

THE CALL

ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

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FALL 2021

Homecoming



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

I AM VERY MUCH looking forward to our 10am service on Homecoming Sunday, September 12. It will be our first 10am in-person service in our sanctuary since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. It will also be our first 10am service in our newly renovated sanctuary. On Sunday, September 19, we will give thanks to parishioner Jim Blackwell who oversaw the renovation of our church home, and after the service, we will have our parish picnic on the front lawn of Luisa Hunnewell's home.

During my sabbatical, the idea of the "spiritual home" has been one of the unifying themes of all the reading and reflection I have undertaken. I have reflected on the state of my own soul and have undertaken some "spring cleaning" to make sure it can be a welcoming home to Christ. I am conscious that Christ is always knocking on the door of our souls to be let in, as illustrated in Holman Hunt's famous painting. I have also been thinking of how we can continue to make sure St. Andrew's is a spiritual

home where all are welcome and can encounter God's love in the midst of our challenging world.

The idea of "home" is so emotionally powerful. Over the summer I was reminded of this by the visits I made to see my parents at their home in Southport, Connecticut. Although I have never actually lived in the house my parents now reside in, I immediately felt "at home" when I visited them. I felt at peace and that sense of just being loved for who I am. This is what being "at home" means. For Christians, this is what being "at home" with God means—being at peace and being loved just for who you are without judgment. I believe all people have a deep longing to be "at home." And our church home at St. Andrew's is the place where we seek to make this a concrete reality in our world. A place where all are welcome and can experience being "at home" with Christ. And this takes work and attention, just like being a good host in our own homes involves the same.

During the darkest days of the pandemic, I am aware of how important being part of the St. Andrew's church home was to me. It helped remind me that God was with us and that although we were physically isolated from each other, I was part of a loving and caring community. Recently my sister-in-law reminded me of how the St. Andrew's community was important to people during the pandemic, not just in Wellesley but also further afield. She told me about how the St. Andrew's and St. Michael's online services had been an absolute lifeline to a mutual friend of ours who lived

with her family out in the Vermont woods near Brattleboro, Vermont.

But somewhat paradoxically, as we look forward to returning to a life made more "normal" by our vaccines, I'm conscious of how even more important, being part of a spiritual community, will be to our lives. It has often been remarked on that during times of crisis and challenge, such as the pandemic, people become more spiritually focused and clear about what is truly important in life—namely love. It is when things are "back to normal" and going smoothly, that we lose our spiritual focus and our lives get carried off by busy-ness and trivia. Our regular involvement in our church life helps keep our spiritual focus.

Experiencing that sense of "being at home" with Christ helps keep in front of us what is truly important in living a life of meaning. I was recently reminded when I was reading Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, the experience of being fully loved by God seems to dispose us almost instinctively to want to share that love with others. And Christ tells us that we are called both to be loved by God, but also to share that love with others. My prayer for St. Andrew's is that it can be a home where we experience that deep love God has for us and then we are challenged to consider how we can bring that sense of "being at home" with all that this implies, into our wider world.

Yours in Christ,

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Warden's Message

Joyful and Hopeful Themes



Paige Manning, warden

REOPENING! REUNIONS! Re-normal! New normal! These joyful and hopeful themes guide our thoughts and prayers, as St. Andrew's steadily and cautiously moves back to in-person and indoor services and gatherings for fall 2021. Steady declines in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Massachusetts are welcome news here, allowing state and local authorities to relax many of the restrictions that we have endured for almost a year and a half to diminish the grip of the pandemic. Sadly, the pandemic isn't receding as quickly in all parts of the nation, or in all parts of the world, and we still face some uncertainty going forward in terms of resurgences and the possibility of further restrictions.

For now, we can rejoice in our progress and in our ability to gather together, in person, face to face, for worship, and for fellowship. Life is always uncertain, and we should take full advantage of these opportunities to celebrate, to rejoice, and to worship our times together. As impressive as Zoom and FaceTime may be, they are no substitutes for getting together with each other in person, sharing stories, laughter, and love with fellow parishioners.

As you return to in-person visits to St. Andrew's, walking through

the narthex and the sanctuary, take note of the many updates and improvements to the physical building and décor that were accomplished during the closure period. Also, make a special visit to find and enter the intimate and lovely Children's Chapel, which underwent major renovations as part of our recent capital campaign. It's not only for our children—we also use it frequently for smaller worship gatherings and meditative services. As I predicted in my spring letter, these "buds" have now blossomed into beautiful flowers for all to enjoy!

My family has been lucky to survive the pandemic without illness, or major disruptions to our lives beyond remote work and school from home, closed restaurants, and diminished travel options. But we know that not all have been as fortunate, and it is important to realize that we are all changed by the pandemic—and that some families in our parish, and in our communities, have had major challenges to cope with during this period, from illnesses and deaths to serious work or school disruptions, and economic hardships. As we regather and catch up, we should be sensitive to those around us who may be grieving, suffering, or dealing with other hardships. As Christians, it is up to us all to provide love and support to our friends and neighbors who need it.

On behalf of the entire parish community, I send hearty congratulations to Mia and Aaron on the birth of their first child, August Cyrus Kano! I also send grateful thanks to Margaret for ably leading the parish during Adrian's sabbatical and Mia's maternity leave. And, of course, welcome back, Adrian! I look forward to seeing you all again soon, in person, face to face, at St. Andrew's.



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PARISH OFFICE: 79 Denton Road,
Wellesley, MA 02482-6404
781.235.7310 | FAX: 781.235.0067
standrewswellesley.org

PUBLISHER: Dan Dent
EDITOR: Katharine Clark,
Parish Administrator
kate@standrewswellesley.org

Knowing the Place for the First Time



The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

—T.S. Eliot, from *Four Quartets: Little Gidding*.

EARLIER IN THE SUMMER, my seventeen-year-old son Ben and I took a long weekend trip outside of Massachusetts. We were away for a little over three days, and when we drove back from the airport towards home, everything we saw had a certain surreal quality to it. The Charles had its sailboats, Kenmore Square had its Citgo sign, the brownstones we passed were beautiful, and just where they were supposed to be, but everything looked a bit unfamiliar. The aesthetics of the objects we saw were sharper than usual and gave us the opportunity to appreciate them in a fresh way.

The brilliant poet (and Anglican) T.S. Eliot wrote about this new appreciation for well-known places when he penned, “the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” That poetic line from Eliot’s *Four Quartets: Little Gidding* describes what I hope we will discover when our community life returns to St. Andrew’s in a three-dimensional, in-person way this fall.

Of course, I’m excited to experience the results of our capital campaign—including a new ushers’ and greeters’ area, a new narthex, and a revitalized Children’s Chapel. I’m looking forward to offering new classes in our adult formation program: the new classes of our 9am Christian Learning, Faith & Practice, and Bible Circle classes, and the new programming Adrian will invite us to engage when he returns from his sabbatical. I’m also looking forward to experiencing the new programming Mia and our church school committee will be offering our children and young adults.

All these experiences will be satisfying. But most of all, I’m looking forward to experiencing what we expect to experience in our “normal” life together as a Christian community with new (grateful) eyes. I can’t wait for coffee hour. I’m looking forward to the casual chats in the office hallway with members of our altar guild, lay Eucharist ministers, and choir just before our service begins. I’m looking forward to teaching in Room 2 downstairs, reflecting upon our faith and our spiritual lives together. I want to help a child find their classroom, chat with volunteers in our volunteer room during the week, meet with our vestry in the Harvey Room (not just on Zoom!). I want to watch Adrian lift the host above the chalice as he blesses Communion wafers and wine, knowing that all of us will be sharing that sacred meal together.

I learned last week that what I’m longing to experience is called “collective effervescence,” a concept first coined by sociologist David Émile Durkheim in the 20th century to describe the sense

of harmony and energy people feel when they come together as a group for a shared purpose. It is a contentment and *joie de vivre* that spreads throughout a group of people during shared activities and meaningful gatherings.

We find it everywhere at St. Andrew’s; it is embedded in our worship, our fellowship, and our service work. Collective effervescence comes to us when we are singing in or listening to our choirs, or running the Turkey Trot together, or going to *common cathedral* to share a meal with homeless people on the Boston Common. We find it when we are teaching church school, or gathering for coffee hour, meeting for a Coventry Supper, or working together to create a beautiful and solemn altar just before the Sunday service begins. Preparing for our child-led Christmas pageant is full of collective effervescence, as is our shared experience of Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter.

In sum, I’m looking forward to experiencing the essence of “being church” together and sharing the love of Christ with one another. I’m looking forward to returning to the interdependent community life of our thriving parish while we are recognizing its value and participating in it fully—knowing its many blessings “for the first time.”



The new narthax entrance to the church sanctuary

Joanne Butler

Following Our Vocations



The Rev. Maria (Mia) Kano

“When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up.” —C.S. Lewis

BACK IN APRIL, Ezra Klein sat down for a fascinating interview with professor of psychology Alison Gopnik on his podcast, *The Ezra Klein Show*. In the episode, the two discussed the intriguing difference between children’s minds and adult minds, particularly as they relate to attention and spirituality. Gopnik noted that we invest a lot of time and effort into training children to think like adults. We emphasize spiritual practices such as mantra-guided meditation that strengthen our capacity for filtering out distraction.

We value sermons and writings that challenge our intellect and grow our knowledge base.

But Gopnik also wants listeners to consider the special abilities of children’s minds—and what we lose by not valuing them. Go on a walk with a child, Gopnik urged, and you’ll notice that they absorb and are attuned to the whole of the scene through every one of their senses. A small child will notice and be excited by the small sights, sounds, and smells that pass by an adult’s singular attention. Children, Gopnik says, are particularly good at the spiritual gifts of wonder and awe. Their minds are designed to learn creatively, unhindered by memorized procedures and practices. We have much to learn from how they relate to creation—and to God!

This idea isn’t new, of course. Matthew records in his Gospel that the disciples once asked Jesus, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” In response, Jesus called a little child to him and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:1-4). When the disciples worried that the little children would distract from their teacher’s weighty and important matters, Jesus again called the children to him, saying “For it is such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs” (Matthew 19:13-15). Jesus continually instructs us to learn from the spiritual wisdom of children.

This fall, St. Andrew’s youngest will be diving into a new curriculum called *Godly Play*®. Inspired by Montessori

principles, Dr. Jerome Berryman designed *Godly Play* to celebrate children’s God-given capacity for wonder. Rather than instructing the children, the adults in a *Godly Play* story room are invited to come alongside the children in their wondering and to treat it as sacred.

Godly Play reminds us that children already have a relationship with their Creator. Our role is simply to introduce children to the Christian language system through which they can begin to express their feelings and thoughts about God. We, in turn, delight in what their imagination and creativity have to offer our adult faith lives.

Susan Jackson has devoted much of her summer to setting up St. Andrew’s new *Godly Play* story and response rooms! Our story room is equipped with special materials that enable children and adults to tell the sacred stories of God to each other. After listening to a story each week, children engage in self-directed “work” time where they respond to the story through their choice of play materials, crafts, or reflection. It’s amazing to see what faith themes and religious ideas children are capable of exploring without specific adult direction! I have especially loved watching elementary school children retell a Bible story with a twist—usually something that incorporates something from their own lives and experiences.

Both of my clergy colleagues and I have all had the pleasure of teaching *Godly Play* at other parishes. In fact, it’s one of the most popular and well-loved Sunday school curricula in our and many other Dioceses. All three of us are excited for St. Andrew’s to experience what *Godly Play* can bring to all the generations of our faith community. I’m grateful to the church school committee for wholeheartedly supporting this transformative step for our church school!



Rev. Maggie Arnold tells the Exodus story to a *Godly Play*® circle.

Mia Kano

Parishioner Reflections

THIS FALL, AS OUR PARISH FAMILY RETURNS to a church building that's brighter following our renovations, many of us will also be in a new place spiritually in the wake of

a year like no other. It's time to share those stories. Following are reflections from fellow parishioners on the theme of return and renewal.

Katherine Barrack



Never ending gratitude. . . I am so thankful to be even thinking of being back in church to worship with the St. Andrew's community. Just to know that we will once again be together in person gives me hope and fills me with gratitude.

Ansley Martin



Our faith is tested constantly; for me even more so during the past year and a half. The pandemic not only overturned the rhythm and cadence of our everyday lives, but it instilled fear and it fostered isolation. The social and political unrest in our

country has and continues to be magnified and amplified to a point where everyone is shouting and no one is listening. I often asked, "Where has the love gone?"

As Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is..."

These tumultuous times have pushed me to dig deeper into my faith and to "imagine" more fully. It has afforded me new lenses to see and focus on God's will and love in action, in reality, at each and every moment of the day; and how I can intentionally contribute to that spiritual force. But I rather not do it alone. Soon I will not have to.

Jessie Sawyer



I am extremely thankful to have grown up at St. Andrew's and to have been involved in all of the different programs. From church school to high school youth group, I have made some of my favorite memories and best friends. Youth group was

always a great way to end the week in high school, sharing our highs and lows, and playing games. Bargain Haul was one of my favorite parts of the church year because I loved looking through (and of



Peter B. Lull

course purchasing) all of the cool and interesting things that belonged to other parishioners. And, Virtual Parish Night Kahoot! was an absolute blast this year. I am looking forward to spending time again in the parish hall enjoying sandwiches, pigs in a blanket, and frozen margaritas.

Why worry about the loaves and fishes?
If you say the right words, the wine expands.
If you say them with love
and the felt ferocity of that love
and the felt necessity of that love,
the fish explode into many.
Imagine him, speaking,
and don't worry about what is reality,
or what is plain, or what is mysterious.
If you were there, it was all those things.
If you can imagine it, it is all those things.
Eat, drink, be happy.
Accept the miracle.
Accept, too, each spoken word
spoken with love.

—Mary Oliver, "Logos" from *Devotions*

continued on the next page

Heidi Harper



*I think I can. I think I can. I think I can. . . Do you remember the children's book *The Little Engine That Could?* It's the story of a rather small engine*

that is given a big task, a task that seems insurmountable. The little engine is small, but she has a big heart and is willing to try to help when other engines couldn't be bothered. The little engine agrees to attempt the passage over the mountain, even though she isn't sure she can accomplish the task. The dolls and toys cheer her on as she chugs up the steep mountain, saying "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can." She was most certainly on a mission. A mission that isn't so different from the seemingly insurmountable task of everyday life during this COVID-19 pandemic.

With almost every aspect of my life affected by this pandemic,

it has been easy to become discouraged. What has amazed me though, over these past 15 months, are the various creative ways our church community has found to live our faith, despite the many obstacles in the way: the hard work our clergy and staff went through in order to adapt the services to social media platforms; the many and varied ways our community reached out to one another, from fellowship walks to outreach food donations to outdoor services. This past year has made clear the universal mission of the church to me. She is to persevere through hardships. She is to lift up one another and keep us going. She is to continue God's mission on earth, no matter the obstacles.

"I think I can. I think I can" . . . and she did.



Adapted: Prayitno, Creative Commons 2.0

Cam McCormick



Turning couldn't into could. . . The shock of our sudden shutdown in March 2020—church, school, work—was a physical as well as spiritual surprise. How would my day look? What was safe or unsafe? How would my church community be different? It didn't take long for the strong relationships that have been forged at St. Andrew's to help me

out, and to start to "do church" differently.

I **couldn't** see my trusted friends at our church building, but I **could** walk outdoors (with a mask), and a lovely routine developed of near-daily excursions with fellow parishioners and their dogs. These outings provided wonderful camaraderie, shared worries, and information as well as exercise.

We **couldn't** have direct contact with our outreach partners, but we **could** pivot to new methods. We

responded enthusiastically to our long-time partner at St. Stephen's when they requested bags of groceries for their families who were experiencing unemployment. Every Tuesday, parishioners streamed to Heidi Harper's home to deliver cans, boxes, and bags.

I **couldn't** catch up with acquaintances at coffee hour, but I **could** attend a Zoom version. Adrian invited each attendee to share, in turn, and I was surprised to find I learned more about different parishioners.

I **couldn't** attend church and soak up the beautiful music and familiar worship routine, but I **could** watch it online, and even participate as a reader myself.

As our community returns to in-person gatherings—for worship, for fellowship, for outreach and so much more—I know the strength we developed in finding new ways to "do church" will deepen our faith and our joy.



Courtesy Cam McCormick

Betsy Millane



Coffee hour. . . Like a reconstituted orchestra, it begins with a few notes, clatter. A few people slip away from the

church service, head downstairs to the kitchen, and set up the coffee, the tea, the sugar, the cream, the cups, the saucers. We catch up, we exclaim over the food offerings, we smile, and listen to the murmur of the service upstairs.

The food comes to the tables in coffee cakes, fruit, cookies, crackers. Abundance waits for everyone.

The congregation filters in. All of the sudden the room is chirping with voices. The notes head to the ceiling, swooping down, then soaring.

Here's Donna from outreach, sipping a cup of coffee, talking with someone about the latest knitting needs.

Here's Al, energized by singing in the choir, buoyed by seeing people, dispensing hugs, radiating his relish of life.

Here's Mary, looking you in the eye, laughing her quick laugh, finding that spark we all have, connecting with you in ways you didn't know you had in you.

Here's Ansley, his family swirling around him, talking about his work teaching the children growing up within St. Andrew's.

Here's Adrian, in his element, among the congregation, a ready smile, listening after his hour of talking.

Here's Mia still bubbling from her last laugh, ready for another.

Here's Margaret, surveying her flock, assessing who needs her focus, a kind word, an invitation.

Here's Wardie, moving through the crowd for a cookie, the music still vibrating in her.

The children swirl through, helping themselves to cookies and cake, turning to talk to friends, to stand by their parents with their sweets, accepted into any conversation.

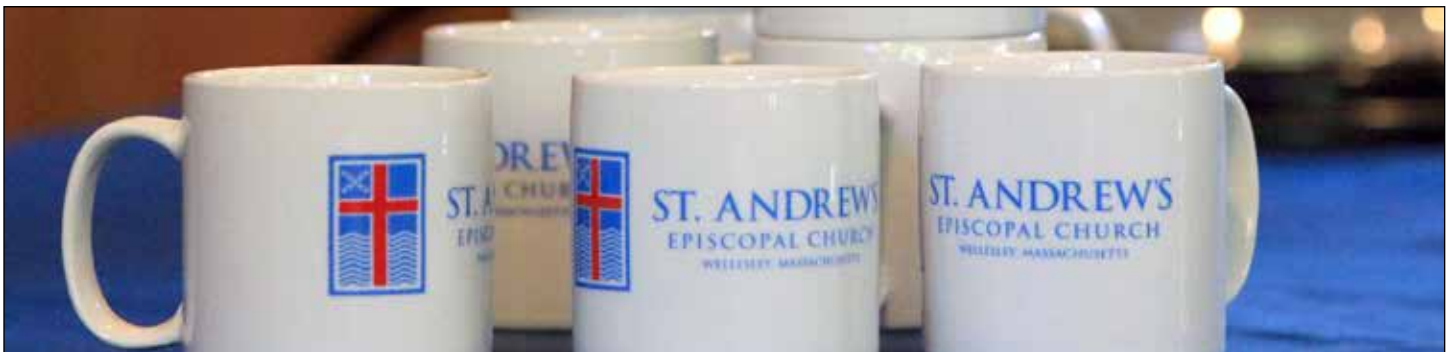
And then, the end. The clearing of the coffee and dishes begins. Zebby commandeers the sink,



Sandra Rigney

Lynda Sperry; the dishwasher. The clatter of hot dishes, the drying, the wiping and stacking of serving utensils so they are ready to go for the next time. It ends abruptly as we leave, one after the other.

We are here, and all are welcome.



Peter B. Lull

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Officers, and Staff

Warden Paige Manning wardens@standrewswellesley.org

Warden Will Nystrom wardens@standrewswellesley.org

Treasurer Harry Condon treas@standrewswellesley.org

Clerk Joanna Horobin clerk@standrewswellesley.org

Rector Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole adrian@standrewswellesley.org

Associate Rector for Adult Formation and Membership

Rev. Margaret Schwarzer margaret@standrewswellesley.org

Assistant Rector for Youth and Family

Rev. Maria (Mia) Kano mia@standrewswellesley.org

Pastoral Associate Rev. Karen Vickers Budney revkar7@comcast.net

P parish Administrator Katharine Clark kate@standrewswellesley.org

Music Minister Helen Ward Mannix wardie@standrewswellesley.org

Financial Administrator Joanne Butler joanne@standrewswellesley.org

Christian Learning Coordinator

Susan Jackson susan@standrewswellesley.org

Director of Youth Choirs Amanda Kern amanda@standrewswellesley.org

Sexton Stephen F. Killeen steve@standrewswellesley.org

Assistant Sextons William Clover and Matthew Killeen



ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

79 DENTON ROAD
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 02482

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