

NETWORK NEWS

ST. ANDREW'S January—February 2021

Jay's Say:

How urgently our tired world yearns for the joy that is birthed in the manger.

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Pondering for the first time how to celebrate the winter solstice in worship, I began to see the natural connections to Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. It's the day when the womb of darkness has expanded as large as possible. In that deep darkness, the divine light sparks and flames forth in the birth of the Christ Child – and in us.

Saint John of the Cross is associated with "the dark night of the soul," but his final work is called *The Living Flame of Love*. John is not easy to read as he travels from the darkness of the world through the deep mystery of God to that dawn whose light only comes after the inkiest night.

Having concentrated on his prose, this beautiful poem came as a revelation when a friend texted it to me a couple of days ago. As 2020 comes to a close and we approach the Epiphany, "If You Want" prompts us to ponder how each of us is called to be God's midwife of light.

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road
 pregnant with the holy, and say,
 "I need shelter for the night,
 please take me inside your heart, my time is so close."
 Then, under the roof of your soul,
 you will witness the sublime intimacy,
 the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,
 as she grasps your hand for help,
 for each of us is the midwife of God, each of us.
 Yes there, under the dome of your being
 does creation come into existence eternally,
 through your womb, dear pilgrim – the sacred womb of your soul,
 as God grasps our arms for help:
 for each of us is his beloved servant, never far.
 If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the street
 pregnant with Light and sing.

May God come under your roof, and may Christ – the prince of joy and peace – be birthed in our world in this New Year.



Parish Updates

Birth

6 November

Kendal Austin Brown

(to Emilie & Austin Brown)



Jenna Wheeler	4	Evelyn Douty	2
James Wassell	7	Candie Reynolds	3
Deborah Lambert	8	George Jamieson	6
Loa Winter	8	Natalie Davis	8
Linda Miller	10	Bill Helm	10
John Jevne	12	Bill Sloan	11
Peter Machen	12	Sondra VanderPloeg	12
Barbara Smith	12	Judy Wallace	14
David Marshall	16	Gardner Yenawine	18
Nancy Rollins	16	Cynthia Canaday	19
Tina Colehower	23	Bruce Avery	20
Diane Caldwell	25	Lou Sawyer	20
Linda Barnes	26	Terry Smith	27
Kathryn MacLeod	26		
Natalie Stark	28		
Kent Woodger	28		
Jeanie Plant	30		



St. Andrew's Christmas Storywalk begins at this sign, above, through 6 January. The prayer tree, right, is a stop along the storywalk. Read more about it on the next page and see additional photos on following pages.



The Outreach Commission currently meets via Zoom to receive and consider suggestions for our *Last Sunday* offering. We have agreed that our efforts should be focused on humanitarian needs, both domestic and international; and we welcome suggestions from parishioners. At our meetings we discuss potential recipients and decide who among us will do the required research and the writing.

Committee members are Elizabeth Lowell, Becky Rylander, Greg Vogt, Janet Heyl, Christine Kellett and Karen Zurheide. Their contact information is in the 2018 St. Andrew's Parish Directory.

Please see pp. 6-7 for *Last Sunday* offerings for January and February.



Engaging Families at St. Andrew's —Aaron Jenkyn—

As the holidays drew closer and it became painfully clear that we would not be able to gather for Christmas services, we began thinking about how we could offer a glimpse of the Christmas story to our friends and family, neighbors and strangers, who join us for Christmas services each year. What emerged was an interactive story walk, free and open to the public, offering a time of prayer, and reflection, story sharing and time outdoors, to all who participated. A Christmas gift from our church to the community.

Storywalks are an innovative way for children (and adults) to enjoy reading and the outdoors. Storywalks began as one small-town librarian's dream to share her love of books and the outdoors with the community, and her tiny idea grew into what is today thousands of storywalks found at libraries, schools, public trail systems (and now churches) across the country. St. Andrew's and Epiphany's storywalk was designed to tell the nativity story, but the storywalk itself, the boards and posts, can be repurposed to share other stories throughout the church seasons.

During this time of pandemic, when we are not able to invite the community into our church, the storywalk is a way for us to share our stories and message of God's life-giving, liberating love with our friends, family and neighbors. Imagine in the months ahead, sharing a message of reconciliation and inclusion through stories like Desmond Tutu's *God's Dream*. Or inviting our congregation and neighbors to ponder where God lives or what God is like through Jennifer Grant's *Maybe God Is Like That Too*. We could share the stories of the saints of our faith through Daneen Akers' *Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints* or the poetry of Wendell Berry or Mary Oliver as a walk through the Lenten season. The possibilities are endless, and the community so desperately needs these stories and moments of hope during this time.

Our current storywalk, which invites you to experience the wonder of Christmas in Newport and New London by walking with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the angels and Magi on their way to Bethlehem, remains in place through Epiphany, 6 January, for you to visit at your convenience. Dozens of local families have participated and I even heard from a church in Manchester that organized a field trip for their families to visit Epiphany's story walk. Perhaps they will take with them the seeds of community and story sharing to be scattered in their own back yards.

Check your parish email for announcements about future storywalks, and let Aaron know if you feel called to participate in this exciting community ministry.



A Warden's Words:

First, please bear with me as I make a couple of personal comments. As we have all heard many times (probably too many) 2020 has been a year that all of us will be glad to see end. My feelings exactly as I near the end of my four years as one of your two Wardens. This has been a fascinating trip with much learned and, hopefully, as much given to the Episcopal Church of Saint Andrew. As many of you are aware, at Thanksgiving 2019, I was found to have lymphoma cancer. Since then, it has been three rounds of various chemotherapy, with round four started on Monday, 28 December. This one involves three consecutive days of chemo followed by a three-week respite and then a new round of three sessions. It is impossible for me to imagine going through this process without your love, prayers and support. Thank you.

The second personal comment regards a personal vow I made when I first became Warden – to never waste your time with any personal observations or comments. I tried to keep this commitment but feel the need now to break it. As said earlier, 2020 has been a challenge for all of us – from the pandemic to the politics back to the pandemic and then back to politics. One of the hardest challenges for the Averys to accept was the inability to attend church services at Saint Andrew's with our friends in Christ. With the ups and downs of cancer treatments, this could have been devastating for both Shirley and me.

Shortly after the pandemic forced stoppage of all indoor church services, we all found how truly blessed we are to have our Christian lives led by the team of Jay, Aaron and Jack. Quickly accepting the challenge, they found the way to broadcast live services from the lawns of Saint Andrew's. This was augmented by twice-monthly services available on YouTube based on regular Episcopal liturgy, and more recently the most unique and rewarding InSpirit services that combine bible readings, sermons and various prayers delivered to your home accompanied by beautiful music and supporting visuals. These services are followed by Zoom coffee hour with opportunities to have real-time discussions with parishioners. Whenever Shirley and I have received comments from family and friends about the difficulties that 2020 has brought, we quickly share one of the links to our services. In each case, the reaction has been revealing – “Why can't my church do this?” to “You have given me the only way to build on my life with Jesus Christ.”

Our leadership team has created and delivered the best of Saint Andrew's into our houses to watch and participate in when we choose. What a blessing! These services started out to be outstanding and have improved each week even with obstacles of replacing older technology with new and learning the very labor-intensive process.

This leads me to Stewardship. I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to speed on our 2021 campaign which started with Jay's letter sent to 198 parish households. With a goal of \$400,000, to date we have received pledges in the amount of \$406,365 from 54.7% of 145 respondents increasing their 2020 pledge and 40.9% matching their 2020 pledge. We have not yet heard from 53 of our households including 16 who pledged in 2020. While we can accept your pledge at anytime during the year, we obviously would prefer to start the year with the most possible clear picture of our financial position. If you have not made your pledge decision for 2021 please help now.

Thank you for bearing with me on this and for trusting me with being one of your two Wardens for the last four years.

God Bless! – *Bruce Avery*

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Editor's Note: Although no one could say that Jack Barben is actually resting this week between Christmas and the New Year, he has been given a slight respite . . . Instead of asking him to write something, I have selected these screen shots from our Christmas Eve InSpirit worship service on YouTube, that Jack produced, to speak for him and to speak of the invaluable contribution he makes to our liturgy week after week. Thank you, Jack!



Last Sunday Looks Ahead— 31 January *The Friendly Kitchen*

Our **January Outreach recipient** will be The Friendly Kitchen “down the road” in Concord. This is the only soup kitchen in our capital city, and it has just one simple purpose: to feed the hungry. Their website notes, “Eating is not a privilege. It’s a human right.”

The Friendly Kitchen is managed by a small staff that supervises volunteer groups who prepare and serve meals. Parishioners of St. Andrew's have been volunteering there for one dinnertime every other month since 2005.

At this time of year, The Friendly Kitchen serves three meals a day Monday through Friday and two meals a day on weekends. On average, they provide 90 meals each day, available to any and all who show up. Numbers for breakfast and lunch are increasing weekly.

Due to Covid-19, beginning in March 2020, changes have been made to the traditional meal service. Plexiglas and propane heaters have been recently installed on the porch to provide shelter and warmth during meals. Client entrance to the facility is prohibited, and to-go meals are served in take-out containers. The additional cost of those improvements and containers, not in the organization’s budget, have presented a financial strain. Single serving condiments and disposable utensils are further new pandemic costs. Our giving will help offset these and other expenses.

Visit thefriendlykitchen.org to learn more. And please plan to support this vital community resource as our *Last Sunday* offering on 31 January.



2008



2019

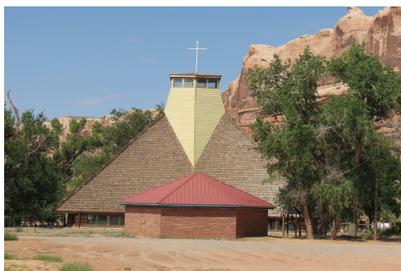
Last Sunday Looks Ahead – 28 February *Navajoland*

The Episcopal Church in Navajoland is our **February Outreach Offering recipient**. The Outreach Commission members have selected Navajoland again because the situation on the Reservation continues to be urgent. You have probably been seeing media reports on a fairly regular basis. Whether experiencing an extension of the first wave of COVID-19 or the arrival of a second, the Diné are once again in almost continual lockdown. It is our indigenous clergy who are regularly braving the virus to deliver food, water and hygiene products far across the 27,000 square mile tri-state area. In a peculiar twist of fate, COVID-19 has turned their dedicated ministry into a form of evangelism, as grateful recipients ask about The Episcopal Church and why it is caring for so many "non-members." Bishop Dave Bailey jokes that the clergy will need re-training to conduct in-person worship when the pandemic is over!

The hard reality is no laughing matter, however. As we shelter in our homes here in New Hampshire, most of us have heat, light and clean water. We can turn up the thermostat on bitter cold days and wash our hands frequently. Those are options not open to many Navajo.

The President of the Navajo Nation had hoped to use half of the money allotted under the CARES Act to help fund water infrastructure, but Congress decreed that all funds had to be spent by 31 December 2020. Infrastructure isn't built that fast. And, furthermore, the Navajo had to go to court to get their portion of the funds released.

The in-person visits which St. Andrew's had hoped - and planned - to make to Navajoland have yet to happen. But, the in-person communication continues, by email, telephone and Zoom calls. We learn, first hand, of their challenges, and we are in each other's' daily prayers. A very tangible prayer is financial support of the 28 February *Last Sunday Outreach Offering*, again anonymously matched, to assist our Navajo brothers and sisters. Please respond prayerfully and generously.



Faith and Issues

The Faith and Issues group resumes meeting on 9 January after a holiday break. The group meets Saturdays from 9:00-10:30 AM, currently via Zoom.

We will begin by discussing Jay's St. Andrew's Day sermon in the light of the liturgy for that day. In his 22 November sermon Jay's emphasis was on the meaning in Jesus' invitation to "Come, follow me." A link to the service can be found on the church website under **Worship, weekend worship**. The readings for that day were Psalm 19 (19:1-6); Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:8b-18; and Matthew 4:18-22.

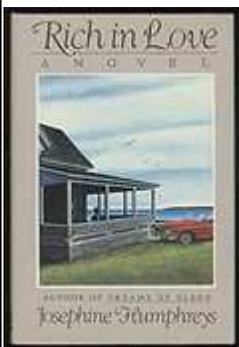
On 16 January we will begin our next Faith based book, *The Great Emergence - How Christianity Is Changing and Why* by Phyllis Tickle. Chapter assignments can be found on the church website under the **Learn** tab.

Over the course of a year we read approximately a book a month alternating Faith based and Issue based books. Often, these themes inform each other. Our discussions range widely and are always engaging. Newcomers are always welcome, so feel free to join us if something piques your interest. Please contact Katrina Wagner if you have questions, suggestions or wish to be added to our mailing list. - *Katrina Wagner*



A station on the story walk at Epiphany, Newport, where visitors are invited to place prayers on the tree.

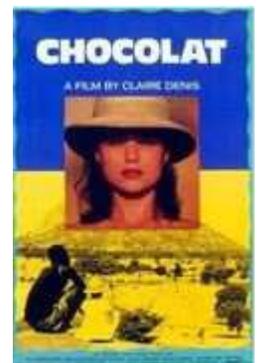
Reel and Novel Theology



We will discuss the novel *Rich in Love* by Josephine Humphreys on 13 January at 7 PM via Zoom.

The film *Chocolat* (no, not the one with Judi Dench) is the topic for our "reel theology" discussion on 10 February at 7 PM via Zoom.

Be on the lookout for an email reminder with the Zoom link after you have read the book or watched the film.



Please keep in mind that the titles we choose – book or film – are meant to shape our understanding of ideas like love, compassion, forgiveness, redemption; in other words, those markers we encounter in following Christ.

Calendar of Events

January

- 3 (Sunday)** – St. Andrew's Epiphany Pageant, pre-recorded virtual worship, 9 AM and on demand
- 6 (Wednesday)** – The Epiphany, last day to enjoy the Christmas Storywalk in New London and Newport
- 9 (Saturday)** – Faith and Issues resumes on Zoom, 9 AM (*see p. 8*)
- 13 (Wednesday)** – Novel Theology, 7 PM (*see p. 8*)
- 19 (Tuesday)** – Kathleen Rusnak lectures on "The Kingdom Within," on Zoom, 10:30 AM; 2021 budget review via Zoom, 5 PM
- 22 (Friday)** – Friendly Kitchen (*below*)
- 31 (Sunday)** – Last Sunday, benefits The Friendly Kitchen (*see p. 6*); Annual Meeting on Zoom, 10:30 AM



February:

- 10 (Wednesday)** – Reel Theology, 7 PM (*see p. 8*)
- 28 (Sunday)** – Last Sunday, benefits Navajoland (*see p. 7*)

*Rotation of our own pre-recorded services with in-person worship when feasible, and with alternate sites, continues. Please look for parish emails to inform you of links to your **worship options** each week.*

*Please also look for additional information about our upcoming **2021 budget review 19 January** followed by our **Annual Meeting on 31 January**. Please join us on Zoom for these important sessions.*



Our next visit to **Friendly Kitchen** will be Friday, 22 January. Details of how you can help will be forthcoming. Beyond helping on this one day, your response to the Outreach Commission's Last Sunday appeal this month (*see p. 6*) will be invaluable. – *Judy Ackroyd*



**Help Re-Stock the KLS
Community Food Pantry**

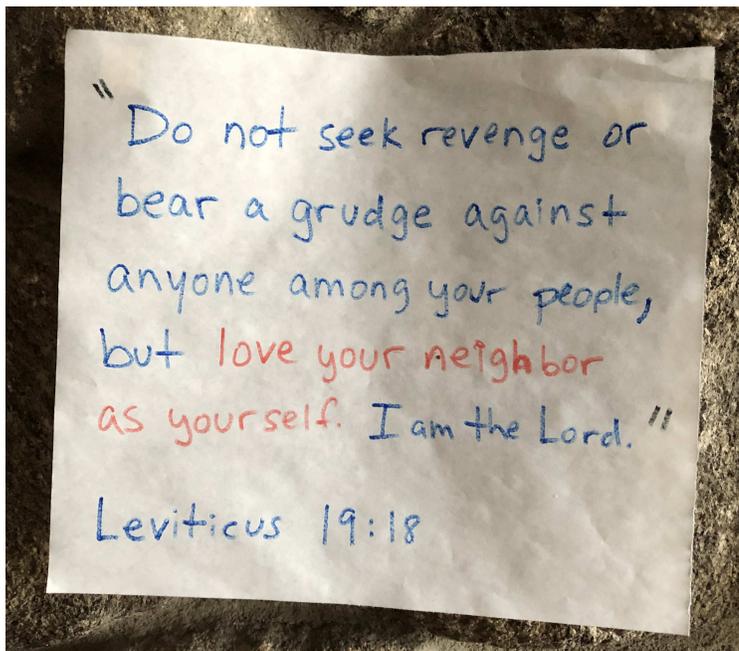
January: Canned fruit

February: Large juice (especially low sugar & 100% juice)

Paper towels, toilet paper, coffee (regular, decaf and instant), peanut butter and jelly, cake and brownie mixes and monetary donations are always welcome.

High School Youth Group Happenings

Though we haven't been able to meet together in our favorite hang out (the Cave) for quite a while, we have been able to find ways to stay connected in a safe manner both virtually and in person. Our focus this fall has largely been on finding ways to reach out to the larger community on issues that are near and dear to our hearts. In November, we added hand-made notes and cards to the gift cards sent to local families as part of the annual Thanksgiving Basket program. We also got together to create posters, which were hung in the church entryway, in the hopes of offering a message of unity and Christian Love to those who chose to come pray during this challenging election season.



Our current project, with lots of help from Crafty Critters and the whole congregation, is the creation of a Covid-19 Prayer Flag to honor the over 600 NH residents who have died in the pandemic to date. It is our deepest hope that this memorial flag can not only honor those who have died, but also be a beacon of hope and a symbol of compassion to be shared with the wider community. Please reach out to Lisa Kelly if you are interested in joining in this on-going project.



Who is God?

Written for his grandchildren this year, Leslie Smith also shares with us this insightful and profound definition – in non-church language – of God.

God is a blend of a few or all of these realities:

God is Water	– enlivens all, shapes all	God is Mystery	– asks all questions
God is Light	– empowers, enlightens	God is Love	– develops all true relations
God is Gravity	– centers all	God is Communication	– unites, links
God is Evolution	– develops all life	God is Community	– sets a place for all

– Leslie C. Smith, 2020

Art Committee Update

At its December meeting on Zoom the Art Committee continued discussing possible art work for upstairs bathroom walls and concluded that a “Tree of Life” would be appropriate for one space. Alison Vernon volunteered to render a painting on canvas, an offer we gratefully accepted. It remains for the committee to determine which of many stylized versions of a Tree of Life we will ask her to reproduce. We expect to make a final determination at our January meeting, along with finalizing choices for a second space, with a simple Picasso print among the favored suggestions.

Although we are not currently using the church building our attention is moving from the hallways and parish hall into the sanctuary. We are a group with sometimes disparate notions about keeping, moving and/or removing various displayed items which engenders energetic discussion as we strive to enhance our worship space. Recognizing that the sanctuary as worship space is Jay’s province, we look forward to his participation in our January meeting. Where he has already indicated that we should be bold in our decisions, we welcome his guidance and input in order to move the discussion forward.

We also welcome *your* input. With only 15 responses from parishioners (including several from committee members) to an emailed art committee questionnaire earlier this fall, we welcome additional comments and concerns about art works you like or don’t like, do or don’t want changed, throughout the church building. – Alice Perry

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