



THE CALL

ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

NO. 400
FALL 2023

Building our lives as temples dedicated to God



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

ON OUR RECENT parish pilgrimage to England, we visited many places of worship, from the grandeur of St. Paul's Cathedral in London to a tiny 7th century Saxon Church in the northern county of Durham, built with stones from the ruins of a nearby 2nd century Roman fort. As we traveled across England, visiting many different churches, we learned about different architectural styles and heard the stories of faith that lay behind the building of these houses of God which often took decades, if not centuries, to complete.

We also heard stories of people of faith such as St. Thomas à Becket, the 12th century Archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered for his unwillingness to compromise his faith to do the King's bidding.

As I reflected on these stories of church architecture and of the bravery of holy men and women, it made me think how architecture and bravery can both be symbols of our spiritual journeys and the work of this parish.

The stories of building holy places reminded me of a verse from St. Paul's

first letter to the Corinthians 6:19-20: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"

The image of building our lives as a church or cathedral dedicated to the Holy Spirit has long been a powerful symbol within Christianity for the life of faith. Just as each day the builders of the churches we saw in England added stones and arches and many other features to create these beautiful structures consecrated to God, so too, every day through our prayers and acts of Christian love and generosity to our neighbors, we are building our lives as temples dedicated to God.

And it is the primary work of the programs and clergy at St. Andrew's to provide you with the "spiritual tools and architectural plans" to help you build your life as a "temple of the Holy Spirit within you." You do not need to do this work on your own, the parish is the "spiritual scaffolding" to support you. And the work of the RenewalWorks survey and the new initiatives we are launching this fall, in response to the survey, are about supporting you in this spiritual-building work.

But although the parish is here to support us in our spiritual lives, ultimately each of us also has to make individual decisions about whether we follow Christ or not. And this decision is not a one-off choice. Just as the work of building the churches and cathedrals of England took decades if not centuries, so too, building our lives as a temple dedicated to God is a day-by-day business undertaken over the course of our whole lives. It involves us making countless deci-

sions each and every day in which we choose to be loving and caring for others as Christ taught us or not. To use architectural imagery further, we are either building your life as a temple dedicated to God or to some other idol such as money, greed, or worldly status.

The willingness to undertake this work of dedicating our lives to Christ each and every day takes a certain amount of bravery. Perhaps not the kind of courage that wins medals for sudden acts of heroism, like those of the World War II fighter pilots who won the Battle of Britain whose memorial we visited on the white cliffs of Dover during our pilgrimage. But rather the quiet courage of everyday dedication to God and serving one's neighbor which might never be recognized in this world, but is known to God. It is perhaps the highest form

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York Minster Cathedral, England

Photo: Margaret K. Schwarzer

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of courage and is the foundation stone of a life dedicated to be a temple to the Holy Spirit.

My hope for us at St. Andrew's, as we enter this new program year, is that our programs, including the new initiatives we are launching in response to the RenewalWorks survey, our worship services, and

pastoral care, will provide you with the spiritual scaffolding you need to build your life as a temple dedicated to the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,



Warden's Message

My spiritual home



Megan Burns, warden

Home is the place where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in.

THE FAMOUS QUOTE from Robert Frost makes me think about the definition of home. In his poem, *The Death of the Hired Man*, Frost seeks to define "home." Arguably, the hired man's home is with his brother, but instead of heading to his biological family, he returns to the home of his former employer. The idea that home and family can be broader than the textbook definition is one that I find appealing. Perhaps Robert Frost was trying to tell us that home is where we are given the chance to serve.

I've always felt at home at St. Andrew's. In trying to recall a specific time or event, I'm not sure that I can name any one occasion—

it's just a sense. In many ways, it reminds me of the community that I was raised in on Cape Cod. There I felt the strong sense of family and faith that was part of my childhood at St. Mary's in Barnstable. And for the last 14 years, my family and I have always felt welcome here. St. Andrew's has many wonderful traditions, like Homecoming Sunday and the annual church picnic, that welcome us back every fall. In addition to the many public events, I like to think that St. Andrew's also does a good job of reaching out on an individual basis to make people feel a part of this wonderful community.

Being a part of any group or family often comes with an invitation to contribute to that community. By asking me to serve in various capacities over the years, from church school teacher to nominating committee chair to warden, St. Andrew's has given me the opportunity to use what talents I might have to give back to the congregation. By serving alongside both clergy and parishioners in various roles, I have had the opportunity to learn more about the ways in which St. Andrew's makes a difference in the lives of others, both inside and outside the walls of our church. I've made wonderful friends and felt the satisfaction of knowing that I'm a part of something larger than myself. That feels like home to me.



A publication of
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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Homecomings



The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

AS THE MOM of a second-year college student, I have just experienced the “first summer home” with my son, Ben. Joyful? Absolutely. Satisfying? Absolutely. Substantially different than last summer? Absolutely.

Ben was home, but home was smaller for him. His room was smaller; his sense of Brookline marked it as “smaller” than it was last year, when it had been his constant landscape since birth, excluding summer camps and vacations.

This summer, I did most of the cooking, but we both cooked some dinners together. He and I both had full-time jobs in July and August. I loved our conversations—both mundane and far-reaching—but it wasn’t the same as last year. I had a college man at home, not a senior in high school, and he (happily) knew himself better and had new expectations for what his daily life and future life would look like.

When we leave home, our newest experiences always impact what we see in that familiar place when we return. Homecomings mark change as much as they mark return and reconnection.

Similarly, the English pilgrimage, which 24 members of St. Andrew’s, Adrian, and I took this July, has impacted my homecoming to St. Andrew’s and my expectations of our parish life to-

gether this year. Having spent time in ancient cathedrals, including Canterbury, Westminster, Durham, and York, I have a visceral sense of how our St. Andrew’s church is knit into a large Christian whole in both time and space. Yes, the Episcopal Church is the American branch of the Anglican Church, but I experienced how we are tangibly attached to them. We’re not a distant satellite.

Our 125-year history is relatively short compared to a thousand years of worship at these great English cathedrals, but we hold a key place in the fabric of Christendom. Parish churches are where over 90% of faithful Christians worship. Parishes are the local (authentic) place of faith for millions.

This fact was underscored for me when we visited a tiny 7th century Saxon church in Yorkshire. It had been a place of continual Christian worship since it was built except for a 17-year period (roof collapsed and barnyard animals got in). No Viking paid attention

and no English King demanded allegiance. It was too small.

The Christians in that village passed their faith down generation by generation, first at a stone marker, marked with a cross, then in a tiny church made of stone blocks taken from the deserted Roman Legion Hall.

Members of the current parish community gave us our tour. Standing in that space, it was impossible not to realize that regardless of the size of our communities, we all serve a role in the living out of the Gospel, generation by generation. We are all part of a larger whole, sometimes without even realizing it.

St. Andrew’s doesn’t feel smaller to me, but its homey quality feels good to come back to. The particulars of our community—including our beautiful building, our choir, our stained glass, our parish hall, our members—are just what I need to encourage my own faith to flourish. The particulars make all the difference.



Photo: Adrian Robbins-Cole

A toast from the parishioners on the 2023 St. Andrew’s pilgrimage to England

The Spirit of Nixsen



The Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole

EVERYONE IN MY FAMILY loves autumn, except me. Autumn is far too close to winter with its dearth of daylight hours and surfeit of cold for my liking. Several years ago, I decided to figure out how I could come to peace with fall. Instead of thinking of fall as dark, I began to think of it as cozy. Instead of being miserable because I was cold all the time, I decided to don some gay apparel of vintage wool sweaters and boots, preferably cowgirl.

At about the same time I was learning to embrace fall, I learned about the now wildly popular U.S. importation of the Danish concept of *hygge* (pronounced “hoo-gah”) which is loosely translated “cozy.” Undoubtedly, the popularity of and intrigue in *hygge* has, in part, grown out of Denmark’s top ranking in the World Happiness Report over the last decade. Surely if you live like a Dane—embracing the cold, clad in Dale of Norway’s finest cardigan replete with metal hook closures, orienting your life around hot drinks, having friends

over for ice skating and dinner, and sitting in front of blazing fireplaces—you, too, can be happy.

However, this fall I am going to focus on a new trend. It is the Dutch concept of *niksen*. *Nixsen* translates to “doing nothing without a purpose.” On the BBC travel website, Olga Mecking, claims that this “Dutch wellness trend. . . has caught the attention of the world as a way to manage stress or recover from burnout.”

Mecking explains that the word *niksen* can be used in many ways. For example, if you are a parent, you might ask your child who is lounging on the sofa, still in their PJs well into the afternoon, “Zit je weer te nixsen?”—meaning “Are you doing nothing again?” But an adult, who has been busy all day and has finally stopped to *niksen* might say that they are currently *lekker nixsen*, which translates to “delicious doing nothing.”

This concept particularly struck a chord with me because it is a massive challenge for me not to be productive. My mother, in fact, reminded me just a couple of days ago that I have been like this since early childhood. I suspect a lot of you recognize this trait in yourself. But as a Christian, I know that an essential aspect of spiritual health and renewal involves a kind of *niksen*. We often call it “stillness,” as in “Be still and know I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

Another great example of this mandate to practice stillness is in the Book of Exodus (14:14). It occurs when the Israelites have just left Egypt and have become entrapped

between the Red Sea and the approaching Egyptian army. Moses tells them, “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Imagine that. When anxious, the solution can be as simple as being still and letting the Lord fight your battles. It might not be a solution for 100% of our issues, but it might be a remedy for more than we think.

Now what this has to do with the theme of this issue of the Call is that one of the things that many of us miss about the summer is the feeling of time affluence. *Nixsen* invites us to carve out just a few moments of each day for non-productive time, letting our minds wander and reflect. These snack-sized moments of stillness contribute both to our well-being and productivity. They may feel boring at first, but consider this thought from Bertrand Russell, the 20th century philosopher, mathematician, and social reformer, in his book *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930), “. . . a generation that cannot endure boredom will be a generation of little men, of men unduly divorced from the slow processes of nature, of men in whom every vital impulse slowly withers, as though they were cut flowers in a vase.” Essentially, Russell believes that greatness requires a certain amount of fallow time before one can bear fruit.

I invite you to insert some time of *niksen* into your life this fall. I will try too, although, I may have to add it to a daily to-do list, so I can check it off at the end of the day. That’s not perfectly aligned with the spirit of *niksen*, but it’s a start. Will you join me?.



The nave at Rievaulx Abbey, England

Photo: Rob Brandt

Parishioner Reflections

Homecoming

FOLLOWING ARE REFLECTIONS from our fellow parishioners on bringing faith with us back home from summer vacation. Their stories are a reminder that returning to our comfort zone—in other words,

“coming home”—can ground us in faith and allow us to integrate all we have experienced in a safe space. We create the community we need here at our home church and treasure what we know we have.

St. Andrew’s is a very special place



Al Dubé

In reflecting on the many reasons I attend St. Andrew’s, one that stands out is that, like many of us, I want to be here.

When I grew up, church was a Sunday obligation reinforced by people arriving after the service started and leaving well before the service was over. When you want to be there, you tend to get there on time and leave after socializing. I experience this every Sunday we attend services.

St. Andrew’s is our spiritual home; it is a community of some of the greatest and nicest people we know. The church is a very active community within the walls and outside the walls of the building. Two committees Zebby and I serve on are fellowship, which helps parishioners connect within the church, and outreach, which

provides services and spreads love, kindness, and joy outside the church.

We are or have been busy over the many years with the choir, adult learning classes, church school, Bargain Haul, and Zebby in altar guild. Although it may sound a little over-achieverish, St. Andrew’s is full of active participants. It is for me a sign of the spiritual foundation on which St. Andrew’s stands and a big reason why we attend.

St. Andrew’s has strengthened my spirituality and opened my heart to relationships and activities greater than myself. St. Andrew’s is a very special place.

Guiding me back to a community in Christ



Kate Farella

THIS PAST JUNE, I proudly stood with other members of our congregation to

be confirmed as a member of the Episcopal Church. One notable difference between me and the group, however, was that I was almost old enough to be one of their mothers.

What makes St. Andrew’s so special is that a sense of homecoming presents itself to us through God’s love at any time in our lives. When I had first decided to enroll my children in Godly Play two years ago, I hadn’t given much thought to my own spiritual journey.

Having grown up an unfulfilled Catholic, I had assumed that my faith was resigned to only express itself through personal prayer and outside a church community. None-

theless, I had always felt a certain exuberance and profound sense of belonging among the members at St. Andrew’s.

In time, my heart knew that my religious home had been at my feet all along. I am so proud to be a member of this welcoming, generous group of people who choose to share and grow in their faith, and I extend my deepest thanks to those who assisted in guiding me back to a community in Christ.

A sense of belonging



Elizabeth Clarke

MY FAMILY HAS BEEN BLESSED to call St. Andrew's home for almost 30 years. (Am I really that old?!)

There are so many moments when that sense of belonging has resonated with me over the years.

Among them are the baptisms and confirmations for our three children, teaching church school, watching our children acolyte, and being a vestryperson and a member of the altar guild—all are examples of the ways I have felt connected and engaged.

To the credit of our remarkable clergy, I have even felt extremely connected during the height of the pandemic with remote worship opportunities and Zoom coffee hours, in which we regularly participated.

Now that we're back, I appreciate being in person, worshipping in our beautiful sanctuary, preparing the altar for services, witnessing a baptism, celebrating a marriage, and so much more. There is an inner calm I feel when I am inside our church and I can center myself,

pray and listen for lessons in the readings and insightful sermons.

I love the uplifting music and the beautiful altar flowers as well. I am very grateful for all of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into our worship for the glory of God.

As we return from our respective summer activities, I look forward to reconnecting with our St. Andrew's community on Homecoming Sunday, September 10, and at our parish picnic on Sunday, September 17.

Please stop by the membership table at the picnic to sign up to be a greeter, request a name tag, or just say hello! We are so excited to welcome new members, reconnect with old friends, and to help everyone feel a part of this special place.

Glad to be home



Adele Beggs

IMAGINE MOST OF US look forward to going away for a vacation every now and then; for many of us it is during the summer. Here in Wellesley, we notice that the streets are less busy and the parking lot at Roche Brothers is less full. A relief!

However, I think that we are always "glad to be home" when we get there. We don't know what it

is, but it is just comforting, secure, and nice to be back to familiar surroundings. That is how I felt back in 2002 when I realized how much I missed St. Andrew's, having been away for quite some time.

When we moved to Wellesley in 1963, we joined the St. Andrew's community right away, attended church on an irregular basis, and then I became overly involved in the 1970s. In the early 80s, with our children going in different directions all the time and my working at an at-home job, it seemed that it was impossible to get everyone together on Sunday morning to go to church. We lapsed!

In early 2002 we realized that we were missing our church community. As my husband had not been brought up in the Episcopal Church, we thought about visiting other churches in town (and we did), but we quickly

realized that St. Andrew's was the place for us. I'll never forget the first Sunday back when I leaned over and said to Jack, "I wonder whose pew we are in?" Of course, if we had taken anyone's spot we never heard about it!

Being at home with the St. Andrew's family is very comforting. How fortunate we are to have such a beautiful building in which to worship, the amazing music provided by Wardie and the choir, the very meaningful messages and teaching of our clergy, the opportunities to serve in ways both big and small, the friends we make, and the comfort and quiet as we sit in the sanctuary finding our own spirituality.

Quite likely we all feel that way. We hope those of you who may be new in Wellesley and are finding us will be as "at home" as we are. We welcome you to this wonderful community.

2023 Pilgrimage to England



Photo: Rob Brandt

Rievaulx Abbey



Photo: Rob Brandt

Dean's cocktail party, York Minster



Photo: Rob Brandt

Ruins of Coventry Cathedral



Photo: Rob Brandt

Durham Cathedral's environmental art display



Photo: Margaret K. Schwarzer

St. Paul's Cathedral, London



Photo: Rob Brandt

Pilgrims' iconic view of London

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