



THE CALL

ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

NO. 394
SPRING 2022

Renewal



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

THE THEME OF THIS EDITION of the Call is “renewal.” This theme seems so appropriate as we all hope and long for a renewal of “normal” life in a post-COVID world. I would guess that we all realize that “normal” life will not simply be a return to life as it was before COVID. There will, of course, be the restarting of some much-loved aspects of life, such as gathering together in person as a community. But we also know that there will be new practices and ways of being that we learned during the pandemic which will become part of the “new normal.” I think we can also imagine that there will be new technologies, ways of interacting, and doing things yet to be learned which will be part of the renewal of life. I have found myself wondering how the “metaverse” is going to be incorporated into church life!

To ask these questions about the renewal of the corporate and organizational aspects of how our church “does its business” is important. But to simply focus on external and out-

ward aspects of the renewal of church life might lead us to ignore the core mission of the church. At its root, the mission of the church is not impacted by innovation, social change, plague, war, or famine. It remains the same as it has for the last 2,000 years since the incarnation of our Lord. It is about opening our lives to Christ so that we can be his disciples. It is about placing love of God and neighbors at the center our lives. How this love is manifested might change from age to age and context to context. But how we open our souls to allow Christ into our lives has not and does not change. It is about repentance or, in other words, “turning our lives around” so that they can be renewed.

I have recently been reading two books which have made me reflect on this question of opening up our lives so that they can be renewed. The two books have a very different tone and, at first, I felt they were at odds with one another.

One of the books is *Seeds of Compassion* by the 20th century American Trappist monk and mystic Thomas Merton. I had not read this book since I was at seminary when he was viewed as a toweringly important spiritual figure. The other book is a more contemporary well-known book that you have heard me and the other clergy refer to in sermons and writings: *The Book of Joy*. This book records conversations between the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who died at the beginning of this year, and the Dalai Lama. *The Book of Joy* has a light and, perhaps unsurprisingly, joyous feeling as these two older men reflect on their lives. The tone of Merton’s

Seeds of Compassion is much heavier and denser.

As I mentioned, at first I experienced these books in contradiction to one another. But what I now realize is that they are complementary. For Tutu and the Dalai Lama, their primary focus is the joy that comes from a renewed life, once we are free to follow God, when we have died to ego and attachment. For Merton, though, the focus is on what we must give up in order to experience the renewal of life that Tutu and the Dalai have joyfully experienced. As Merton writes at one point, “In order to become myself I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be, and in order to find myself I must go out of myself, and in order to live I have to die.”

This reminds me of the key themes of Lent and Easter. During Lent we remember that Christ spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness to confront and die to the temptations that stood in the way of his call to ministry. He needed to do this to free himself for his earthly ministry spreading Gospel about the renewal of life offered by God. And at Easter we remember that there was no Resurrection with its offer of renewed life before Christ had to undergo his death on Good Friday. And so, too, for us. There is no renewal of life without dying to that which prevents God’s love and grace entering our hearts.

Yours in Christ,

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Warden's Message

Nourishment and Strength



Megan Burns, warden

When you think of the greatest positive experiences in your life so far, which two or three offer you the most nourishment or strength?

THIS PAST FALL, our family started the challenging process of applying to high schools for our son. The question above was one of the essay prompts that he could choose to answer for one of the schools to which he's applying. Since he had a choice of multiple essay prompts (and it was decided that I might not be the most helpful person to read his responses), I'm not sure if, or how, he answered the question. But it did get me to thinking about how I would answer it.

I love that they use the word "nourishment." Although the word often refers to food, it's generally meant to refer to a particular kind of food. It's doubtful that you would say that French fries are nourishing (delicious, sure, but nourishing? Doubtful). It connotes something that helps to sustain you not just for survival but for your long-term health and well-being. So, what would I say if I had to write this essay myself?

I will readily admit that some of the things that I think offer me nourishment are solitary pursuits. A walk in the woods. Quiet

time spent with a good book or cuddling with a favorite pet. But that quiet time only takes me so far. Where I find true nourishment is in service to others. At different times in my life, that's come in different roles. It's come in volunteer roles where I played Wii bowling at the Council on Aging or taught church school here at St. Andrew's. It's come in my job where I helped students prepare for medical school. Just like exercising when you're tired paradoxically gives you energy, giving of your time in service to others can renew your spirit and provide you with more purpose in your days.

As someone who majored in religion in college, I know that there are many ways to interpret scripture. When I was thinking of the theme for this issue of the Call, I immediately thought of the famous words of the Epistle of James 2:17: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." This has always felt a little harsh to me. Sometimes it feels like faith is enough of a challenge on its own. And although invoking death may seem a bit dramatic, James definitely has a point.

I've always been drawn to the more academic side of religion. And although it challenges me intellectually to study the history and writings of the church, it doesn't wholly nourish me. To really give me nourishment, strength, and joy, I need to be working with and for others. So, at the start of this Lenten season, I'm going to try my best to serve the St. Andrew's community in my new role as junior warden. I'm eager for the challenges and I'm looking forward to the ways this experience will strengthen my faith and nourish my spirit.



A publication of
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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Inner Renewal

Engaging Prayer



The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

I'M NOT SURE WHAT we will be facing when we are celebrating Easter Sunday this year. Will we be almost finished with the pandemic, or will yet another variation of the COVID virus be making itself felt around the

globe? I'm uncertain about what the material world will hold, so this season the renewal I'm focusing on is an inner renewal. I want to recommit myself to the discipline of private prayer for 15 minutes a day. When I do that, whether it is silent prayer, or praying the daily office, or a different prayer mode altogether, I find a grounding and a sense of refreshment which is palpable.

I have learned that I need to vary my prayer during the year to keep myself engaged in prayer. The prayer I've decided to use for Eastertide is technically an antique: a prayer written by Phillips Brooks, a giant theological figure in his day who was the rector of Trinity Church, Boston, from 1869-1891. Later in his career, he became the Bishop of Massachusetts.

Brooks wrote this prayer in addition to writing the hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem." (Brooks wrote this hymn for his Sunday school children when he was rector of an Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.) I've modified it in a few places to make it more meaningful for me. My changes are underlined. I hope his wisdom will inspire us to remember that each day truly is a new day—a chance to begin afresh and to strive to be the best person we can be.

Please let me know if you also decide to pray this prayer during the seven weeks of Easter, or if you choose to pray a different prayer during Eastertide. May we each find the spiritual renewal which we most need as we live into the promise and the joy of the Easter season.

O God,
Give me the strength to live another day;
Let me not turn coward before its difficulties
or prove recant to its duties;
Let me not lose faith in other people or myself.
Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite
of ingratitude, treachery, or meanness;
Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them;
Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live
so honestly and fearlessly that no outward
failure can dishearten me or take away
the joy of conscious integrity.
Open wide the eyes of my soul, that I may
see grace in all things.
Grant me this day some vision of thy truth;
Inspire me with the spirit of joy and
gladness and make me the cup of
strength to suffering souls; in the name
of the strong Deliverer; our only Lord
and Savior, Jesus Christ.

—Phillips Brooks



Peter B. Lull

Pain into Power

St. Andrew's Lenten Outreach Project



The Rev. Maria (Mia) Kano

EACH YEAR, ST. ANDREW'S church school has chosen an issue or a charity to focus on for the season of Lent. This year, for the first time, our eighth-grade confirmation class has selected the issue, cancer, and the charity, RIP Medical Debt, for our 2022 Lenten outreach project. Best of all, the youth came to their idea after spending two classes learning all about how God transforms human pain into the power to help others.

We began our exploration last December with Debbie Osborn's moving testimony about how God

transformed her family's pain into a gift that defines their family. From the moment Debbie and her husband learned of their son's life-long intellectual disability at six months old, she and David knew that they would choose to love Ryan, fiercely and whole-heartedly, however their lives were to be up-ended. Debbie wrote,

"No one else we knew had a child like Ryan, some of our friends stopped spending time with us . . . they did not understand or want to be near the pain we were feeling, others stood by us. We made a lifetime choice which looking back was very much based on our faith. We were meant to be Ryan's parents and God knew we would accept him and love him unconditionally—God gave the job to the right parents!"

Debbie shared how her youngest son, Nick, recently spoke about the impact his parent's love for his brother had on him. Shortly after the Osborns had moved to Wellesley, right when it really mattered for Nick to fit in at his school, Nick's new friends were at his house to play soccer. Ryan really wanted to join in, and Nick asked his mother what he should do. Nick never forgot what Debbie told him: *how you treat your brother will be how the world treats him*. When Nick welcomed Ryan in with joy and gratitude, so did his friends. Debbie and David's faith transformed the pain of Ryan's difficult diagnosis into the superpower of empathy for those with special needs. And that compassion has rippled out into the world, shaping Ryan's sibling's friends and our parish community!

We ended that class by celebrating Eucharist, the ultimate symbol of God's transforming power. In the breaking of the bread, we saw how God transformed Jesus' pain into salvation for all. But we

weren't done yet! For our next class, we examined what we mean when we talk about the power to help others. We discussed how helping others can go beyond gifts or donations. Sometimes helping others means removing obstacles, barriers, and burdens. Sometimes it can look like changing systems, correcting injustices, and addressing root causes.

As a class, we created a list of all the pain that we see in ourselves, our community, and the world. Each of the youth chose an issue to reflect on and shared with the group about why and how they thought St. Andrew's was called to help. After listening to each other carefully, the class voted to focus on cancer. We knew that so many in our community have experienced the grief and hardship that a sudden diagnosis can inflict on an individual and their family. As we brainstormed what we could do to help families in our community, one of our youth pointed out how the huge financial costs of medical care make the emotional, physical, and spiritual burdens of cancer that much heavier for families in poverty. The class learned about a charity, RIP Medical Debt, that works with Episcopal churches to purchase bundled medical debt and completely erase it, with no strings attached for the debtors. Life-changing indeed!

If you have ever felt powerless in the face of cancer, St. Andrew's confirmation class, church school, and youth programs invite you to join in our parish's Lenten outreach project. If you know about how paralyzing medical debt can be for financially strained families, we hope that you'll consider contributing to our parish campaign to erase medical debt for families in need. We are so excited to see God's transforming power at work in you!



Debbie Osborn

The Osborns

A Few Warm Conversations

Nurturing Something New



Betsy Millane

HAVE A YOUNGER BROTHER, John, who has always been on the fringes for me, four years younger, living in the Midwest. He's cool and successful, handsome, warm, and funny. I see him at family reunions and rejoice in his success, his family, his ease walking in his world. When he looks at you or pours you another glass of wine, his world looks like a pretty good place to visit.

We haven't been at all close since we were kids, growing up in the same household, but he would check in from time to time, praising my kids, encouraging me. I had lit-

tle to offer him, so I engaged when he did, briefly. It was as if I didn't want to break the sweet spell, or ruin his sunshine with my rain.

And then I texted him about a great uncle, a hardscrabble guy, who started each sentence with "Godamnit to Hell!" He always was, in my brother's words, "colorful."

This uncle survived a shipwreck in the 1930s by jumping into a trough of a wave and allowing the wave to sweep him onto a Coast Guard cutter. He was 16 years old, working on a stripped-out freighter, during the Depression. The freighter was loaded with limestone, culled from a quarry in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. A November storm had come up, the freighter went aground on a sandbar, the tug that was pulling it cut the line, and scooted to safety. All the passengers and most of the crew members died, swept off the boat by the crashing waves to be pounded and drowned in the surf, or jumping with their lifejackets on, to drown anyway.

A fellow crewman, a burly man of considerable girth, is credited with saving my uncle by wrap-

ping his body around him as they both clung to a mast, insulating him from the elements, until they jumped the following day and survived. I wanted the particulars, to write down for all the cousins, because most of the kids in this latest generation don't have to risk their lives to save their lives. They go on death defying climbs and jumps and ski down crazy dangerous drops, but they don't jump into a trough of a wave hoping the odds are in their favor, that they will be crashing onto the waiting deck of a Coast Guard cutter.

John had a technical recollection for me; there were a few laughs about this uncle and his raw language and hard luck life. We agreed there aren't many characters like him around anymore. And, all of a sudden, we were remembering other stories, both happy for this new conversation, for what I was writing.

Renewal. It isn't always about epiphanies, or about a prayer answered, or a meditation on God or nature. It's sometimes about risking a text, a few warm conversations, and maybe nurturing something new.



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St. Andrew's Outreach Ministries

Grants distributed in 2021 and how to apply for 2022 grants



Margaret Zusky

IN 2019, A NEW FUND was added to the outreach ministry budget to encourage parishioners to bring fresh ideas into our circle of giving. These are one-time grants of no more than \$5,000 to address issues beyond the church's regular commitments. The needs are varied and offer a window into the many new ways in which we can lend a helping hand. In 2021, grants totaling \$30,000 were awarded by the outreach ministry listed on this page

Thank you to the creative sponsors of these grants: Joe Jankowski, Donna Kell, Toby Kell, Paige Manning, Elizabeth Martin, and Michaela Osborn.

We are eager for more new ways to expand our work, engage with new communities, and broaden our own horizons. See the outreach section of our website standrewswellesley.org/outreach to see how you can apply for a grant in 2022.



Carm McCormick

Serving common cathedral lunches



MassBay Community College to give financial aid to food-insecure students. *"I can think of no more important nor impactful pursuit than the work being done on our campus to combat food insecurity," said MassBay President, David Podell. "Many of our students are overcoming financial and homelife obstacles, coming to college to forge a better life for themselves and their families. We can all understand how being unable to afford food and going hungry can derail a dream. The Meal Scholarship Program helps alleviate food insecurity for many of our students, enabling them to succeed in the classroom, to complete their studies with us, and to feel pride in their achievements."* Student retention and improved GPAs are measurable benchmarks of the success of this simple, yet critical program.



The New American Immigration Fund at Temple Beth Elohim towards the resettlement of an Afghan family in the Boston area.



Bridge Over Troubled Waters to provide home essentials to teens and young adults transitioning out of homelessness.



New Life Furniture Bank of MA to supply new mattresses to families transitioning from homelessness to housing. Our grant provided 27 new mattresses, box springs and frames to primarily formerly homeless people, but also to refugees, veterans, seniors, single parents, and families escaping domestic violence. *"New Life furniture is amazing, I was overwhelmed. I am very grateful; I do not know how and when I would have been able to get everything they gave me. It brought me to tears and made me feel lucky. This is life changing. Everything I am receiving is giving me hope and making it feel like starting over on my own will be less hard. Thank you very much."*



Parents Helping Parents to update the handbook provided to parents interacting with social services.



Médecins Sans Frontières for Haiti relief.



The Kelsey B. Diamantis TS Scholarship Family Foundation to support college students with Tourette's. *"Every year we support two children with Tourette Syndrome to attend Camp Twitch and Shout, a one-week summer camp in north Georgia for children with Tourette Syndrome. Your generous donation was used for undergraduate and graduate student scholarships. This was such an important grant for us this year because we had been unable to hold fundraising events due to COVID-19."*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!



Sandra Rigney

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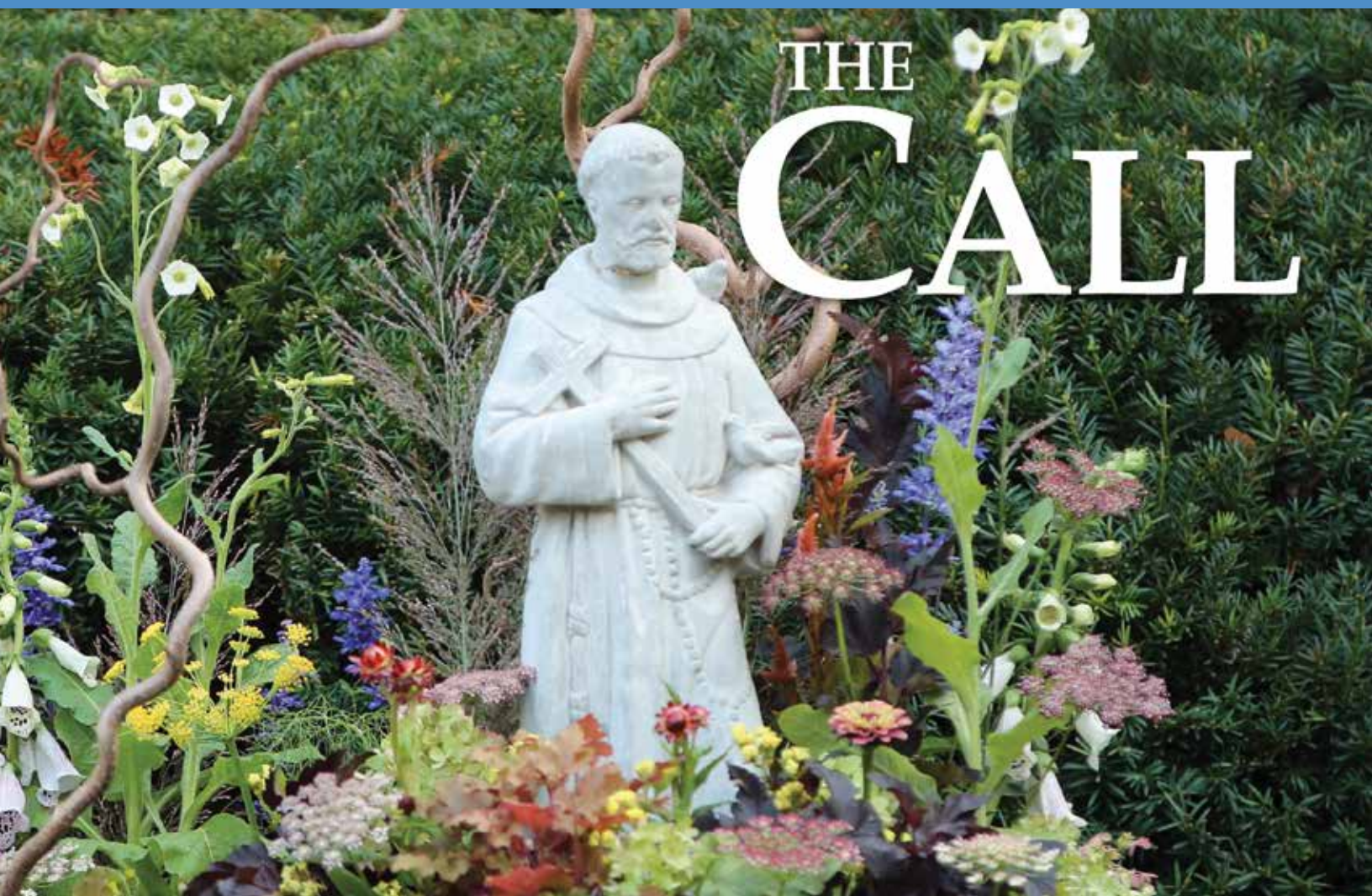
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