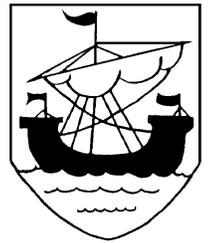


Canterbury Tales



The Newsletter of St. Anselm's Church, Lafayette, California

April, 2020

From The Rector

Ministry in the Age of Pandemic - We've Got You!

Reading Canterbury Tales for the first time? Ha! I wouldn't be surprised. We have more time on our hands don't we?

We are reshaping how we do ministry at St. Anselm's. Many of you were on our third Zoom streaming service last Sunday, and we had 76 devices signed in. That tells me we had well over 100 participants, which is more than we normally have at church!

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we are learning each Sunday as we move forward:

- ◆ We are offering Birthday and Anniversary prayers for those who let us know ahead of time that they will be participating in the service
- ◆ We now have the services recorded for later viewing
- ◆ We have upgraded our Zoom service to accommodate up to 500 participants. Feel free to invite anyone you want to join us!

If you are reading this, and are not yet on our list of folks to whom we send the invitation to participate, email Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws and she will get you on the list. Want friends on the list? Send them Cathy's email address and she will get them on as well.

There are other groups that will be meeting as well, and also open for you and/or friends to participate in over Zoom:

Contemporary Bible Study, every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. The group generally picks books that provide a variety of perspectives from current writers and scholars that can expand our knowledge of context and inform our consideration of the Word. We are currently reading a book entitled Zealot. Here is what Wikipedia says about the book:

Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth is a book by Iranian-American writer and scholar Reza Aslan. It is a historical account of the life of Jesus and analyzes the various religious perspectives on Jesus as well as the creation of Christianity. It (was) a *New York Times* best seller. Aslan argues that Jesus was a political, rebellious and eschatological (end times) Jew whose proclamation of the coming kingdom of God was a call for regime change, for ending Roman hegemony over Judea and ending a corrupt and oppressive aristocratic priesthood.

(Aslan grew up in San Jose, and taught at nearby De La Salle High School at one point in his career.)

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Anselm's Angels

"We will come out of this storm. In the coming days, we have to stay calm and confident. And for sure, we will overcome this moment of despair. How long this will last cannot be ascertained. But the one thing that we can be sure of is that we will not be the same anymore. Hopefully, we would have changed for the better. This is the way of life. This is how life teaches us its lessons."

~ Avijeet Das

A very big thank you to the following parishioners who are helping St. Anselm's stay connected and operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chris Young for serving as our official cameraman and Zoom expert to make sure we all have access to Sunday services.

Sylvia Williams for providing altar guild support to Father John and **Sally Fischer** for delivering the new Paschal candle.

Andrew & Caroline Huddart for agreeing to provide music for our Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services.

Sara Nelson for making weekly bank deposits.

Marian Mulkey for coordinating calls to the homebound among us.

(Continued from page 1)

All you need to participate in the group is the book. We go around the group and take turns reading. If someone wants to comment on something we have read, they just speak up and we discuss.

Grief Support Group, First Tuesday of every month at noon. You don't need to have lost a loved one to participate. Loss of a job or a long-term relationship can also qualify you to join. Format - very simple: we go around the group and have a check in about what has gone on in the last month. If there have been birthdays or anniversaries, they can often trigger emotional responses, and we talk about them. There are members who have participated for a long time, and they provide support and perspective for those who are just entering into the grief process and over time can reduce the pain.

Cancer Support Group, First Sunday of every month at 11:30 a.m. Led by Julie Rinkenberger, the group will continue to meet via Zoom. To be invited, email Julie directly at jrjpmaggie@hotmail.com. The group meets for about an hour, and is open to those who have been diagnosed with cancer and their family members. The group checks in each month to provide updates on our status, and we have a considerable resource in Dr. Rinkenberger who knows a lot about a variety of cancers and treatments.

Mid-week Worship Service (being planned). This group is being put together in response to the pandemic, to connect those of us seeking additional community in worship. We are considering at least one service per week, and perhaps more based on level of interest. We will follow the Morning Prayer service from the Book of Common Prayer. There may or may not be a simple form of Bible Study included, also based on what folks want. Length of service? 20 minutes or more.

If you are interested in possibly being included in this group, please contact Deacon Naomi directly at orchidsnrch@att.net or at 925-689-1720. She will be sending out a survey to guide us in determining how best to structure the group.

New Pastoral Ministry Opportunity - Home Contact

With the understanding that there are those among us that are living alone and may like an occasional friend to talk to, we are putting together a list of folks that would be interested in being on either end of that phone call. As this moves forward, we may be able to expand services.

If you are interested in this shared ministry, either email Cathy Witkay (cathy.w@stanselms.ws) or me at suttonj@comcast.net.

Finally, I have a suggestion for how we might expand our joint ministry. Are there folks at church that you have connected with over a common interest? Why not set up a group around that? Ministry teams, would it be helpful to check in with each other even if there is no agenda to cover? Zoom and FaceTime can make this happen very easily. No need to pay to set up a small meeting of your own.

I am blessed to minister to some very smart and resourceful folks who get it in every way. We walk into this new phase of life knowing that we are surrounded by very capable friends who will find new ways to bring blessings into the new world that is taking shape before us all.

John+

Canterbury Tales is the monthly newsletter of
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Virtual Sunday Service:
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

St. Anselm's Staff
The Rev. John Sutton, Rector
The Rev. Naomi Chamberlain-Harris, Deacon
Cathy Witkay, Office Manager

The Senior Warden

As I sit down to write this month's senior warden message, I do so from my desk at work. Sitting next to me is the toilet paper I bought out of the trunk of a coworker's car. Each day I wake up knowing that I will leave the house when so many others do not. They are either working from home in the best case scenario or they have been laid off in the worst. If you don't already know, I work for Contra Costa Public Health Clinic Services and recently became a Public Health Program Specialist just about five months ago. What does this mean? It means I'm on the front line of what our County's public health department is doing to help stop the spread of COVID-19. I worked thirteen days in a row to help ensure that we are doing everything we can to meet the public health's need at this time. And it has been both profoundly terrifying and incredible all at the same time.

If any of you are like me, you are glued to social media and news channels for up to the minute information about what's happening around the world and locally due to the pandemic. You see story after story of hardship, pain, fear and sorrow. At times, you might feel paralyzed about what to do next or feel so helpless you can hardly stand it. I've been there, I know these feelings intimately. As a manager, I have staff who are still working in community clinics because I schedule them to be there and they don't have enough masks. And the anxiety? It feeds itself constantly with uncertainty and fear. Working for the betterment of our community's health I sometimes feel that I'm still not doing enough.

It's when the fear and anxiety get to the point where it's nearly unbearable that I look heavenward and ask "how do I get through this? How do any of us get through this?"

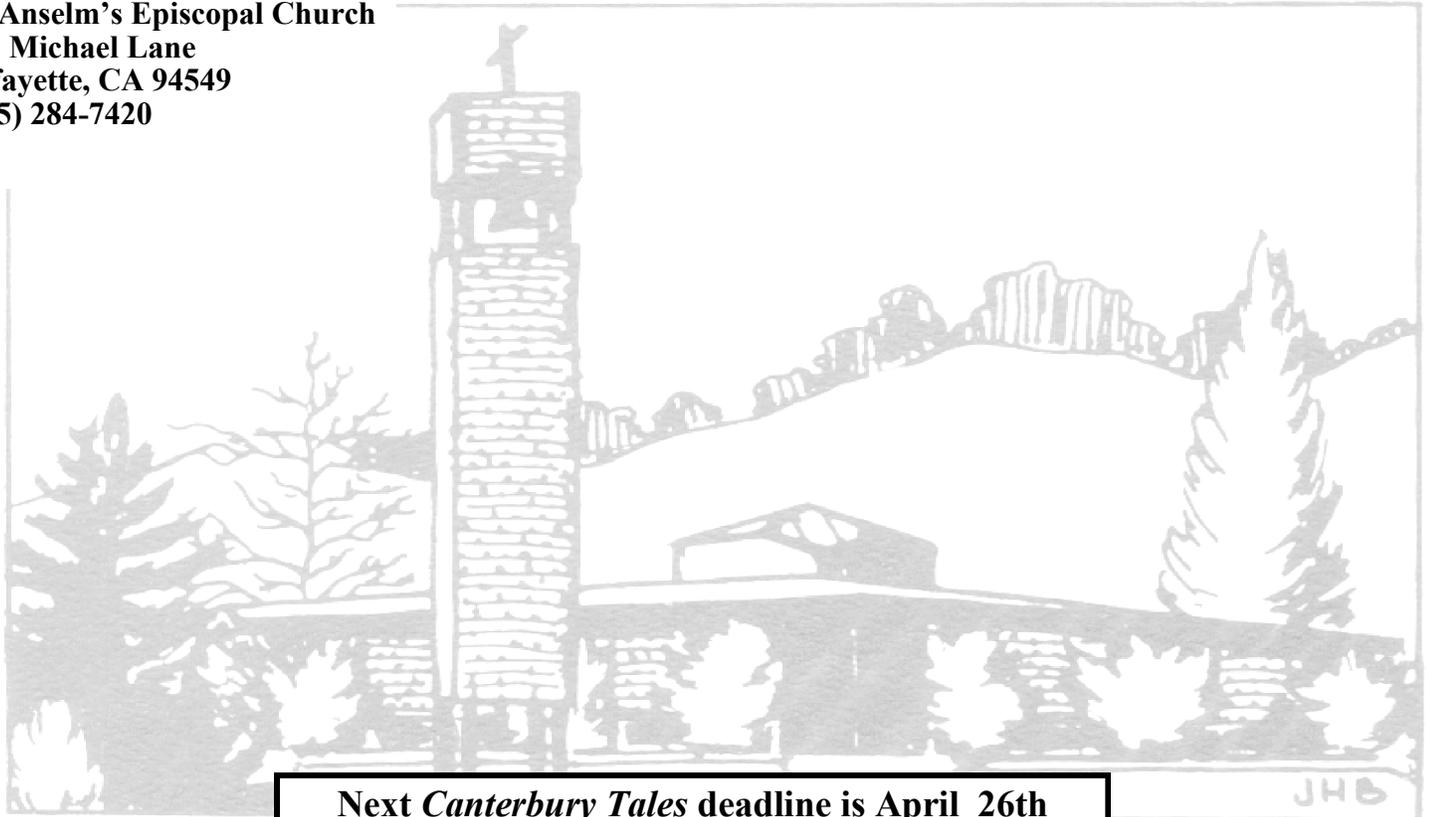
And that's when I get my answer. A video of a young girl finishing her last chemo treatment being welcomed home by folks parked in cars lining her entire neighborhood. It's in stories of young people reaching out to their elderly neighbors to see how they can help them in their time of need. It's when we began testing our healthcare workers and first responders in the parking lot of my building and seeing the gratitude in otherwise scared folk's faces. It's taking a moment between patients and having a dance battle against the nurses and the traffic staff at our testing site. It's in the feeling that humanity has risen to the occasion and will continue to rise as one voice saying "we got this, yo."

There is still a long road ahead of us; a road that holds distance and hardship and heartache. But we at St. Anselm's are a community united in fellowship and love. We are united in our faith in God and each other. If you are feeling scared or vulnerable, reach out to those you know within the church. Continue to enjoy John's Zoom services and sermons. Find peace in your faith and in knowing that there are people out there who are fighting the good fight for humanity. I feel our faith when times are dark and each day I walk out the door, I take that faith with me and it gives me immense strength. Take that faith with you and find the peace within. Remember, we got this, yo.

Shanda Young



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Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is April 26th

Holy Week — Virtual Services

<u>Sunday, April 5th</u> PALM SUNDAY	9:00 AM
<u>Thursday, April 9th</u> MAUNDY THURSDAY	7:00 PM
<u>Friday, April 10th</u> GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE WITH STATIONS OF THE CROSS	7:00 PM
<u>Sunday, April 12th</u> EASTER SUNDAY	9:00 AM

