



THE CALL

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Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. —James, 2:14-17

THE THEME OF THIS EDITION of The Call is "service." For Christians this means using our time and talent to put our faith into action by loving God and our neighbor as Jesus showed us. The Epistle of James captures a central notion of Christ's teaching that faith without showing our love of our neighbor in real practical ways is worth nothing.

A national conference of the Episcopal Church that I attended in January made me reflect on how the way we are each called to serve will vary from individual to individual depending on our talents, interests, and circumstances.

In his opening sermon at the conference, the Bishop of Missouri, Deon Johnson, said, "Whatever you are doing is what you were meant to do, but with the following caveat: if what you are doing does not bring you joy then you are not doing the right thing."

This reminded me of a famous quote by Frederick Buechner, a leading contemporary American Bible scholar and spiritual writer, who said, "Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need."

Buechner's quotation, that our call to serve should involve something that brings us joy, was a central theme that ran through the conference. One speaker, who was African American, spoke about the pressure he felt from his family and mentors to become a community organizer and a leader of confrontational protest against racial injustice in America.

But he began to realize that although he wanted to work for racial justice, he did not feel called to be a confrontational leader. Instead, he recognized that what brought him joy was building relationships with people, getting to know them, and hearing their stories. So, he now finds joy in breaking down racial injustice through building relationships which transcend barriers of race, class, or background.

A related theme in the conference was that our call to serve is better if we can shift from what you "should"-do to what you "want" to do.

There was some interesting conversation around this opinion, because there was a sense that there are real needs in the world such as poverty or injustice which Christians do need to confront, even if you don't feel it is

your primary call to serve. But it was argued that deep joy can be experienced when you feel that you are helping those in need.

So how do you feel called to serve in a way that would bring you joy?

As I have said, the kind of service you might feel called to might not be directly involved in serving someone in need such as by serving in a food pantry. For example, if you have a vocation to serve by working on the altar guild, this may not literally be putting food into someone's mouth, but your service helps strengthen the church community and helps feed spiritually those who do feel called more directly to serve by helping the poor and needy.

This reminds me of a parallel with the way military forces are organized. Most soldiers serve in supporting roles (the logistical tail) with only a fraction of those in the military serving in actual combat roles.

The main thing is that there are enough ways to serve God and our neighbor for all of us to find something that brings us joy.

If you want to do service through St. Andrew's but are not sure of the possibilities, please don't hesitate to speak to one of the clergy. Or perhaps you will be inspired by something you read in this edition of The Call.

If we all commit to some sort of service, we help build Christ's kingdom. As St. Catherine of Sienna said, "Be who you are meant to be, and you will set the whole world on fire."

Yours in Christ,

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Warden's Message



Megan Burns, warden

Grant O Lord, that in all the joys of life, we may never forget to be kind. Help us to be unselfish in friendship, thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves and eager to bear the burdens of others; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THESE ARE THE WORDS of the school prayer that I recited throughout my high school years. Being “eager to bear the burdens of others” meant service. And in my junior year, I participated in the required service-learning project.

There were a variety of opportunities to serve in the community, and I picked spending time with an elderly woman at a nearby nursing home. Like most teenagers, I did not initially relish the “required” service. I was busy with studies and college applications, sports and friends, and with all the very important things that high school juniors are doing. What happened next is, of course, a cliché.

The thing I didn’t want to do became one of the most meaningful experiences of my high school years. The title of the program was particularly apt. As students we were there to serve others, but also to learn. And learn I did. Those afternoons, I learned a lot about my new friend’s life, and who and what was important to her.

I had always been close to my grandparents as a child—both my mother’s and father’s. My grandparents served as examples of what it meant to serve. My paternal grandmother was active in both her church (she also served on the vestry!) and in local government. My maternal grandfather was heavily involved in multiple charitable organizations, from the United Way to Western New England College. They both had their passions and pursued them as board members, leaders, and volunteers.

People from many organizations that my paternal grandmother volunteered with spoke about her at her funeral. Most meaningful to me at the time was the person from the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, who told me that my grandmother was the best sort of board member. She was willing to do anything. She refused to learn how to use a computer, but she could type like a champion and would stuff envelopes, answer the phone, or do whatever needed to be done. Both my grandparents were devoted to helping others and both were remembered for using their gifts to serve the greater good.

Although my path to service was one that started off as a bit of a forced march, I had wonderful examples in my grandparents, so it should have come as no surprise that I found so much enjoyment in spending time with someone else’s grandparent. I’ve tried to follow my grandparents’ example and offer my time and talents (such as they are) to various organizations, from Wii bowling at the Council on Aging to volunteering at my son’s school. The school’s motto is: “Let us learn those things on earth, the knowledge of which continues in heaven.” I’m grateful that one of the things I learned there was the joy of service.



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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

Worship Service: The Service of Worship



The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

CARING FOR NEIGHBORS and strangers has always been a vital part of a spiritual life. I'd like to call our attention to the service we do together in a place we might not often consider: our Sunday morning sanctuary. We don't often think of worship as "service" in the traditional sense, but we serve God and each other when we gather on Sunday mornings.

There are many instances of premeditated kindness and care.

- Ushers and greeters arrive early to help each of us be at ease in our sanctuary.
- Altar guild and flower guild members have been hard at work during the week, preparing flower arrangements and ensuring the vessels and altar hangings are beautiful, clean, and organized.

- Our membership committee makes sure one or two of our members are in the narthex after our 10am service to greet newcomers who are looking for a new church home.
- Acolytes lead our church processions. Acolytes, readers, and lay eucharistic ministers read Holy Scripture, assist in the setting of the altar, and help clergy distribute communion.
- Church school teachers get ready to teach their class and welcome children to church.
- Our adult choir rehearses twice each week to bring us beautiful music each Sunday.

All who are serving on Sunday arrive well before the 10am service each time they serve, and those who participate in our 8am service arrive before 7:40am. All this work culminates in a beautiful, worshipful experience. What feels seamless at our 8am or 10am services actually is a team of lay and ordained people both preparing to serve and serving. Like holy ducks, they are being serene but paddling hard underneath the surface of the service.

Our Sunday service also extends to our service to God. Everyone in our sanctuary serves God together when we participate in our public Prayers of the People or the Confession of Sin.

When we all join in our public confession, we confess in solidar-

ity with one another—acknowledging that we are all in need of repentance and forgiveness. Even the priest who pronounces our absolution confesses with us. In our confession, we share a network of unspoken mistakes and sins. Without needing to share the specific details with one another, we collectively acknowledge our shared humanity and God's goodness.

The Prayers of the People is one of our most solemn obligations; it may be where we do our hardest service. There is a brief silence when we center ourselves, and then we pray for the health and well-being of our troubled world. When our leader articulates individual names, each name is offered with sincerity. During this prayer time, we bear each other's burdens. We hope for healing, restoration, and comfort for those people we know and love, and for those people loved and known by other members of our congregation. We take on sacred service on one another's behalf.

A worship service has the word "service" embedded within it; we serve God and the world, acknowledging God's and our neighbor's care for us, when we gather.



Photo: Peter B. Lull



The Heart of Service



The Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole

ONE OF THE MOST common things you will hear at my house during the Olympics is, “Mom’s crying again.”

I love the Olympics, but if you saw what the Olympics did to me, you would wonder why. I spend a lot of time crying. Tears flow down my face when athletes win and when they lose. It’s as if I am a parent to each and every one of the athletes. I cry every time a national anthem is sung, feeling like I am a citizen of every country. And, whenever there is a human-interest piece, I feel it to the depths of my soul.

However, if I had to choose one single stand-out event in Olympic history, it would be the 1992 men’s 400-meter semi-final when the world record holder from Great

Britain, Derek Redmond, came in last. He had missed the 1988 Olympic games in Seoul because of an injury. Many thought that 1992 was going to be his year to win an Olympic medal. However, that was not to be so. He started off fast and strong, but only fifteen seconds into the race, you see Redmond grab his right leg, and shortly after, he collapses. He suffered a devastating hamstring injury.

Redmond gets to his feet and continues to try to hop to the finish line. A few moments later, a man from the stands rushes onto the track to help Redmond finish the race. The officials try to get this man off the track, but the man insists on staying. Redmond mistakes the sudden physical assistance as an official attempting to get him off the track, so at first, he resists, and then, he sees the man with him is his father. You can see the agony on Redmond’s face.

Then, in a beautiful moment, when Redmond tries to hide his face in shame, his father pulls his hand down, and the crowds begin to cheer in unanimous support. The cheers were not only for Redmond, who demonstrated true grit and dogged determination to finish the race, but also for the display of fatherly love, a love so deep that a father would jump the barriers

between stands and track to go the distance to help his son.

But there is one more aspect of this moment worth remembering. Derek Redmond was one of the world’s strongest, fastest, fittest men, and even he needed his father’s help to get over that finish line.

In her book, *The Joy of Movement*, Kelly McGonigal, reflecting on the significance of this event, writes, “This Olympic moment touches us—people weep watching the video—not just because Redmond persisted, but because it demonstrates how much we depend on one another to keep going.”

For me, this story reflects the heart of service. In Genesis, we learn that God recognized that “it is not good that man should be alone.” We all need each other as companions. Sometimes we will be Derek Redmond and need help. Sometimes we are his father, Jim Redmond, who gives a helping hand. The task for each of us is to discern who we are in any given moment because, within us all, we are both Derek and Jim.

By the way, if you want to cry too, watch the moment, Google “Derek Redmond’s father helps him across the finish line.”

Getting to Know Ciara Chelli



Dan Dent

IN THIS ARTICLE, The Call caught up with St. Andrew's youth music director, Ciara Chelli. A musician and theater fan all her life, Ciara joined St. Andrew's in 2022 after years attending and singing as a St. Andrew's parishioner.

When did you join St. Andrew's?

My introduction to St. Andrew's Church was in 2017 when I was a student at Wellesley College. Our college chaplain, Sarah Robbins-Cole, suggested I give St. Andrew's a try. Since I was studying music, I made it a point to meet the church music director, Wardie Mannix.

What was it like to join our church choir?

Music educators say church music ensembles are a great training ground because of how many different people join, and that's very true at St. Andrew's. Our church choir is truly intergenerational—we have singers from middle school, college, high school, and older adults. Everyone is very dedicated and committed. It helps that Wardie is a master of what she does.

When did you decide music was your future?

I grew up immersed in music, through choir and musical theater. I was lucky to be trained by an amazing teacher who valued stories with integrity, and who always wanted her students to be proud to be singing. The commitment she instilled in me has continued to shape my approach to music education as an adult, and it is important to me that the integrity of the story or lyrics is matched by the music. I need to believe in the story, the music, and in turn be able to communicate that to my students.

What are you planning for spring?

Our spring program will be performed at the 10am service on March 26 and will be a musical theater revue based on the story of Mary and Martha. This revue will tie together repertoire from several Broadway shows along with contemporary choral arrangements to support an original interpretation of the Bible story of Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha. We have so many new families and so many kids who haven't been in the program before, and we are looking forward to staging a great show together.

What's the time commitment for the youth music program?

This year, we're mixing it up a little, and have changed the youth music program from ongoing rehearsals throughout the year to a project-oriented structure. For the spring program, we have six weeks of rehearsals that will culminate in a performance similar to the Christmas pageant. For the Youth Sunday service in May, we will

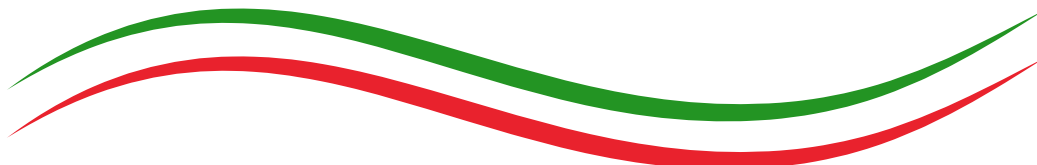
use the same approach. We think the project-oriented structure and time-commitment fits families and students with busy schedules and allows them to commit for shorter time periods.

What do you hope your students take away from the program?

I had several kids this past fall who showed up a little shy, or a little quiet, and it was incredibly rewarding to see them bond and grow, not just with me as the director, but with their peers, too. It's so important to have those connections. My goal is to show them that there is a trajectory for them to have music all the way through their lives. From little sheep in the pageant, to high schoolers who might do stage craft or directing, or teaching the next generation, there's a future for anyone who gets involved in the youth music program at St. Andrew's.



Ciara Chelli





Parishioner Reflections

THIS LENTEN AND EASTER SEASON, our fellow parishioners offer reflections on service. They share their thoughts on what service they are called to do, and what their service says about their faith.

Paul Criswell



REFLECTION, study, meditation, prayer . . . all are powerful and necessary means to contemplate the purpose of life and to cultivate our faith in God. But human beings do not have a relationship with God in isolation. The human connection with God is

intertwined with and is a part of all of God's creation, which means it is intertwined with every other human on the earth.

Faith that does not take account of all of God's creatures is narcissistic and incomplete. I believe that true

The grounding text from James 2:17, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." Or, more positively, works enliven faith. We hope you enjoy these reflections.

faith in God must include a concern for all of creation. It must motivate us to care for "all of God's creatures." So, at some point, all the fruits of our contemplation, all of our faith, have to be offered up to the world.

By its nature, that includes doing something. Even if we only talk about our beliefs, that is doing something. And if we really want to be effective in professing our beliefs, we have to include more than talk, we have to include some form of action. So when we say that faith without works is "dead," it means that without action, our faith lacks the most important part of its vitality.

Cam McCormick



ST. ANDREW'S HAS JOINED in worshipping with the congregation at *common cathedral*, a few times a year for many years. This is a diocesan ministry that serves lunch and holds an Episcopal church service on Boston Common every Sunday, where the

congregation is mostly unhoused, and partner parishes bring the lunch and are invited to join in worship.

I have done this several times and it is always a moving experience for me. Each time, I am reminded that the (small amount of) inconvenience, to pack up the car with 150 brown bag lunches and drive to Boston Common on a Sunday, is imperceptible compared to the inconvenience and difficulty of being homeless.

Each time, I am impressed with the love and genuine care that the pastoral staff have for the congregants, displaying a respect for each person's dignity that is

uplifting and empowering. Each time, I hear the same readings and prayers that I heard that morning at St. Andrew's, but often in a new interpretation.

When our group went in October, I agreed to ask each person who was waiting in the lunch line if they had a prayer request, to be read later during the Prayers of the People. A very articulate woman in her fifties engaged me in conversation about politics and her upcoming plans to move to an apartment and start a job. Then I looked down and saw that she was in stocking feet, a shocking disconnect to her speech. I was pierced with empathy in that moment. Jesus' words to "love your neighbor" become manifest for me in such encounters.

My faith is enriched by our ministers, our church building and services, and our community, but it is greatly amplified by "works" like this and the many other outreach ministries that St. Andrew's pursues.

Margaret Zusky



I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE of talking with families to plan receptions following a memorial service or funeral for someone they love. Introducing myself and learning what I can of their particular situation starts the conversation and often awakens fond stories

and memories. Frequently I don't know any of the people involved and I am touched by how open and personal people are at this vulnerable moment. I hear stories that create a picture of the family and friends who will be celebrating a life.

There is a small group who step in to provide a comfortable place to gather and talk after the service. We set up the parish hall or the Harvey Room like we would our own home and offer simple food

and drinks, planned with someone in the family. What food or drinks would be a nod to favorites of your loved one? What were his or her favorite colors? I was especially moved by a man bent with grief, who suddenly perked up when I suggested we serve San Pellegrino. "Oh, and we must have Amontillado and a bright Italian white wine. My wife would have insisted."

These receptions can be a rare opportunity for friends and family from far corners to come together and share stories of the person they love. There is often more laughter than tears. Families are "unfeignedly thankful" to be cared for in a difficult time. With this service, we "show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service." I think we all feel that we get as much or more than we give.



Photo: Rob Bryan (Adobe Stock)

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

Warden Will Nystrom wardens@standrewswellesley.org
Warden Megan Burns wardens@standrewswellesley.org
Treasurer Harry Condon treas@standrewswellesley.org
Clerk Peter Lull clerk@standrewswellesley.org
Rector Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole adrian@standrewswellesley.org
Associate Rector for Adult Formation and Membership
Rev. Margaret Schwarzer margaret@standrewswellesley.org
Interim Associate Rector for Youth and Families
Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole sarah@standrewswellesley.org

Parish Administrator Katharine Clark kate@standrewswellesley.org
Pastoral Associate Rev. Karen Vickers Budney revkar7@comcast.net
Music Minister Helen Ward Mannix wardie@standrewswellesley.org
Financial Administrator Joanne Butler joanne@standrewswellesley.org
Christian Learning Coordinator
Susan Jackson susan@standrewswellesley.org
Youth Music Director Ciara Celli ciara@standrewswellesley.org
Sexton Stephen F. Killeen steve@standrewswellesley.org
Assistant Sexton William Clover



ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

79 DENTON ROAD
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 02482

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