

# THE MESSENGER

July/August 2013, Volume 4 Number 4

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*The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole, Rector ❖ The Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole, Associate Rector*

### ***Our Mission (What we do)***

*All Saints' is committed to being a church community in which Christ's love is experienced and shared.*

### ***Our Vision (Where we are going)***

*We wish to help people grow in their faith and trust in God. Our vision is to help people recognize their God-given talents and to use them to serve God and their neighbor.*

## ***From the Rector...***

Dear Parishioners,

### ***A Simple Summer Spiritual Exercise***

I want to offer you a simple spiritual exercise to do over the summer – to write your own “spiritual autobiography.” I mentioned this in a sermon a few weeks ago and some parishioners have asked for some guidelines about how to do this. The point of this exercise is to help you become aware and recognize the people, events, relationships, life experiences and learning that have formed your faith. Perhaps, most centrally, it helps you focus the importance of faith in your life and how it has shaped your life.

As part of a preparation for a clergy refresher retreat I attended last year I was asked to write a spiritual autobiography. I offer you the guidelines they asked us to follow as a model for you to write yours. We were to identify, in every decade of our life, a key moment or event that had an impact on our spiritual life and our relationship with God. We answered these questions: What happened? What was important or formative for your spiritual life about the event? What forces and factors were in play? What were the immediate and long-term impacts on your spiritual life?

Perhaps you may simply want to reflect back on your life and identify the people, events and relationships that had an impact on your spiritual life during different periods of your life. You may wish to think about things that have deepened or challenged your faith. What doubts have you wrestled with? What reassurances to your faith have you received? Can you identify how your life has been a “spiritual journey” during which your faith has deepened? What factors have been part of that journey?

Writing your own spiritual autobiography is seen by many of the great spiritual guides as a very important practice to deepen our faith and recognize the significance of God in our lives.

In the autumn I will offer a discussion series on “the spiritual life” in which we explore not only what the great spiritual writers and theologians have said about life as a spiritual journey, but also discuss our own experience and the spiritual practices that can help us grow in the depth of our faith and relationship with Christ.

### ***The State of All Saints'***

As I mentioned in my last article, the Strategic Planning Ministry has been hard at work preparing a strategic vision for All Saints' for the next chapter of the life of our parish. On the next page you will find an outline from me about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges that the Strategic Planning Task Ministry believes our parish possesses. These factors are important in understanding the strategic vision for the next chapter of the life of our parish. In this *Messenger*, Cindy Naudascher, a member of the

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## More from the Rector...

### *The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of All Saints'*

In formulating a strategic vision for the next chapter in the life of our parish, the Strategic Planning Ministry identified a number of key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that All Saints' possesses. I would like to discuss these with you in this article so that you have an understanding of the basis of the strategic vision that the Vestry has adopted for the next chapter in the life of our parish.

We recognized that All Saints' has many strengths – our beautiful campus, our stable church attendance at a time when many churches are facing a decline in attendance, our comparative financial strength, an active and committed congregation and clergy, a respected place in a small tightly knit community. It would be easy for us to sit back on our laurels and be complacent at a time when many other churches find themselves facing severe challenges to their very existence. However, we recognize that, despite our strengths, there are some very major threats facing all churches, including our own, which we would ignore at our peril.

The major threat facing all churches, including All Saints', is the continued marginalization of the Christian faith in contemporary American society. This threatens the very long-term existence of our parish and our faith. It is the underlying threat to our attendance levels, to attracting new members and to our finances.

The main opportunity we have to address this major threat is to reach out to our community to share our faith. We are well placed to do this because we are a well-known and respected church and we all as individuals have strong personal connections in the wider Monadnock community. We also have the strengths of our parish to support us in these efforts – our great ministries, our beautiful campus and our active congregation and clergy. But we also recognized that All Saints' has potential weaknesses and threats that could prevent us from using these opportunities. These threats include the unwillingness of our congregation to reach out to the wider community to share the faith and also lack of knowledge and skill about how to do this effectively – this is not something Episcopalians necessarily feel comfortable about.

In September our Vestry is having a retreat to begin to consider ideas about how we can make use of the opportunities we have to deal with the threats and weaknesses we face. There is a lot of confidence in the Vestry that by being open to the Holy Spirit and true to our Episcopal culture and values we can begin to position ourselves to ensure that our parish will be a church in which Christ's love is experienced and shared for many generations to come.

Yours in Christ,

*Adrian*

**Note on Community Meetings Below: The Monadnock Area Food Pantry is also open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm.**

### Community Meetings Each Week at All Saints'

**Mondays:**

9-10:15 AM RSVP Senior Exercise, Reynolds Hall  
10 AM-noon Monadnock Area Food Bank Open  
7-8 PM AI-Anon meeting, OPH Room 1

**Tuesdays:**

10 AM-noon Monadnock Area Food Bank Open  
5:30 PM Community Soup Supper, Reynolds Hall  
7-8 PM AA meeting, OPH Room 1

**Wednesdays:**

10 AM-noon Quilters, OPH

**Thursdays:**

9-10:15 AM RSVP Senior Exercise, Reynolds Hall  
Noon-1 PM AA meeting, OPH Room 1  
1 PM-4 PM Serendipity Shop Open  
8-9 PM AA meeting, OPH Room

**Fridays:**

10 AM-4 PM Serendipity Shop Open  
7PM Open Meditation Group, OPH, Room 1

**Saturdays:**

10 AM-noon Serendipity Shop Open

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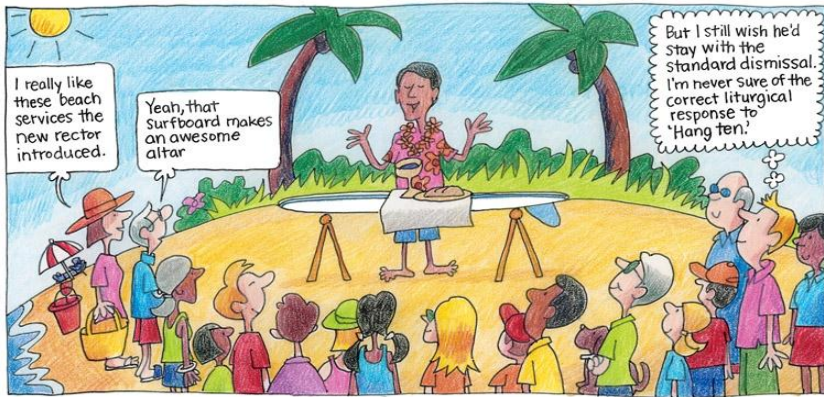
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## Cartoon



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## Love

If you examine it carefully  
 And ponder prayerfully  
 You'll see the importance of love  
 Your parents' love enabled you  
 To grow and accept the Christian view  
 It came with no strings attached  
 Indeed it seemed unmatched  
 Except that it was, by God above  
 Who taught us all we know of love.

## Summer Saints' Days

### JULY

7/2 Ewan Finser  
 7/3 Gail Wilson  
 7/5 Amedine Bella  
 7/6 Tracy Wagoner  
 Matt Weddle  
 7/8 Karl Betz  
 7/10 Beth Healey  
 Robert Kiely  
 David Rowell  
 Bob Weathers  
 7/11 Eleanor Erickson  
 Philip Miner  
 7/12 Barbara Eckert  
 Nancy Drogny  
 7/16 Linn Perkins  
 Sam Abbott III  
 7/17 Addie Catlin

7/18 Tom James  
 7/19 Hannah Garfinkle  
 Carl Wagner III  
 7/20 Brooklyn Zielie  
 7/23 Peter DeVinnie  
 Sydney Hutton  
 7/24 Cindy Engelhardt  
 Barbara Metivier  
 7/26 Susannah Parish  
 7/28 Robert Steinert, Jr.  
 Lora McClintock  
 7/29 Boo Martin  
 7/30 Sam Scheinblum  
 7/31 Jennifer Davis

### AUGUST

8/1 Bev Kemp

8/1 Andrew Manns  
 8/2 Olivia Krommes  
 8/3 Bernd Foecking  
 8/5 Marilynn Hill  
 8/7 Ivy Vann  
 8/10 Barbara  
 Clinkenbeard  
 8/11 Kathryn Dodge  
 8/12 Mary Liz Lewis  
 8/13 Jack Lewis  
 Lily Juarez-Rivas  
 Winnie Skeates  
 8/14 Linda Lapham  
 8/15 Peter Row  
 8/16 Alistair George  
 Armstrong  
 Eloise Catlin  
 Jay Hale

8/18 Anthony Gatto  
 8/19 Eleonore Bayles  
 Haley Spitzfaden  
 8/20 Ellie Peterson  
 8/22 Mckayla Kelly  
 8/21 Janet Linn  
 8/22 Mckayla Kelly  
 8/23 Dorrie Richmond  
 Mark Lapham  
 Dee Thomas  
 8/25 Jean Gogolin  
 8/27 Arthur Eldredge  
 Swift Corwin  
 8/29 Sally Steere  
 Emily Smith  
 8/31 Evan Wagner  
 Hadi Lancaric

## Join the Adventure: Sign up for Education for Ministry!

If you are thinking about taking the Education for Ministry course, it's time to sign up. What is EfM? Education for Ministry is an adult education program created by the University of the South School of Theology. It is based on the notion that we are all ministers, and to have a mature faith that meets the demands of modern life, we join together to study and grow in our theological thinking.

We need to have all students registered by mid-August. The first class for the 2013-2014 year will be Monday, Sept. 9. Please contact mentors Chris Howe ([chow6569@gmail.com](mailto:chow6569@gmail.com)) or Marilyn Weir ([photos4u@galaxy.net](mailto:photos4u@galaxy.net)) or come to the church office to fill out the registration form. The cost is \$350/year. There are a few scholarships available which can cover part of the cost.

For the first time, EfM classes will use books not written by EfM authors but by other noted theologians and historians. The cost of these texts is covered by the registration fee. They will include:

\* **Year One: The Hebrew Bible** *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, John J. Collins

\* **Year Two: The New Testament** *Introducing the New Testament*, Mark Allan Powell

\* **Year Three: Church History** *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, Diarmaid MacCulloch

\* **Year Four: Theology, Ethics, and Interfaith Encounters** *Theology for a Troubled Believer: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, Diogenes Allen; *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety*, Timothy F. Sedgwick; *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation*, Jennifer Howe Peace, Or Rose, and Greg Mobley

## Treasurer's Report

As we approach the end of the first half of the year, I think it appropriate that I give you my assessment of All Saints' from a financial standpoint. If I look at the big picture, we are very fortunate that we have a congregation that, for years, has supported the church financially and in other ways. This has enabled the church to successfully pursue its mission of focusing on being a church community in which Christ's love is experienced and shared. Because of this continued support and good planning, overall, we are on very solid ground financially, and we should be able to continue to fulfill our mission as time goes on.

Looking more closely at our present situation, 2013 is turning out to be somewhat of a financial challenge for All Saints'. With unpredictable weather conditions, at times somewhat spotty Sunday attendance, changes in staffing and job responsibilities, and unexpected expenses (particularly in the maintenance of our buildings), our budgets are being tested. As I mentioned in last month's *Messenger*, through April our pledge contributions were running considerably below last year's. We are also well below this year's budget. On the other hand, for reasons mentioned above, our expenses have been considerably over budget. Unfortunately, this trend continues with the result that our total contributions are now about 8% behind last year's and further below budget for the year. As you know from previous reports, about 75% of our budgeted income is planned to come from the

congregation's contributions. This is the money that we use to pay our monthly bills for staff salaries and benefits, utilities, office expenses, maintenance, various outreach projects, and other ongoing expenses. Alternate sources of income, such as our investment dividends, help to pay for additional expenses such as the Diocesan Assessment. As you can see, it is very important that we maintain a constant flow of income to cover our daily and monthly needs.

In reviewing our year-to-date pledge contributions, I have discovered that about 30% of those who do pledge have yet to contribute or are behind for the year. Some give on an annual basis and, traditionally, don't contribute until the end of the year. Most, however, pledge to contribute weekly or monthly and are simply behind. There are many reasons why this might be. Perhaps they are due to personal hardships or other issues. However, in order for us to continue to pay our bills on time, as we have committed to do, I would ask that anyone who is behind do what they can to get up to date on their pledge activity. For those who pledge on an annual basis, if they can contribute something now it would be very helpful.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for the financial support provided to All Saints'. Have a wonderful summer. I look forward to giving you my next, much more positive, report later in the summer.

Warren E. Sponsler, Treasurer



## Remembering and Forgetting

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." (John 14:27) Our essential nature is one of peace. We have Christ's peace. But, we often forget! The world rushes in and demands our attention.

Spiritual practices though, help me remember the essential loving and peaceful nature of myself and all human beings. Silent prayer, yoga practice, the sun on my shoulders, Bible reading, bird song, church services, noticing my breathing, looking out over the lake, and

singing are only a few of the “signals” I use to remind myself of God’s love, Christ’s peace and the spiritual presence within me and everyone I meet. I smell the peonies and touch the bark of an oak and right away, I feel God’s love and peace. I try to notice when I forget and what caused that dis-ease, and I use these practices to bring me back to God’s love and Christ’s peace already present somewhere within me. God’s love and

peace are immediately accessible to us at every moment. We have only to turn our attention to Him.

Silent Prayer at All Saints’ is a time when we can stop and listen to God’s love, and feel Christ’s peace within us and others. Please join us on Thursday evenings in the church at 6:30 for 30 minutes of silent prayer. We would love to share the beauty of the silence with you.

*Deb DeCicco, Junior Warden*

## Vestry Views

### *A Faithful Journey into the Future*

A Strategic Planning Ministry was established at All Saints’ more than a year ago to look at financial issues related to the church and then report to the Vestry. After several meetings, members recognized a need for a clearer sense of where we as a church community wanted to go as we looked to the future. They realized they needed more information from the congregation in order to make informed decisions.

To obtain that, parishioners were asked at the 2013 annual meeting to identify their perception of the strengths and weaknesses at All Saints’. That information provided both the Strategic Planning Ministry and the Vestry with a pulse on the congregation's view of our Church community.

Looking at the future of the church is an issue being considered by the Episcopal Church and other mainline churches as attendance continues to decline nationwide. To that end, the Strategic Planning Ministry spent many months discovering our strengths and weaknesses at All Saints’ Church.

At the May Vestry meeting, this group presented their findings for consideration. Their intention was for Vestry to look at the two guiding statements below and consider their adoption:

1) Explore and seek new ideas for ministry from wherever they come, in order to help attract new people of faith and to help our existing members grow deeper in their faith while, at the same time, maintaining our existing ministries.

2) Retain and support our existing church campus because we see it as a powerful and beautiful God-given gift to draw people to the Christian faith.

Vestry members engaged in discussion around these findings and felt they needed more information and more time to consider what was being proposed.

The Strategic Planning Ministry spent time this past month refining their findings into Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats or SWOT to present at the June Vestry meeting.

At the June Vestry meeting, we considered the future of our church at a deeper level. A key focal point that was identified is to look beyond our church and into the community in an effort to connect with those individuals seeking spiritual renewal who may feel resistance towards organized religion.

The Vestry adopted the two guiding statements at the June meeting.

Self-analysis is always challenging for an individual; for a group it can be overwhelming. We have taken the first step on this journey into the future of All Saints’. As we travel your help as parishioners and of course the spiritual guidance of the Lord will be essential to our success.

As we look forward to your thoughts and ideas we all might consider asking ourselves “What would Jesus do?”

*Cindy Naudascher, Vestry Member*

## Rector Appoints Becky Goodwin Web Administrator

On behalf of the rector and the Vestry, Senior Warden Pam Everson announced that Becky Goodwin has been named to the newly created position of web administrator. Becky is currently on staff as Director of Christian Education.

"We are delighted that Becky will be leading our electronic communications efforts," Pam explained. "The web administrator position has long been a goal of the communications ministry. We are expanding Becky's hours to include her new duties as web administrator. The fact that Becky is already on staff, regularly in the office, and has already set up a Facebook page for our Youth Ministry were strong factors in our decision."

To keep the website current with vital information Becky said she plans to reach out to all department

heads to make the website a hub between ministries. A second strong focal point will be keeping the calendar page accurate and up to date.

"We want to put our very best foot forward," she added. "The website development team, as part of the communications ministry, spent over a year developing this fabulous website. Now our goal is to make sure that it becomes a strong and vital communication medium for All Saints' Church."

Becky said she would be updating the website on Wednesdays, the same time that "At a Glance" and "Saints Alive" are being done. If you have questions or ideas on how to make things more usable on the website. Becky would love your feedback. Contact her at [becky\\_goodwin02@hotmail.com](mailto:becky_goodwin02@hotmail.com).

*Ramona Branch*, for the Communications Committee

## Thank you

*from Pastor Joel and the children of Centro Victoria, Juarez, Mexico*

Thank you for your warm welcome to Pastor Joel on May 5. He felt your sincere interest in and support of the children of Centro Victoria and of his taking care of them. And thank you for your generosity. More than \$5,000 was raised that Sunday and with the *Friends of Juarez* donations, we sent \$6,200.

Five All Saints' members will fly down to Juarez on June 29. They are: Patty Wheeler, Paige Spaulding, Hayden James, Paul Kaufmann and Emily Miner. Please keep us in your prayers. We all have been there before several times and are so anxious to reconnect with the children. We will return full as always: full of God's grace, of wonderful memories, of stories and pictures; all of which we would love to share with all of you.

Thank you so much for your continued support for the children of Centro Victoria.

*Patty Wheeler*

## The Pastoral Care Ministry

In my early days here at All Saints' I read a pamphlet describing all of the ministries at the church. I read the words "pastoral care" and wondered what exactly that was all about. I was adding the pamphlet to my new "All Saints'" folder for which I had just made a label (I am a bit obsessed with organizing and making labels.) Now, a few years later, I find myself the Vestry liaison to the Pastoral Care Ministry attempting to answer the same question I had years ago.

Liz Tong, Adrian and I have had many meetings recently about what pastoral care could look like here at All Saints'. My question from a few years ago kept creeping up: what exactly *is* pastoral care?

Here's what I have discovered: pastoral care is a ministry of presence. It is the simple act of being fully present with someone in a time of need. "Being there" can be any number of things - sharing a cup of tea on a

rainy afternoon, a conversation at coffee hour on Sunday, the warmth of a hand-knit shawl from our knitting ministry, a hands-on healing prayer from our healing team, the knowledge that someone is praying for you through our prayer team, a visit from our clergy, or a card saying, "I'm thinking of you." All of these are pastoral care. As members of this ministry, we have the opportunity to build on all of these activities and even identify some new ways we can be present for our fellow parishioners.

As we look to build the pastoral care ministry, we realize how very important communication is in developing a system of checks and balances to ensure that no one is inadvertently left out from the care that we are intending to deliver. We cannot provide pastoral care if we do not know when a need arises. There are many ways for you to let us know about a pastoral care need, but the most efficient way is to call the parish

office and talk with Diane (she is so wonderful and caring, and she keeps us all on track!). She can help explain what is available and direct you appropriately, whether for a clergy visit, an addition to the prayer list, or to the pastoral care ministry.

So as you embark on your summer adventures, consider taking a moment to think about any ideas you might have for us as a ministry and share them with us. We will also be looking for folks to join the pastoral

care ministry as we look to officially re-launch in September. See if God is calling your heart to join us as we attempt to care for one another and embrace His spirit.

*Meghann Wuorinen, Vestry Liaison*

## **The Silent Auction at The English Summer Fair**

The Silent Auction is the main fundraising portion of the English Summer Fair. The auction's success depends on the generosity of our donors - YOU! Please consider donating your special treasures or talents to this year's Silent Auction. We are looking for items that will generate excitement and competitive bidding. Art, decorative items, pottery, glass/crystal, wood, small pieces of furniture, theater or sports tickets and jewelry always create interest. We hope to expand the donation of your time, talents and services. Baking, preparing a special meal or dish, yard work or knitting are just a few things that have been offered in the past.

If you are involved with a local business and would like to offer a gift card or certificate for products or services, these would also make great donations. All profits are donated to local charitable causes. Feel free to contact me at 563-8180 or [naudwood@gmail.com](mailto:naudwood@gmail.com) with ideas and offers of donations or assistance. Donations can be brought to Diane Callahan at the Church Office.

*Cindy Naudascher, Chair of the Silent Auction*

## A Season for Gratitude

There are times in all of our lives when we may feel we have fewer reasons to be grateful than we might wish. We may have lost a job or a loved one (both, as in my case) and are understandably more concerned with how we, personally, can carry on than with helping an institution to carry on. Stewardship may not be high on our list of priorities.

As I begin my fourth term with the Stewardship Ministry, I am grateful for this season of down time at church. With fewer activities going on, I am able to take a step back to really think about why I am grateful for All Saints'. During the summer months, it is hard for me not to appreciate the beauty of our campus, and once I start thinking about what I have to be thankful for, the list grows. I am grateful for our wonderful parish clergy and staff, for the splendor of our music and liturgy, and, most importantly, for the love of Jesus Christ. I recognize that so much of what I am grateful for depends on my continued support of the church. For me stewardship is an ongoing thought process, and I hope that although pledge time is still months away, the same is true for all of us.

*Steve Smillie, for the Stewardship Committee*

## New Season, New Responsibilities, One Mission

As many of you know, I have recently taken on the role of web administrator for All Saints' Church. When Adrian first approached me about this position, I immediately felt a strong desire to take on the challenge, even though at first glance it may appear to be far outside the umbrella of my other responsibilities. However, I see it somewhat differently. I believe that our church, like Christianity generally, is undergoing a dramatic transformation, of which each of us will play a part. My role, I believe, will be to reach out to my generation and younger generations and help bring them into the fold by showing them their place among us and the natural home that the Episcopal Church can be for progressive, open-minded individuals who still hunger for tradition and sacramental theology. The digital world is a given for this particular group, and having a well refined website is a must if we are to appeal to this segment of the population.

As the Christian Education director, I am constantly trying to find new ways to inspire our children and adolescents by opening up the Gospel to reveal its relevance in the modern age. For me, the words of Jesus still tremble with energy and meaning. Once one has truly heard the message contained in the Gospels, it is impossible not to be moved to action. Our generation is the first to have the full wealth of human spiritual heritage at our fingertips, on our computers, even in the palm of our hand as an app on a smartphone. It is an amazing time, full of opportunities to evangelize in ways previous generations could not have imagined. Our footprint in the digital world will determine how we interface with this generation and will help determine our success at bringing in new Episcopalians.

It is also an exciting time within our community, and I believe a functional, interactive, vibrant website can be an enormous resource to connect us with each other and help our church create new ways to have fellowship and even, perhaps, to worship. Already I have had the opportunity to sit down with countless people to get feedback and share ideas about the website, and each day, changes are being added and new possibilities emerge. Recently, I worked with Steve Smillie to create an interactive online form for registering for the 8 at 8 Dinner. He and I immediately recognized the potential for other forms and event-planning instruments, and were excited about what this can mean for All Saints' church in the future.

I am honored and genuinely excited about this new role and I look forward to seeing the website change and evolve to meet the needs of our church. I am open to talking with anyone who has ideas or suggestions and I welcome feedback as I work to develop the website to be an excellent tool for our current community and a means of attracting new people in the future.



*Becky Goodwin, Director of Christian Education*

## Book Note

One of the fascinations for me of this monthly contribution has been discovering books to read and write about. Most of the early ones were books I had read in the course of my education and ordained ministry, which occurred to me in odd moments as worthy of a second look and a broader audience. But throughout these months, I have had books suggested to me, or even thrust upon me, by relatives and friends, often at the precise moment when I was beginning to wonder what to pick up next. Or Adrian or Sarah mentions some author in a sermon, and I have the presence of mind to jot it down. Last month's subject, by the Prince of Wales, had been given me for some occasion several years ago, at my request, and I had only got around to reading it recently; I suppose I had heard some mention of it on NPR when it came out.

This month's offering was the book used in a course taken by my sister and brother-in-law at their retirement community in Maryland. *The Book of Dead Philosophers* by Simon Critchley, (Vintage, New York, 2008) is a quirky little romp through 2,500 years of philosophy, written for all of us, not for professional philosophers. It begins with a discussion of Cicero's maxim, "To philosophize is to learn how to die." What ensues is a series of biographical sketches of around 190 philosophers, how they died (if known), and what they had to say about dying and death. It is arranged chronologically from the Pre-Socratics (Thales, sixth

century BC, sunstroke while watching sports) to the present (Dominique Janicaud, 1937-2002, cardiac arrest after a swim). Most of the deaths do not involve athletics: they span the usual gamut of illness, accident, murder, and suicide, with a few executions. Concerning suicide, which might seem the logical death for the most pessimistic, it is told of Thales that "he held there was no difference between life and death. 'Why then,' said one, 'do you not die?' 'Because,' said he, 'there is no difference.'

The range of personalities encountered here is illuminating in itself. There are Chinese philosophers, mediaeval Jewish and Muslim sages, at least a dozen women, and a great many Christians, beginning with the Apostle Paul. The author's own opinions are pretty clear, but do not preclude attention to some whom he finds interesting though not persuasive.

But this is not just a series of thumbnail sketches of thinkers. Death, and how we face it, is a central theme. The author, not himself apparently a believer, presents us with the intersection, sometimes the collision, between thought and practice. There is clarity, sympathy, and much whimsy in these 250 pages, and a testament to our human inability to accept life without question.

*Cassius Webb*

## Faith in Action

Christine asked me if I wanted to write a kind of reflection on my time here at All Saints'. When she asked me, we were standing outside church as the choir waited to go in for the Easter Vigil. I remember this so clearly because a friend from my EfM group had asked me that morning at the Holy Saturday crypt service if I was going to write for the *Messenger* about leaving. I told her I hadn't thought about it, but that maybe I would. When Chris spoke to me that same afternoon about writing, I asked if someone had told her to ask me. She looked confused and replied, "God?" I laughed and told her what our friend had said to me that morning. I figured that this was indeed God at work, nudging me to reflect on my time at All Saints'.

I came to All Saints' a Catholic who had been interested in the Episcopal Church for some time. When I visited All Saints' with Thomas for the first time in October 2010, I immediately knew that this was the place. Bishop Robinson received me that fall. In time I became more and more involved at All Saints', drawn in by the strong community and the wealth of ways in which I could feed, challenge, and strengthen my faith.

I think that I have grown more spiritually in the past 2 ½ years at All Saints' than I probably have in my whole life. The simple act of making the decision to be received by the Church marked my transition from a passive faith to an active one. At All Saints', I have learned how to ask questions. I have learned what it means to be in community in Christ. I have learned how to see the world as reflected through my faith, and I have come closer to understanding the ministry that God is calling me towards.

I told many people that leaving All Saints' would be one of the hardest parts of moving away, and that is true. But I also know that what I have gained at All Saints' will come with me. Faith is a journey, and I have a lifetime of walking ahead of me. The foundation that All Saints' has given me is a strong one to build upon, and I am so grateful to all of you who have helped me create it. Thank you for your love, your support, your laughter, your wisdom, your songs, and your prayers. I will miss you!

*Catherine McCosker*

## Musings

Seeing the theme of this July-August issue, "Basking in the love of God," I thought "Ah, summer, time for a break!" Granted, for people in businesses such as landscaping and hospitality, this is the busiest time of year at work. Those of us who live by the school year calendar, even in churches, can be grateful that God's words about Sabbath rest are not just a suggestion but a commandment. Sabbath observance includes both worship and R &R: both are ways of basking in the love of God.

Recently I heard some of my clergy colleagues complain about poor church attendance in the summer. Of course some people attend summer chapels or other congregations while on vacation, but at least one former parishioner unabashedly claimed that he worshipped on the golf course on summer Sundays. Another would bring me bulletins of parishes she visited, as a sort of proof of attendance, which a former rector of hers had expected.

Last month I wrote about varied worship experiences in several far-flung churches we had visited in recent months. I anticipated more, as we expected to be away much of June on a trip we had booked in January. Then four days before the departure date, we received email and phone messages that the trip had been cancelled due to one of those increasingly frequent, disastrous "weather events." The cancellation came as a surprise and disappointment, but when we learned what those most closely affected were enduring, we could hardly

allow ourselves more than momentary self-pity. After all, vacation travel is a luxury most of the world's people cannot indulge in, while we would recover from our disappointment and probably have other opportunities. We rationalized about how we live in a vacationland anyway, how we now would have more time to spend with family, tend our garden and perhaps take some short trips.

Someone with whom I shared our change of plans tried to offer some consolation, saying, "There must be a reason." I often have heard faithful, well-meaning people say "There's a reason for everything." Usually in a pastoral situation it has not seemed appropriate to challenge this view, but I will say it now: I do not agree. Maybe I just misunderstand what people mean by this claim, but I do not believe that a good and loving God sends floods, tornadoes or hurricanes to punish anyone or to direct others of us to do something other than what we had planned. There are other clichés I do believe from experience: that there really are blessings in disguise; that when one door closes another one often opens; and indeed this has been true since our trip was cancelled. There are many ways to understand what it means to "bask in the love of God," and they are not always what we had planned. I hope and pray you too will be surprised and delighted by some of those opportunities this summer.

*Betsy Fowle*

*Save the Date! Save the Date!*

**The All Saints' English Summer Fair**

**August 3**

## Saintly News

*Congratulations to...*

Our recent High School graduates...

Lucy Beyer and Heather Tourgee (Salutatorian)

Our recent Middle School graduates...

Sean Driscoll and Autumn Roberts

Cindy and Greg Naudascher in celebration of their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary

Amy Spitzfaden and Ravi Both in celebration of their recent marriage

Kimberly Coffey, granddaughter of Melvin and Alice Weir, who just graduated from the University of Mississippi, Phi Beta Kappa, *Magna cum Laude* and *Scholar Athlete*.

*Gloria Schultz*



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## Editor's Note

This weekend, my older daughter and her husband celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary with a getaway trip to Provincetown. And my granddaughter decided that the best way to celebrate her seventh birthday was to go on an overnight camping trip with her dad, another father, and two of her best friends. So I got to spend a couple of days with my three grandsons (ages 16, 12, and 4 ½-almost-5) and my younger daughter. What a lovely time we had. I am so incredibly grateful.

Besides swimming, barbecuing and going to the barber, we went to the Boston Museum of Science. A treat at any time, with the baby chicks and cotton-topped tamarins and exhibits on wave motion and flight simulation, our visit today was profoundly moving: we got to see some of the Dead Sea Scrolls—the oldest extant copies of the Old Testament. They are on exhibit in Boston until October 20.

Like many others who studied Biblical Hebrew for a moment during college, one of the few things I learned to decipher was the *Tetragrammaton*, the four letters representing the personal name of God that He revealed to Moses. And one of the few phrases I can still say and read in Hebrew is, "Hine ma tov umah nayim, Shevet achim gam ya chad" from Psalm 133, "How good it is when men are brothers..."

So you can imagine what it felt like to look at these ancient fragments where some faithful scribe wrote this Psalm including the precious name of the LORD more than 2,000 years ago.

There is also a three-ton limestone block from the Second Temple there. The exhibitors have constructed a simulation of the Wailing Wall around this block. Like visitors to Jerusalem, we could write prayers on paper and put them into cracks and crevices.

As we were leaving, my four-year old grandson, who had been incredibly respectful and had even dictated a prayer for the wall, said to his mother, "This was about the Dead Sea Scrolls? I thought it was going to be about the Dead Sea Squirrels."

Surely this is Basking in the Love of God.

The deadline for the September *Messenger* is August 21. The theme will be *Working for the Lord*. Please send your contributions to me at [chow6569@gmail.com](mailto:chow6569@gmail.com)

With much gratitude and great joy,

*Christine*

