

The Piper

December 2017



Inside this Issue:

- ⇒ **Ramblings**.....p.2
- ⇒ **Where To From Here?**.....p.7
- ⇒ **St. Andrew's at Willowbrook**....p. 9



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Ben Lomond, CA 95005

831.336.1069

saintAndrew'sbenlomond.org

Where God is worshiped and the people are

Ramblings in the Redwoods

Did you enjoy the comic strip “Pogo”? (And are you old enough to remember it?) I know some of you did. In case you like arcane words, Pogo lovers came to be called “Pogophiles.” I doubt if you can win a bar bet with that, though. Walt Kelly produced a series of books containing the strips, the comics and other works, and after his death his estate put out reprints of the dailies, things that hadn’t been in other books, and in some cases they combined several of the old books into one volume. One of those was called *Pogo’s Will Be that Was*. That’s what St. Andrew’s is embarked on right now. It took me a long time to get to that one, didn’t it?

There are positives and negatives to going through a process of transition – which this issue of the *Piper* is focused on, and about which the multi-skilled-and-talented Editor has asked me to write. The positives I can think of are:

- Getting to talk and think about the congregation, its ministries, and its character, personality and identity.
- Remembering the things you love about St. Andrew’s and getting to discuss them with others.
- Taking time to consider what we have lost and, more importantly, what we have gained over the last eight and one-half years.
- Getting the opportunity to support and enhance the process and the people involved.
- You can, I am sure, think of other advantages.

The negatives are potentially dangerous for the spiritual life of the congregation and its members. These are the ones I can think of:

- Paying more attention to what you are losing than to the opportunities which you are gaining.
- Withdrawing emotionally – and in other ways – to wait and see what will happen.

Please don't yield to these temptations. There is a cost. If you don't go through these things in community you will become part of the margins.



Jesus invited people into his community and kingdom. Some of them were poor; working fishermen like Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John. Some were wealthy, but had lives that were morally and ethically compromised; like Matthew. Some were political radicals; like Simon the Zealot and, apparently, Judas Iscariot. None was turned away. I have been blessed to see the way in which St. Andrew's has opened its doors and its hearts to people who might not have been welcomed in other places, or who might not have been welcomed here in times past.

There are always temptations to exclude people based on what we think is appropriate or acceptable. These exclusionary policies have included, throughout our history as a religion and as a denomination, poor people, women who did not properly conform, divorced people, people of color, people who speak languages other than English, LGBTQ people and people whose brains aren't wired quite like those of the "acceptable" majority. As I have said before – are you tired of hearing it yet? – I have two things I want to impart during my professional ministry. First, healthy communication, so we can speak with each other with respect and without shutting off communication; and second, radical welcome, which is what I understand Jesus to have done. Jesus scolded people for rejecting him and his message, but he never told them they weren't welcome.

If you have been here long enough, you may recall that there used to be two gates in the center of the altar rail. I removed them as a sign of God's open door policy; the chancel, or sanctuary, area which used to be off-limits except to ordained people and members of certain ministries like acolytes, Lay Readers and Altar Guild members, is not like Mount Sinai or the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus opened the door to us all. The curtain in the Temple was torn in two when he was crucified. If you want to put those gates back after I leave so communicants will have something to lean on if they come to the middle (a critique of the idea when I proposed it), go upstairs in the Parish Hall, go to the doors in the middle between the closet areas, open them, and look on the upper shelf. If you want to keep symbolizing openness, remember that if you can't kneel without something to lean on, you don't have to go to the middle.

But whatever you choose to do, remember that Jesus came to bring the kingdom of God among us, not to bring a new and harsher law among us. It is God's welcome that we celebrate, not God's rejection.



What do I mean by “The Will Be That Was”? St. Andrew’s has gone through this process many times before, going back to when it was a seasonal chapel. You are always looking ahead to what God has in store for you without losing what you have been through, what you have experienced, and what God continues to teach you through those experiences.

You will be something new without losing what you carry forward.

We will continue to talk about all of these things as we enter into the process as a congregation with the December 10th discussions. There is always sadness at parting, but let us focus on the excitement of what God is up to in the Will Be. - *Blaine*



What Can I Do, Continued

It was predictable that in attempting to list all of the ways that individuals can be involved in the ministries of St. Andrew’s some things would get left out. Here are a few more:

Counter: Pairs of people come in each Monday to count the money from the Sunday offerings. This is an important piece of accountability; it makes sure that the treasurer is not only on the up-and-up (do people still use that phrase?), but that there are never grounds to make accusations against the innocent, by spreading the tasks around.

Folder: Do you appreciate having someone hand you a bulletin at 10:00, or scriptures at 8:00 with announcements and prayer sheets stuffed inside? Someone has to make that happen. People come in on Friday after the bulletins are printed to put it all together for you.

Diggers and Delvers: Several years ago – many of you will remember – we had a much-loved Senior Warden named Michael Kimpton. Michael decided that the ditch out front of the church needed to be cleaned out, so he got a shovel and went to work. He was streaked with sweat, but smiling, as he finished the job. But not long after that, he was helping to clean up at the shooting range where he was a member and afterwards he suffered a fatal heart attack. At the time, it was said that we needed to honor his memory by keeping that ditch cleaned out, but Fr. Blaine and Ray Wentz are, I think, the only ones who have worked at that. Also, Fr. Blaine has been trying to level the space where the two trees used to stand in the parking lot. He is getting there. There has been an offer to pay for someone else to come in and finish it. Anyone want to do a little more of that work so the offer doesn’t have to be as generous?

Library

Every congregation where I have worked I have tried to enhance the Library. Usually, there has been someone who wants to take part in that; at St. Andrew's it has been Paula Jansen, but she got very busy and has not been able to take part like she used to. I also want to give a shout-out to Ray Wentz, who found and purchased a number of bookends, badly needed. I have received several bequests of books, notably from Ralph Gulliver and Jennifer Kennedy, among others, and I have put in shelving to hold the expanded collection. It is now in the process of reorganization. I wonder if you have had a chance to look it over and see if there is something there which could hold your interest or expand your self-education?

Also, I built a tract rack out front of my office, where periodicals and other materials have come to roost. My favorite is the periodical *Biblical Archaeology Review* but the latest issue always has to wait until I can get around to reading it. Older issues are on a library shelf.

Libraries are a part of the historical tradition of Anglicanism, which started Sunday Schools as a place where children, who had to work in factories during the week, could get a basic education. When the government began to provide that, and child-labor laws were enacted, the church has continued to be a source of religious learning. I think we would all be the poorer if we lost that part of our history and tradition. Let's not get mentally and spiritually lazy!

-Blaine



Evening Prayer-Wednesdays - 5:15-5:45 PM

It's brief, quiet, and a great way to refill your spiritual tank half way through the week.

Join us.

Elizabeth needs your help on the Piper. If you could be of assistance, please call her at 831-338-3312.

She would sooooooooooooooooooooo appreciate it!

+++

St. Andrew's Women's Reading Group

Annual Christmas Party

Everyone is to bring something to eat to share and a wrapped book for a Secret Santa drawing.

When: Tuesday, December 16th, 2-5 pm

Where: Donna's house

We will be discussing *The Three Year Swim Club*,

by Julie Checkoway

All are welcome!

Call Jean for more info, 335-5682.

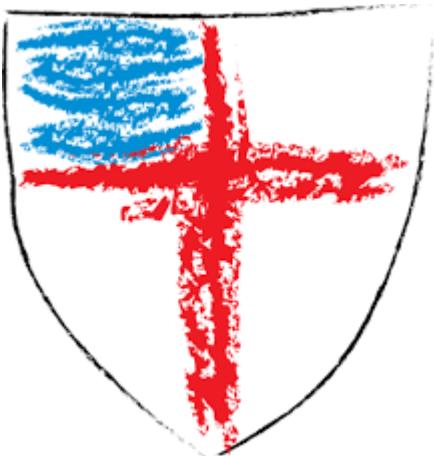


+++

Why I Am An Episcopalian: Reason #65

We find our unity in shared worship, not in enforced agreement.

*Lou Poulain, St. Thomas, Sunnyvale,
Diocese of El Camino Real
From 101 Reasons to be Episcopalian*



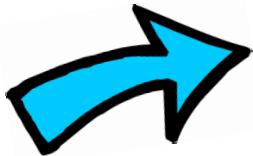
Christmas Carols at Boomeria: Saturday, December 9th, 8:00 PM

Dress warmly! Expect rain!

Attention: DO NOT PARK on Verde Drive! You may park on Vick Drive.

Do not place this invite on facebook or other media!

We do not have space for a huge gathering.



Sunday, Dec. 10th – One Service Only – 10:00 AM

**WE NEED
YOUR INPUT
FOR OUR FUTURE**

Where To From Here?

On Sunday, December 10, after the one service at 10 AM, you are invited to participate in an all-parish conversation in small groups about the present and future of St. Andrew's. This will be the first critical point in the process of finding a new priest to replace Father Blaine, who will be retiring in June. It is critical because in this meeting, the

Vestry will be seeking the views and guidance of each individual parish member as we move forward.

Recruiting a new priest has changed greatly under the leadership of Bishop Mary and the diocesan leadership, changed and very much for the better. Here is the process which we will be following in finding our new priest:

First, the Vestry, beginning on the 10th, will attempt to elicit from every parishioner his or her views on the fundamental questions of who we are now, and where we want to be in five years.

Second, taking the information which everyone has contributed, plus St. Andrew's financial information, we will create a Draft Parish Profile. This will be made available to the Parish for comment. Some changes can be made at this stage, but obviously it is much better to have input before the Profile is written than trying to change it later. Thus, your participation is very important on December 10th.

Third, we will complete the Profile and submit it to the Diocese, which will begin the process of identifying and recruiting candidates who fit our needs and budget. At the same time, the Vestry will appoint a Search Committee to review the applications we receive to identify those whom they feel are a good fit for St. Andrew's. So that you can be thinking ahead of time about your own interest in participating in the Committee, you should know that the Vestry intends to appoint any parishioner in good standing who expresses an interest to be a member of the Search Committee.

Fourth and finally, the Vestry receives a short list of candidates from the Search Committee and chooses our new priest from among them. Of course many factors can influence the time required to complete this process, but our goal is to have our priest by September, 2018. We in the

Vestry believe that for many reasons this process can be an improvement over our traditional ways of hiring a priest: Father Blaine will be working with us through the process, rather than, as in the old days, being isolated from it, and all of us will be invited to express our views, in writing and verbally, while the Vestry LISTENS.

This is how the process will work on Sunday the 10th: After a short service, we will meet in the Parish Hall. After a brief orientation on the ground rules, we will divide into small groups — we expect between about five to eight people in a group, each of which will have a Vestry moderator. Each person will receive a notepad and pencil, and be asked to write his or her response to two very open-ended questions: where are we as a parish and where do we want to go. Obviously, there are no “right” answers or right way to express them; some may want to write about finances, others about St Andrew’s role in the community, others about whom we serve. The only requirement is that you express your view. (Legibility would help too, but perfection is not required — we have some former teachers on the Vestry who are pretty good at deciphering scrawls).

We think this will take about twenty minutes for individual writing. Then you will be invited to take part in a discussion, to last about a half hour, about what you have written. The Vestry member/moderator’s role will be to listen and see to it that everyone has been heard. After that, you will be asked to respond to one last question about the conversation your group has had, and then we will be finished. We hope you will sign your comments, because we want to try to be sure that everyone has been heard. But again, this is about our parish community — you need to be heard. Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you on December 10th.

Michael Freeman, Senior Warden

+++



Do you want to be lifted up in the Spirit?

Are you seeking to grow spiritually?

Do you experience God through song and sacrament?

Yes, and that's why you come to church services at St. Andrew's. Well, the residents of Willowbrook Residential Care, an assisted living home for folks who live with mental illnesses, are seeking these experiences, too. And they have asked us to bring church to them.

Our first service at Willowbrook will be on
Saturday, December 16th, at 3:30 PM.

We will share Holy Communion with them using the rite in the *Book of Occasional Services*. It is brief (20-30 minutes), and usually includes a short reading, the day's Psalm, prayers, then the sacrament, all of which will be printed out in a bulletin, just like we have on Sunday mornings. We have been told that this group likes to sing, so we will have a guitar and a couple of well-known hymns, as well.

If you've never taken church out into the community before, you might be a little hesitant about joining in. Never fear! Fr. Blaine will lead the service and the rest of us will follow along in the bulletin as we do on Sunday mornings.



*Ho,
everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters.*

In The Spirit: Congregations find vitality through less dependence on clergy

One year ago this month, when I started asking mainline Protestant denominations to point me to their vital congregations with part-time pastors, I heard a lot of the same response: We don't have any. Oh, they explained, we have plenty of churches led by part-time clergy who either serve multiple congregations or work secular jobs ... we just don't have any that would qualify as healthy or particularly vital.

If only they knew their small congregations better. While some are indeed less than healthy, dozens of vital ones are proving every day that you don't need a full-time pastor in order to have stable finances, growing attendance, impactful mission outreach or other marks of vitality.

I know, because over the past year I visited 20 of them in 10 states, and I talked with even more by phone. They're churches like St. Columba's in Kent, Washington, where new vegetable gardens feed hungry neighbors and attendance is up more than 30 percent since the pastorate became part time three years ago. These faith communities are alive and well and doing great ministry. They're just not getting recognition from their Christian brothers and sisters. It's high time for churches to learn from those who're thriving by becoming less dependent on clergy. A whopping 40 percent of mainline congregations no longer have full-time paid clergy. In the Episcopal Church, it's 48 percent.

Congregations that experience new life after full-time clergy do so by empowering laypeople...Empowering laypeople means giving them latitude with parameters to use their considerable gifts more broadly and faithfully in the church. At Christ Episcopal Church in Bethel, Vermont, 10 of the 20 regular attendees take turns preaching. That takes pressure off the part-time priest, who works full time as an insurance agent and preaches only a few times a year. At Trinity United Church of Christ in Gloucester, deacons (not the pastor) keep tabs on congregants and provide a first line of pastoral care when needs arise. In these settings and others, laypeople draw on experiences in related professions, as well as training from clergy, to bless one another.

"It's up to us to keep the church alive," said Katie Runde, a Vermont artist who preaches several times a year at Christ Church, when I interviewed her one day after worship. "In some ways, it's more alive because every member is active."

Part-time pastors who count on laity to share pastoral responsibilities are freed up to minister beyond their churches' walls. At Salishan Lutheran East Side Mission in Tacoma, Washington, Pastor Lauren Vignec counsels gamblers at local casinos, delivers relief supplies in a public housing project and brings more than 100 teens and young men together for street dance competitions. He's able to do it all, on top

of his secular day job, because laypeople handle almost everything for Sunday worship. His church is vital as a result of the revamped division of labor between laity and pastor. But he's noticed most mainline congregations get the model wrong when they cut back to part-time clergy.

"They think of it like, 'We can have a 15-hour-a-week pastor, because it will take 15 hours to do all the things we want the pastor to do'. No, no, no, no, no," he said. "The church should do those things and let the pastor do something to bring in new people to the church, however that is going to work. And there are a ton of different ways to make it work."

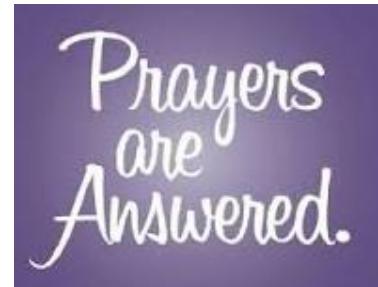
He's right. Most churches that have made the part-time switch are getting the model wrong, and they're less than vital as a consequence. They're leaving laypeople and clergy in their traditional roles when they need to be strategically redeploying assets and revisiting who does what. A brighter future lies ahead for those who choose it.

The Rev. Jeffrey MacDonald is an author & pastor of 1st Parish Church of Newbury, UCC.

+++

What happens when we pray?

Ben's Story: We have been praying for Ben, who last July 30th, was out bike riding when he was struck by a drunk driver near Scott's Creek. Though he survived, and escaped paralysis and major head trauma, he had many serious injuries: fractures to his legs, knee, vertebrae, ribs and scapula, as well as broken teeth, lacerations and bruises.



He has been in rehab since August 9th and this is what he wrote on November 23rd: Gratitude...For me this a feeling so intense that even after months of processing I can hardly conjure up the words to describe what goes through my heart when I open my eyes in the morning. I have gratitude to be alive, I have gratitude for my family, I have gratitude to be well on the road to a nearly complete recovery and I have gratitude that I am still capable of conscious thought...Your response to my injury has been, alongside meeting Thea and the birth of my children, the most significant uplifting event of my life. I have been astounded by the breadth and depth of your response and often wonder what I could possibly have done to deserve it; it is profoundly moving nonetheless. In the past few days I have been able to walk short distances with only the aid of a cane and completely brace free. Last week I went to work and yesterday I drove. Each one of you has helped me get to where I am now and each one of you is helping me move forward from here. So, from the bottom of my heart and from deep within my soul, I want to say thank you. With love and hugs to all, *Ben Abrams (friend of the Fishels)*



Advent Series
December 3rd, 10th, 17th
6:00 - 7:30 PM
St. Andrew's Parish Hall

How do we prepare?
Learn to see his coming in our hearts
and in each other.
Come to draw, but mostly to talk.
Bring crayons, colored pencils, charcoal - whatever you prefer.
Some will be provided if you don't have any.

Holy Spirit Potluck!
Bring what the Spirit moves you to bring.

Who will set up and clean up? If you will, please sign up on the bulletin board.

Christmas Service Schedule

December 24th: 4th Sunday in Advent - 8 AM & 10 AM

December 24th: Christmas Eve – 4 PM, Family Service

December 24th: Christmas Eve – 10 PM, Festal Eucharist

December 25th: No Service

Christmas Carols at Boomeria



Saturday, December 9, 2017, at 8:00 PM . Our 57th year.

Bill Visscher, spectacular organist and organ builder, will be roaring out the carols.

DRESS WARMLY! EXPECT RAIN! ATTENTION:

Please DO NOT PARK on Verde Drive!

This street is not wide enough to accommodate both parking and emergency vehicles. You may park on the upper street, Vick Drive.

Please *do not place this invite on Facebook* or other media! We do not have space for a huge gathering! Note: The Castle and Catacombs will be closed and locked. If you wish to explore, choose a date in the Spring when it is dry.

+++

Experiencing God through song