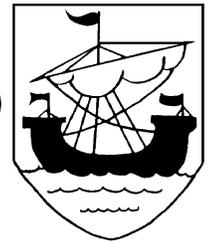


Canterbury Tales



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

September, 2020

From The Rector

Brother Bernard

This morning during Morning Prayer, the words of the Song Of Creation resonated with me as I listened to them being read from the Book of Common Prayer. When the writer of those words transcribed them centuries ago they came from an experience of awe in observing the unity of the cosmos. On some occasions in prayer you can share the experience of awe. But not often. I was prepared for paucity in prayerful wonder many years ago by Bernard.

Brother Bernard was a monk who was my spiritual advisor. He was also a very good friend. Some of you who have been at St. Anselm's for a long time may remember Brother Bernard. He presented a series on Thomas Merton and Mysticism at our Lenten series, somewhere around 20 years ago.

I met Bernard when I was in seminary. He was in his 70s, about 5'4", mostly bald with blue piercing eyes. His voice had the timber of grinding sandpaper.

As monks go, Bernard was colorful. I don't know how many monks have tattoos these days, but back then none did. Except Bernard; his was on his forearm. His tattoo was "U.S.N." in front of an anchor. He got it when he was in the Navy.

Bernard enlisted in the Navy as a teenager, before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was very smart and capable and became a Chief Petty Officer at the unheard-of age of 19. He showed me a photo of him when he made Chief. They didn't make khakis for men the size of teenagers, so his belt was cinched tight to hold his pants up with a good length of the belt hanging off to the side. The smallest combination hat they could find engulfed his head.

Bernard was Admiral Spruance's navigator during World War II. The name Spruance may not mean much to most of you reading this, but he was the in-theatre Commander in the war in the Pacific. Bernard was at every major engagement in the Pacific during the War except Iwo Jima. He survived two kamikaze attacks to the bridge of the command ship where he was present. In one of them, a Marine adjutant who was his best friend and more died.

Bernard was fine for many years after the war. Until, while I knew him, PTSD kicked in. Fortunately, a fellow seminarian at the time was married to a psychiatrist who worked at the V.A. down at Stanford. Bernard got the help he needed.

(Continued on page 4)

Anselm's Angels

A very big thank you to the following parishioners who continue to help 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.

Andrew Huddart for adding music to our virtual services.

Sara Nelson for making weekly bank deposits.

Sally Fischer for regularly checking altar supplies.

Our virtual lectors and Lay Eucharist Ministers: **Wynne Bacon, Anne Brown, Sheila Gorsuch, Pam Green, Palmer Hightower, Caroline Huddart, Marian Mulkey, Sara Nelson, Liz Sutton, Eva Woo, and Allen Zhang.**

Our Sacred Ground facilitators **Anne Brown** and **Marian Mulkey** and **Cindy Eisenberg** who is assisting Anne with Zoom.

Canterbury Tales is the monthly newsletter of

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, CA
Phone: (925) 284-7420

e-mail: cathy.w@stanselms.ws
web site: www.stanselms.ws

Editor: Cathy S. Witkay

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

ONE OF THE WAYS THAT COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED ST. ANSELM'S

In reviewing the second quarter financials this week, the Vestry found that our plate offering is down significantly over the last couple of months. Each year, as we plan a budget, we set a figure based on the giving in previous years. Plate offering is a substantial factor in St. Anselm's being able to meet its financial obligations.

The shortfall is to be expected this year, as no one can come to church. But there is a way of donating during the service. With a Venmo account, you can transfer funds directly to the church via your smart phone. If you would like instructions on how to do so, please email Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws. Alternatively, you can always donate by sending a check to the church. The mailing address is: 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, CA 94549 Thank you!

NEW MICHAEL LANE PRESCHOOL STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Hello St. Anselm's: I'm Holly Higgins, the new Director at Michael Lane Preschool! I am an alumni parent of the school, where my youngest child attended for 3 delightful years. I come to Michael Lane Preschool with 14 years of classroom experience, teaching kindergarten through 4th grade, and was awarded the Herbst Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence in 2011. I earned a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Oregon, and have taught in Oregon, New York City and California. A native Californian, I love being outdoors with my family, reading in the hammock, going to the ballet, and trying new things! Joining our staff this year is Danielle Mallari. Danielle has been working with kids for many years through her church as well as the childcare from her previous job and many one-on-one babysitting jobs. She simultaneously received her High School diploma and AA degree in Liberal Arts: Math and Science a few years back. She is driven and extremely passionate about working with children and is looking forward to being part of the small but loving community at Michael Lane Preschool. In her free time, Danielle enjoys creative writing, reading, and trying out new and exciting recipes to share with her family! Colleen Miller is returning to our staff this year to assist with the Tuesday/Thursday class.

WINTER NIGHTS UPDATE

If this were a "normal" year, without a pandemic, we'd be preparing for our Winter Nights families to be arriving on Sept. 6. Eva Woo would be recruiting volunteers to bring meals, be greeters, help unload and set up tents in Jackson Hall. I would be clearing my calendar to be the point person while they are with us. Instead, we will not be hosting Winter Nights this year.

I would like to give you an update on what is happening. We had said "No" to hosting this year, because of concerns about potentially exposing children in our preschool to Covid-19. It turns out that a number of other churches, also with preschools and schools, have said "No". Then Contra Costa County forbade Winter Nights to house families in any churches or other venues. They have since rescinded that order, giving permission for 4 families at a time to be housed in churches, provided that they are there for 4 weeks, shelter-in-place, have the 4 tents 12 feet apart from each other, with a table next to each tent for eating.

It has been hard to find churches, given those requirements, especially the 4-week one. As of now, they are scheduled to start on Nov. 2. They have commitments from 4 churches and are working on 4 others. Clearly, they need our prayers.

I know that we have had a relationship with Winter Nights for many years, and it's heartfelt. I thought that all of you who have nurtured and served the families in the past would want to know what is going on, hence this update. I intend to stay in touch with the program and will give you updates from time to time.

Anne Brown

The Senior Warden

During this time of such strong emotions on both sides of the political line I think it's important to think about the dichotomy between those who feel free and those who still are oppressed. One of my favorite pieces to demonstrate this dichotomy is the poem below by Maya Angelou. When I first read it I didn't understand it the way I do today, take a moment and read the poem below. Then read it again tomorrow. Then read it again a week from tomorrow. Then read it one month later. Until you really get the opportunity to get to know the poem and the message within.

Caged Bird **By Maya Angelou**

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Shanda Young

(Continued from page 1)

After the War, Bernard got a degree from Harvard and then attended seminary and got ordained. He was briefly a parish priest.

It was not a job he was cut out for.

He told me he had one elderly lady in his parish who would schedule times with him for confession. He could barely hold back from telling her to go away as she confessed to him that she had taken one-too-many pieces of chocolate the previous day. Chief Petty Officers who work for Admirals during wars are good at giving and taking orders upon which lives depend. They are not so good at assigning penance for eating an extra bon bon.

Bernard did not find it easy to adapt to the ways in which supervision in the military differs from the way it works in the church. He got into a spat with the renowned Bishop Pike over something Bernard wrote the Bishop in a too-direct letter of complaint. Bishop Pike replied to his letter:

“Dear Father Bernard, I am in receipt of your vituperative missive...”

Knowing he had been insulted by a fellow Ivy Leaguer, Bernard jumped into his car the next morning and drove directly from Watsonville to the Diocesan office in San Francisco, demanding a meeting with the Bishop. After sitting in the waiting room for most of the day, around four p.m. he got his meeting.

I don't know how that meeting went, but somewhere along the line, Bernard came to see that parish ministry wasn't for him. He joined the Order of the Holy Cross where he was a monk until his death in his 80s.

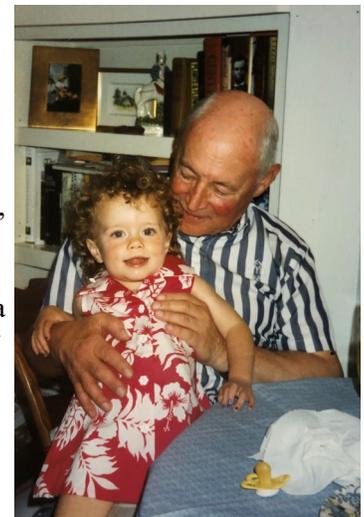
The Order of the Holy Cross is a monastic order of the Episcopal Church. Monks take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Not surprisingly, Bernard, like most monks, found obedience to be the hardest of the three. The Abbott of the house in Berkeley, Brother Tom, was about Bernard's age. They never got along. One time during evening prayer, Tom came over to Bernard with arms spread wide, saying, “Peace of the Lord Bernard!” Bernard turned in the opposite direction, and walking away from Tom, flipped a dismissive hand behind him and turned back his head to say, “SHUT UP!”

Personality conflicts aside, I think the discipline of the monastic life was good for Bernard. Praying the daily office three times each day as monks do and reading the entire Psalter each week, provided a structure for him to carry to God the considerable loss he knew. To witness the one person in your lifetime with whom you shared love incinerated before your eyes on the opposite end of the bridge would be an unspeakable loss in any age. But it was entirely unspeakable in his. So he took it to God. He took on the monastic yoke, and found the burden light.

Though he questioned nearly everything, I never heard Bernard question his faith. He did warn me though of the desert experiences of prayer. Monks don't get so good at prayer that they enter into a state of nirvana more than you or me. They just pray more often. And they get comfortable being in the desert. Because they have been there before and come out the other side, they have the confidence that they will do so again. And they are grounded in the knowledge that when they have those heightened, even mystical experiences in prayer- God is doing the praying.

My friend Bernard lived a quiet life devoted to prayer. By the time I met him he was a cantankerous old monk, with a great sense of humor. The greatest testament to me for the power of prayer was a little tattooed monk named Bernard van Waes. Because while nothing else in life measured up for him, a life time devoted to prayer did.

John+



Bernard & Kate, circa 1997

HARVEST FESTIVAL UPDATE FOR 2020

Dear St. Anselm's Community:

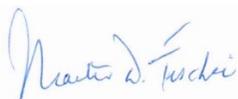
For the last 6 years, our St. Anselm's family has celebrated the annual Harvest Festival and the proceeds were donated to help Trinity Center serve the needs of others not so fortunate as ourselves. Our last three annual efforts have provided an average of \$50,000 per year and have helped establish Trinity Center as a premier charitable institution with its mission to support our greater Walnut Creek needs of those without homes or on the verge of losing their homes.

After significant discussions within the Harvest Festival committee and with Trinity Center, we have made the difficult decision to cancel our traditional dinner and auction event. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to restrict our freedoms and cause havoc with our traditions and institutions. The local impact of Covid has led to a surge in homelessness. In fact, Trinity Center reports that the first six months of 2020 versus the same period in 2019, showed a 25% increase in service demands. Female client numbers increased by 38% and soared by 51% among women 55+. 30% more women reported domestic abuse and the numbers among men, while somewhat less, rose significantly. And keep in mind, Covid only was being felt for the last half of this January-June 2020 period, so the impact may be substantially greater in the months following.

In place of the Annual Harvest Festival Dinner, the committee and vestry have agreed to develop a direct appeal networking outreach, to call attention to these burgeoning needs and to limit the appeal to cash gifts. There will be no auction, dinner or raffle this year. We anticipate fielding an email, social media and direct mail campaign beginning around the 15th of September through mid-December. If you agree with the importance of the Trinity Center mission, please give generously to support their efforts. Each appeal will be designed so that you may send it to your friends and associates outside the St. Anselm's family whom you believe will support the Trinity Center mission. If each of us took the time to send out the communications we receive to just 3 or 4 friends, or to those local businesses we deal with, our results could increase substantially.

We thought it best to inform you now of this plan and that there will be no physical Harvest Festival event this fall. However, the help made possible by the Harvest Festival program in past years will be pursued more directly. Throughout this process we will focus on the loving community at Trinity Center that we helped to create and support. Our goal is ever more important and we hope you will help us to achieve another successful outreach to benefit those less fortunate within our local community.

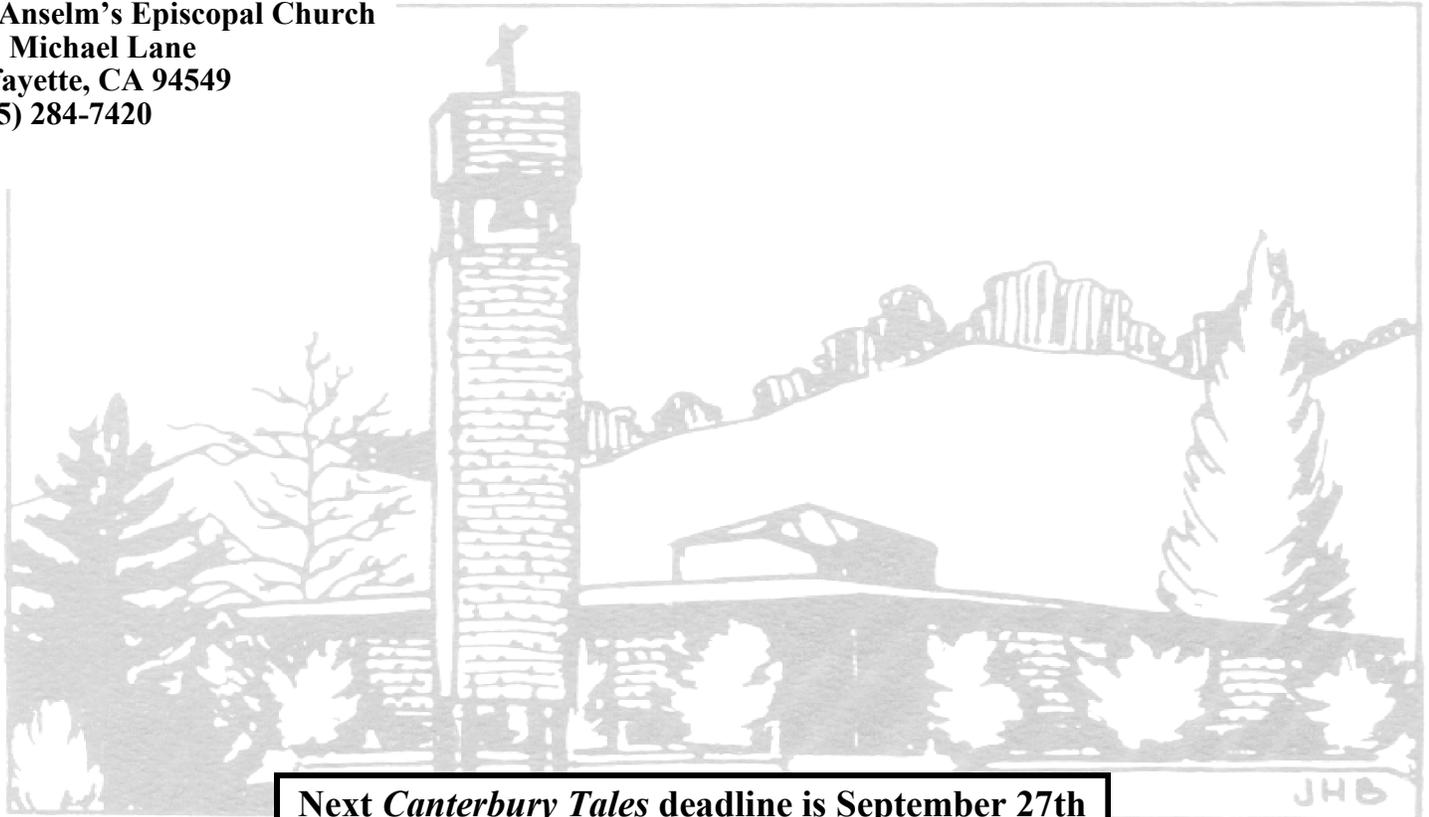
Stay Safe!



Marty Fischer
Chairman,
Harvest Festival Committee



St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
682 Michael Lane
Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-7420



Next *Canterbury Tales* deadline is September 27th

SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

September 1st Grief Support Group will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Father John at suttonj@comcast.net.

September 2nd and each Wednesday in September, Morning Prayer will be held via Zoom at 9:00 AM. To be invited, email Deacon Naomi at orchidsnrch@yahoo.com.

September 6th, Cancer Support Group, will meet via Zoom at 12:00 noon. To be invited, email Julie Rinkenberg at jrijpmaggie@hotmail.com.

September 7th & 21st – Sacred Ground will be facilitated by Anne Brown from 10:30 a.m. to noon. To be invited, email Anne at annechalfantbrown@gmail.com or Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws.

September 8th & 22nd – Sacred Ground will be facilitated by Marian Mulkey from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. To be invited, email Marian at marianmulkey@comcast.net or Cathy Witkay at cathy.w@stanselms.ws.

September 21st, Vestry, will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Vestry members will receive an email from Father John with the meeting link.
