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ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Newsletter – June 2021

A Reflection from the Reverend Diane Wong, Rector

Two words summarize some of my reflections for last year - intentionality and community, and I hope we would continue to live that way as Covid restrictions are being lifted, businesses reopen, and the rhythm of everyday life quickens.

During the pandemic when our state issued lockdown restrictions, that negatively impacted lots of people economically. Others, then, through social media, publicized that they were available to help. They went above and beyond to make sure those in their communities and elsewhere had access to food and other daily necessities. Lawmakers agreed quickly on setting up public funds to assist those who were facing financial difficulties. This says to me that when our hearts are in it, when there is intentionality, nothing is impossible to make sure everyone in our communities is cared for. It reminds me what Jesus says that when we have faith, we can even move mountains. I hope we continue to care for one another with intentionality.

Because of the lockdown in the U.S. and around the world, there was practically no traffic on the road. As a result, global carbon emission dropped drastically. One report shows a drop of 12% in the United States and 11% in Europe. Aerial photos showed a greener and bluer earth. It IS possible to slow down climate change. I hope we will intentionally cut down our driving, and take the well-being of our earth over the convenience of our daily living. I hope we will continue to intentionally include our environment as part of our community and take care of it.

I feel tremendously thankful that Zoom has allowed us to meet and worship together, to somewhat keep us together as a faith community. I want to thank all of you who have made the time to be there on Zoom. But building and maintaining a sense of community requires making connections - making eye contact, looking at someone face to face, reading their facial expressions and body language, and feeling their presence. Zoom just does not capture these elements. At our Pentecost outdoor service, I was so moved when I was able to place the wafer in people's hands, look at them and say, "The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven." I felt God was there connecting us and binding us together.

We all have missed being together in-person. With our church opening up again, I hope we will intentionally make time to be together in-person and let God bind us together as God's people to serve God's people.

Appreciatively,

Diane+

Why I Believe that Part-Time is Best for St. John's

By Christine Stevens

When I first came to St. John's, what first struck me was the strong sense of community which, at the time, I attributed to the small size of the parish. It never occurred to me that what I liked about St. John's had anything to do with the fact that Diane is a part-time minister. It was only this year, when I was required to read, as a new vestry member, a book called *Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving without Full-Time Clergy* that I began to understand the significance of our church having a part-time priest.

The gist of this book is that having part-time clergy is a growing movement in many Protestant churches, due primarily to monetary restraints. Yet the author of this book argues that the absence of full-time clergy can actually turn out be a good and healthy thing for many faith communities. For instance, while St. John's chose this path out of necessity, I believe that it has caused our church to thrive after a difficult period, and it has, in fact strengthened St. John's in the following ways:

- Because we do not depend on our priest for everything, it forces parishioners to get to know and learn to trust each other as they perform shared tasks.
- Furthermore, as one vestry member put it, "when we give our time we offer thankfulness and praise to God".
- Moreover, the fate of our church does not fall on any one individual. For instance, in the church I attended in Florida for three years, when the priest became ill, everything fell apart. Yet, at St. John's, because we are using the part-time model, I believe that such a situation is much less likely to occur.

Yet, before becoming a vestry member, the significance of having part-time clergy never even occurred to me, so I basically never bothered to volunteer for chores related to the church's functioning, since I was always under the impression that church "die-hards", so to speak would get everything done, somehow. Now that I am on the vestry committee, and am beginning to understand how things at St. John's really get done, I can assure you that this is not the case! I would like to now tell other lay people who might still share the same mentality as I did that, in a church with part-time clergy, the talents of every single parishioner are precious. In my opinion, that is the advantage of having a part-time priest!

How then, as a faith community, can we make sure that the functioning of our church does not fall on the shoulders of Diane and a few "die-hards"? Another vestry member had this to say:

"There are so many advantages to embracing the model of part-time Rector...We can thrive with part-time clergy by viewing the ministry function as a congregation's responsibility, not just the minister's responsibility. We should plan and review each year all of the ministry's functions and the role of lay leaders in these functions. If each function (worship, outreach, altar guild) had a clear statement of "purpose" and a brief description of how it goes about doing its work, that could be reviewed annually in order to recruit new members to that function...Participating in the church's ministry should be fun and rewarding because you can see your impact."

Finally, during our vestry retreat a few weeks ago, vestry members discussed the need to bring more parishioners into our church. I believe, for the reasons I have mentioned above, that being a church with part-time clergy can actually be used as a selling point in order to bring new members into St. John's. In his book, *Part-Time is Plenty*, G. Jeffrey MacDonald states that having a part-time rector is something that many parishes wish to downplay. Yet I feel that this growing trend is something to be celebrated, since it means that each and every parishioner can be viewed as a highly-valued and important part of a faith community.

Normal?

By Jackie Clermont

My late father, who hated change, used to say "Everything is back to normal" after the resolution of every problem.

When he was young, he'd say it after he fixed broken things, or finished a project, or even returned from a vacation. When he was older, he'd say it after his most recent health setback.

But it was always back to a new normal. The old normal — the flat tire, the new door, the hearing in his right ear — well, it was gone forever. The bike had a new tire, but not the same tire. The door ruined the look of the house, according to our neighbor. His hearing never came back; he just got used to its being gone.

Our CEO repeated the word "normal" 11 times in a 2 1/4 page memo announcing our office was reopening on June 1. "Our goal is to have the office back to normal as soon as possible," he writes.

But what is normal? "With respect to being back in the office, the "new normal" is the same as the "old normal," he says.

My heart sank into a sea of irrational adrenaline when I read the memo on April 23. Plenty of time to prepare. But not enough time.

I should be happy.

I'm alive. I have a good job. And our CEO is a great guy, but on June 1, we're going back to nightmarish commutes involving demons on wheels and too many traffic lights, men working in the road, mile-high speed bumps, and overzealous school crossing guards.

The past year and a half had its measure of grief and heartbreak — lost lives and long separations — but I must admit some of life during the pandemic was better than life before it.

Mostly, despite the hassle of wearing a mask and the fear of contracting the virus from a doorknob turned deadly, my quality of life improved. I learned what I didn't need — the mall, haircolor, power suits, and pants.

And what I did need. My precious hobbies, God in nature, local stores, phone calls from good friends, Facebook (yes), online shopping, and fine wine in the evening.

And now my future seems like a big ball of exhaustion and exhaust.

I live a little more than six miles from my office, but in rush hour traffic, that's 45 minutes to an hour of utter misery I didn't have to face during the pandemic. That was 10 hours saved every week, and an extra hour of sleep.

My commute after I totaled my Toyota on the Expressway — a not-for-fun roller-coaster for the rushed or quasi-suicidal — was via Boston's underfunded Mass Transit system whose mission, less than getting you from point A to point B, is packing sweating bodies and angry hearts into airless tin cans. Needless to say, if the pandemic has taught me anything, it's that traffic accidents are preferable to disease and death from the kind of viruses that like packed tin cans, which I wager is all of them.

The annual cost of parking my car at the office building will be high at \$3,600, which, after 14 months of free parking at home, represents a pay cut.

Then there's the old work life.

According to a recent poll, more than 80% of CEOs want employees back in the office, as opposed to 10% of employees who want to go back.

Martine Haas and Mark Mortensen in "The Secrets of Great Teamwork" published in the Harvard Business Review, write that one of the four essentials of successful team building is a shared mindset.

"Many participants in our field research and executive education sessions promote shared understanding through a practice called "structured unstructured time"—that is, time blocked off in the schedule to talk about matters not directly related to the task at hand. Often this is done by reserving the first 10 minutes of teamwide meetings for open discussion."

During the pandemic, all business meetings were on Teams, and the first few minutes were always about some part of a team member's dress, office, or pets. Because we were all at home, we discovered things about one another that increased bonding and mutual respect. I never knew my colleague Tom played the drums; I got to meet Joel's new puppy; Rachel's foster cat found a home. Jan's ginger tabby naps in a bed she put beside her keyboard. An executive in a T-shirt called me on Teams for tips on using an application I know very well. The formalities gone, I respected him even more.

Conference rooms are stark places, where suits, the corporate uniform that erases so much individuality, predominate, and so many people hide behind them. You work for faceless suits because you have to. Sure, there's small talk, but filtered. No surprise cat attacks on the keyboard.

Plus, my office cubicle is no match for my setup at home. I outfitted a loft with an electric desk with adjustable height, an expensive seat pad that supports my back, and adjustable computer display. As I worked, I looked at a running brook with cute critters like rabbits, ducks, squirrels, and even wild turkeys. My two cats kept me from forgetting to take breaks. With my extra hour of sleep, walks in clean air, and collegial Teams communication, my days were more relaxed and productive. No trains or traffic to worry about, and I frequently looked up to find it was 6 p.m.



Illustrations by Jackie Clermont

Back to normal? I've signed up for LinkedIn notifications for remote work, and they're pretty interesting. I'm thinking that were I younger I'd go after one or two of them. I'm guessing a lot of people who are younger will go after them, and that will put pressure on companies who want people onsite five days a week.

Habit takes the pain out of a lot of things. A callous on your heel. A vile tonic you take every day. They bother you, but then you just accept them like the alarm clock. Then when the habit changes — the callous removed, the tonic turned into a pill — you more than notice their return. In fact, what you once tolerated daily becomes intolerable.

What we call normal is not static. Events, good or bad, change it.

We might want to reach back for it, like my dad, but it is always as gone as yesterday.

Awakening to the New Normal

By Joe Curro

How wonderful to gather in the garden of the Order of St. Anne for Pentecost Sunday and to welcome a new member of the Christian family.

Wonderful... and disorienting.

After fifteen months, parishioners could come together and largely dispense with the masks that have shielded our faces and provided pandemic protection. We could share a smile and lift our voices together in worship and song.

Scenes like these are playing out beyond church life. As vaccination rates go up and COVID case rates go down, we are discovering so much that we have lost as we gingerly step out into the "new normal."

Concerts. End-of-year school events. Sporting competitions.

Like so many others, I have -- for better and worse -- worked from home throughout the pandemic.

I've been getting more sleep, but I've exercised less.

I haven't missed the amount of time spent commuting, but I have missed the peace of my daily walks to and from Alewife.

I have enjoyed the flexibility and comfort of working from the couch or porch and dispensing with shoes and other business casual attire. However, I have labored with backaches and family interruptions and the lack of a dedicated, ergonomically-designed workspace.

I have appreciated the efficiency of Zoom meetings, but I have missed casual encounters with colleagues and friends. And I abhor the way my workday flows seamlessly into civic, religious, and recreational life through an endless Zoom stream!

The virtual world has made it possible to benefit from live lectures and discussions by luminaries and interesting people from around the globe in a way that has been more intense than ever. At the same time, the pandemic has robbed us of the possibility to visit some of those faraway places and break bread with some of those interesting people.

Even as we race toward reopening, stories of continued suffering and pain fill our newsfeeds.

I recently read *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. The novel relates the intertwining tales of the survivors of a deadly pandemic, which wipes out 99% of civilization. Over the course of two decades, humanity struggles to preserve pre-pandemic memories and build a new world.

Our pandemic trials have been comparatively short in duration, and civilization has not collapsed. That notwithstanding, the world has changed profoundly. Like the survivors in Mandel's book, we must help to rebuild our world, strengthened by the faith and hope of our teaching.



Outdoor Service and Baptism on Pentecost Sunday



Baptism of James Donald Maxwell

Thankful, but Hopeful for the Future

By Emelia Blankson

The effects of the pandemic have been tumultuous for all of us. Personally, it has taught me how courageous we are, how we all communicate, how we gather for church, the meaning of work, and insights into our personal lives.

Without electronic gadgets and social media, it seems like we were all excluded from our daily lives. Those who were never interested in getting into technology, social media and stayed in our old ways of doing things, were either left behind or became the late comers of learning how these social platforms work, including me. For example, I had to learn how Zoom works. Although I thought I was savvy with technology, I found out it wasn't as easy as I had imagined.

Staying indoors wasn't a problem for me since my health forbade me from socializing anyways; I was afraid of compromising my health with the virus. Seeing how people were hospitalized and people losing their lives was scary. I double masked whenever I had to go out for appointments or treatments, which wasn't easy but survived through it all by God's grace and help of my oncology team.

This turbulent time forces us to implement new health measures such as hand-washing, sanitizing, and wearing face coverings. In the midst of the ever-changing CDC guidelines, we all saw the courage of all first responders, store clerks/ delivery people, educators, students and our priest, who with her creativity was able to conduct church services weekly from the sanctuary for us all. I say thanks to Rev. Diane and vestry members for all their hard work and support. We are lucky to be vaccinated and continue to stay safe as one body in Christ's mission. Although we all missed our families, friends, in/outdoor activities, it was safer for all to stay put and socially distanced, helping to get Covid under control. We thank God for his love, mercy, and grace, even in the worst of days of this pandemic, we never stopped worshipping, praying and helping each other. Hurray!

Short Reflections on Quarantine

By Frank Foster

I look forward to a restorative time of summer and preparation for an active fall. My major fear is that the rampant partisanship within various groups in society will erode attempts to bring people together in new ways to seek brand new solutions. From the last year I will carry forward happy memories of calls, e-mails and greeting cards shared and received from loved ones. During this time, the Holy Spirit showed me I could still share what I had with those less fortunate. One thing I learned was that people can still stay connected (in brand-new ways) and because of that connection a relationship can strengthen and be open to new growth and new energy. So, I am very thankful for my blessings.

Post-Isolation Bloom

By Barbara Greene Seyon

During isolation, ensconced at home by the rigors of caretaking, I had little time or thought for anything other than the care of Patrick, my husband, who was soldiering against a debilitating disease. He needed every moment of my time. Our faith never waned during his struggle. We prayed together until he no longer could, and we heard prayer from his homeland pastor, family, friends, and from Reverend Diane. Reading and hearing Scripture brought light to dark days.

I listened with patience as others spoke of the mammoth challenge of coping with the threat of Covid. I heard the fears, discomfort, and inconvenience being in isolation had caused them but was unable to fully connect. I was not bored or idle; I did not have too much time on my hands. My days were full from sunup till sundown. The days, weeks, and months of isolation passed quickly, or so it seemed.

A year after it had begun, isolation ended, and so, too, had my forty-year friendship and love bond with my husband; I had lost him to a disease that had bested him, his courageous battle notwithstanding. Caring for Patrick had given me a special purpose for each day during isolation. With that purpose gone, I was faced with a new beginning, and because of Covid, a new way of living. I was scared.

When Isolation ended, spring began, and flowers bloomed, St. John's became my garden; I too began to bloom. Flowers after isolation reminded me of the poem below by Dorothy F. Gurney, "God's Garden." There is a plaque with a verse from Gurney's poem on it outside at our church: "[A]n angel warden" keeps watch over St. John's garden.

God's Garden

The Lord God planted a garden
In the first white days of the world,
And He set there an angel warden
In a garment of light enfurled.
So near to the peace of Heaven,
That the hawk might nest with the wren,
For there in the cool of the even
God walked with the first of men.
And I dream that these garden-closes
With their shade and their sun-flecked sod
And their lilies and bowers of roses,
Were laid by the hand of God.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.
For He broke it for us in a garden
Under the olive-trees
Where the angel of strength was the warden
And the soul of the world found ease.

By Dorothy Frances Gurney
Oct. 4, 1858 -- June 15, 1932

St. John's Garden

By Jan Ford

Our garden is a gift to the church and those who visit the church but to those who tend it as well. It has expanded to include the many parts of our yard. The wild flower garden is starting to fill out with (mostly) native plants. The biggest problem is keeping the rabbits from eating many of the young shoots! We will be adding some fencing, probably around individual plants, to allow them to mature.

I often will go by and there will be someone enjoying the quiet of the garden, only interrupted by the songs of the birds in the pear trees. We are planning on adding a stone marker to honor the memory of loved ones as well to give thanks to all who have supported the garden and for the many blessings we receive. I also hope to add markers so that folks will be able to identify the plants and to add markers recognizing the garden as part of the Pollinator Pathways.

We received an offer of a Pagoda Dogwood, a native tree, from the Arlington Tree Committee. On a beautiful, warm Saturday morning at the beginning of June several members came out to set the tree in the ground. Rev. Diane shared a blessing for the gift of the tree, the folks who planted it and for the wildlife that will benefit from it. In addition, we planted the two hydrangeas that were on the altar at Easter where a previously dying cedar had been. They are thriving with new growth and will produce beautiful blue flowers next year.

But, that's not all! Careful pruning, weeding and mulching have allowed for the foundation plantings to shine. Multiple textures and colors brighten the front of the church. Vern and Jan on one of the hottest days of the season, set out multiple hostas in the area in front of the church between the sidewalks. This had been a desert of dirt that had experienced much erosion. It is now a welcoming sea of green. Perhaps the best part of that morning were all the people who walked by and chatted with us and who expressed gratitude for all that the church is doing beyond the gardens as well.

Our gardens would not exist if it were not for all the parishioners who have supported them. I would like to recognize our garden committee, Vern Brown, Cate Barr, Vicki Ford, Charlotte Pierce, Frank Foster and myself along with the folks who have jumped into help when we've put out a call, Joe Curro, David Wilcox, Dorothy Mallam, Larry Ford, Kermit Argon, Sarah Phillips, John Gibson and anyone I may have forgotten with sincere apologies.

How St. John's Garden Grows



Sunday Mulchers (below):



Planting and Blessing the Pagoda Dogwood

Spinning the Coffeehouse Tunes: Going Forward

By Charlotte Pierce

For almost a decade, St. John's Coffeehouse Concerts ministry has been bringing live music to our community, providing a venue for local creative musicians, and raising more than \$40,000 for local social support organizations like Arlington Eats, Foodlink, Episcopal Development Fund, and NEADS Service Dogs. Our virtual "Gimme Shelter" concert in 2020 raised \$4,000 for FoodlinkMA and our DishUP! concert in January 2021 raised \$3,000 for Arlington EATS during a huge spike in food insecurity.

You can view some of the outstanding concerts we've produced, on our YouTube channel, <https://youtube.com/CoffeehouseConcerts>.

- [First Coffeehouse Concert](#) photo album from March 2012, Florence Henry Mayala from Tanzania, with local drummers, Kukublu. Other Coffeehouse albums at photos.google.com

If you'd like to join our merry band that comprises the concert crew, no experience is necessary! St. Johns members make these concerts successful by performing tasks small and large, from putting up physical posters, to digital promotion, to operating cameras and ushering and providing refreshments at the shows. We need you!

Aiming to pick up where we left off when things shut down last March, we're inviting all interested parishioners to a post-pandemic regrouping meeting on June 22 at 7 pm. Contact charlotte@piercepress.com or 781-258-9608 to RSVP and get the Zoom link.

Our coffeehouse-style, informal folk and classical concerts take advantage of the unique acoustic qualities of this historic old church. We often host an informal musician's session after the concert, and provide refreshments. Seating is in the comfortable wooden pews, with beautiful stained glass windows on each side and at the altar. The concerts benefit both the hardworking, gifted musicians who perform, and the community outreach missions of St. John's.

PLEASE NOTE: For booking requests and musician referrals, please use this form: <https://forms.gle/V5SVHeHLTwqAdQ8j8>

- Facebook: <https://Facebook.com/stjohnsconcerts>
- Instagram: <https://Instagram.com/stjohnsconcerts>
- Twitter: <https://Twitter.com/stjohns02476>

A Post-Lock Down Summer Salad

By David Wilcox

One of the things I did enjoy about the time at home during the pandemic was getting in the kitchen and making a variety of new dishes from different recipes. Unfortunately, my eye and taste buds wandered to recipes in the carbohydrate-rich genre of “comfort food”. That worked on many levels and kept me content during the direst parts of the lockdown. However, the reckoning for such lip-smacking dishes emerged in the slow creep of “pandemic pounds”. In the post-vaccination age, I have tried to tackle a new range of recipes that are a little gentler on the waste line and are still satisfying and healthy. Below is a recipe that has been a proven winner in our house and is easy enough to make. If I have cooked the quinoa ahead of time. I can prepare it with very little effort within about 20-30 minutes. It is also a wonderful cold dish that travels well and keeps over several days, making it a handy meal in the summer. Bon Apétit!

Quinoa and Broccoli Floret Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 bag of pre-cut broccoli florets or 1 ½ head of broccoli
- 1 cup of frozen fire-roasted corn (thawed to room temperature or briefly thawed in microwave)
- 1 can of black beans or black-eyed peas (drained and washed in colander)
- 1/8 of a cup of diced red onions
- 4 cups of cooked quinoa (Cook quinoa ahead of time and let cool.)

Ingredients for Honey Mustard Dressing:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons smooth Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar or more lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 medium cloves garlic, pressed or minced OR 1 ½ tablespoon pre-minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- Red pepper flakes, optional (for heat)

Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a liquid measuring cup and whisk until emulsified. The dressing should be pleasantly tangy and pack a punch. If it's overwhelmingly acidic, add a little more honey to balance out the flavors. If it needs more kick, add a bit more mustard or lemon juice.

Preparing the Salad

1. To prepare the broccoli, trim off any brown bits from the florets and stems, then slice the florets off the stems into bite-size manageable pieces.
2. Finely diced red onion, not much, usually two slices of the onion finely diced is enough.

3. Add the broccoli florets, onions, beans and corn and cooked quinoa to large serving bowl. Best to add in a little at a time and mix.
4. Pour the dressing over the mixture and toss until well mixed. Let the slaw rest for about 20 minutes to let the flavors meld.

Serving

You can serve this with a sprinkling of sliced almonds or sunflower kernels for extra crunch. The salad keeps well in the refrigerator for several days. For added protein you can add in diced grilled chicken, smoked salmon, or tuna.

Book Review of Tattoos on the Heart

By Joe Curro

Father Greg Boyle pulls off a trifecta with his book, Tattoos of the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion (Free Press, 2010). He tells stories of extreme human tragedy and sorrow. At the same time, he writes with a sense of humor that continually brings the reader to audible fits of laughter, all the while offering deeply spiritual insights.

After his ordination as a Catholic priest, G or G-Dog, as Father Greg is affectionately called, goes to Bolivia, where he ministers to -- among others -- the Quechua indigenous people. His love affair with the poor inspires him to request assignment to Dolores Mission, the poorest parish in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

When he wrote Tattoos on the Heart, Father Greg had buried 168 victims of gang violence, each death inspiring him to further action. He describes his early days working with the women of the parish to intervene in the cycle of carnage afflicting their neighborhoods. They advocate for job opportunities for their children, spurring the creation of Homeboy Industries, a training and outreach organization that has helped thousands of young people over nearly three decades.

Homeboy Industries provides an array of services and programs, ranging from job and parenting training and work placements to tattoo removal and substance abuse counseling. Perhaps the most important offering is a recognition that we are all created in the image and likeness of God and are worthy of love. This is what Father Greg refers to as “no matter whatness.”

This book tells stories of unspeakable suffering: children being told by their long-absent mothers that they are garbage (*basura*) or being subjected to physical abuse or neglect and the constant threat of street violence at the hands of rival gang members.

It also tells of hope, such as that displayed by the young man who -- despite a straight-F report card -- beams with pride at his perfect attendance record. Gang members are invited to visit the White House and find that their own stories are worth sharing with the world. Others go on to successful careers and families.

Pushing back against seemingly long odds, Father Greg and his team succeed in creating an environment where former enemies become friends and colleagues. This is truly a tale of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

Tattoos on the Heart gives witness to the power of faith to move the needle just a little bit in service to one another and the greater good.

Holy Rowers, Revisited?

By Charlotte Pierce

My good little boat Eos, aka *She Persisted*, was blessed by Rev. Diane and the parishioners at a beautiful ceremony in 2018. The good news is that *She Persisted* is back on the water, reconnecting me with nature and physical well-being. (I've included a couple of photos of me and my boat at the end of this article.) I wasn't on the water much in 2019, but I was pleased to loan my boat to Boston's Youth Rowing Programs then.

My rowing club, Community Rowing, will be restarting the novice adult recreational soon. (I will publish the restart date in the newsletter.) When we were in session, Rev. Diane joined in the action with us (see [album](#)). Anybody interested in rejoining or joining our St. John's Holy Rowers team should contact me; I'll be happy to set up a learn-to-row session. Camaraderie, making new friends, and improving health are just three of the fabulous benefits you'll get from this activity.

A special highlight that you'll get by being on the team is being on the Charles River. It's a treat! Its shoreline is beautiful. God has blessed it with a bounty of life. Wild flowers at the crack of dawn greeted me, juvenile herons did their first fishing around me, and a fish jumped right off the stern of my boat. You'll also get to enjoy night herons, swans, and oodles of geese on the Charles. No need to be down in spirit when spring and summer end. You'll see more of God's work when rowing the Charles during the fall; you'll get to enjoy a rainbow of vibrant colors from trees in the area. Come! Row with us!



Rowing Lesson on the Charles (above)

Charlotte in Her Boat Eos (below)



To broaden my contribution to teaching youth to know and appreciate the art of rowing, I have joined the Board of Directors for the Arlington-Belmont Crew. Its rising high school team will have learn-to-row sessions in late July. They will practice on Spy Pond, which many of you know, is just down the road from our church. For registration information, please visit the Arlington Community Education website: [**https://www.arlingtoncommunityed.org**](https://www.arlingtoncommunityed.org)

Don't hesitate to let me know your questions about youth or adult rowing. I'll be happy to answer them when you call me at 781-258-9608. Click open the link to see photos of some of the fun things that we do. [**Google Photos Album**](#)

St. John's Prayer Group

By Rev. Diane Wong

St. John's is going to be starting a prayer group in the coming months. The focus of the group will be for members of the group to commit to regular (ideally on a daily basis) prayer for those on our prayer list, special needs of others in our community and around the world, and the special needs and work of St. John's as a parish. The group will keep the concerns expressed in the group and requests from others confidential, so it is a safe environment for people to share their concerns or make special, personal requests. We invite you to consider joining the group. We would meet on a regular basis probably once or twice a month for fellowship and prayer, but most of the work of the group will focus on individuals committing to private devotion and meditation in prayer. We will be discussing this in the upcoming coffee hours and during announcements. Please feel free to ask Rev. Diane, Dorothy or David if you have any questions.

Want to Fight Hunger? **Be Part of the Food Link Team at the Ride For Food!**

Have a summer adventure OR train for a beautiful fall bike ride on behalf of [Food Link](#). It's all possible at the 2021 Ride For Food. You can do a ride or adventure on your own time, or join our traditional in-person charity bike ride event, which is back for 2021! Either way, you'll be part of the community fighting hunger in Massachusetts.

The in-person charity ride is on Sunday, October 3rd. It's in Dedham and you can choose 25 or 50 miles of gorgeous fall scenery.

Our team captain Karin will support your fundraising efforts, and has all sorts of adventure ideas if you take the "adventure on your own" option. Karin Turer can be reached at 617-599-8509 or karin@tugboat23.com

Please consider joining the team, sharing with friends, or making a donation here:
<https://ride.threesquaresne.org/foodlink2021>

Milestones

June Birthdays: Cate Barr, Charlotte Pierce, Andrea Nyamekye, Charles Nyamekye, Carol Hoover, Bob Goode, Dorothy Mallam

June Anniversaries: Don & Nanci Richardson, Peggy Jo & Don Webb

July Birthdays: Adam Pachter, Lucy Pachter, Vicki Ford, Don Richardson

August Birthdays: Aidan Wilcox, Gene Downing

August Anniversaries: Vicki & Larry Ford

**St. John's Episcopal Church
74 Pleasant Street
Arlington, MA 02476**

**Rev. Diane Wong's office hours: Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. John's.
Please feel free to arrange with Rev. Diane for other times to meet.
Her cell phone number is 617-417-8102. Her email is dianeckwong@gmail.com.**

**Church Office hours for Summer 2021: M, W, Th 10-1 :30
Church Office phone: 781-648-4819**