



St. John's Scroll

March 2025 Vol. XL

Upcoming Services

Date	Liturgical Day	Time	Rite	Officiant & Sermon	Altar Guild
03/02/25	The Last Sunday after the Epiphany	10:00 AM	Morning Prayer Rite 2	Samantha Snodderly	Ellen – Lynn
03/05/25	Ash Wednesday	10:00 AM	Special liturgy	Alan Rockwood	
03/09/25	The 1st Sunday in Lent	10:00 AM	Deacon's Mass Rite 2	Alan Rockwood	Charlotte – Olga
03/16/25	The 2nd Sunday in Lent	10:00 AM	Communion Rite 2	Ossie Knowlton	Olga – Charlotte
03/23/25	The 3rd Sunday in Lent	10:00 AM	Morning Prayer Rite 2	Hunter Davis	Mandy – JoCarol
03/30/25	The 4th Sunday in Lent	10:00 AM	Deacon's Mass Rite 2	Alan Rockwood	Mandy – JoCarol

March Birthdays

3/5	Dawson Winter	3/16	Michael Funk
3/8	Darla Dubry	3/19	Cierra Driscoll
3/10	Olivia Driscoll	3/20	Madeline Stephens
3/11	John Matsuura	3/20	James Dubry
3/15	Michael Weston	3/21	Don Pennington
		3/25	Rachel Funk

March Anniversaries

3/26 Hunter and Deb Davis

Brief from the Editor

Taylor & I have been thinking about the sometimes outsize part *suffering* plays in the lives of Christ's followers. Even if we don't consciously think about it when praying for the St. John's family, our expressed petitions for those troubled with ill health of various kinds make clear that being a Christian doesn't keep us from knowing, in Shakespeare's words, "what all flesh is heir to."

*Have mercy on_____.....Ease the pain and discomfort
of_____.....Provide relief from the
chronic_____.....Restore health, we pray...!*

An idea for a devotional was forming in my mind when I came upon a particularly encouraging meditation on the same subject by an English clergyman named Dr. John Jowett, who did most of his writing in the late nineteenth century. Jowett is a fount of concise wisdom, and makes his point in several hundred less words than I'd be able to do. And I love his thought that often our prayers land *in medias res*, or "in the middle of things." By the time we get around to praying for an infirmity, the suffering is well under way, and many times we're not near the end of it yet. But this doesn't mean our trust in God's goodness should lapse. Prayers for ourselves and others are part of the means to God's end of our suffering. Anyway, Jowett is a master of the devotional art, so I commend his words to you on the matter: the title is "Moving Towards Daybreak," and the meditative verse is from what sounds at first to be discouragement from Lamentations, Chapter 3: "He hath brought me into darkness, but not into light."

A man may be in darkness, and yet in motion toward the light. I was in the darkness of a subway train, and it was close and oppressive, but I was moving toward the light and fragrance of the open country. I

entered into a tunnel in the Black Country in England, but the motion continued, and soon we emerged amid fields of loveliness. So the great thing to remember is that God's darkneses are not His goals; His tunnels are intended to carry us somewhere else. Yes, His darkneses are appointed ways to His light. In God's keeping we are always moving, and we are moving toward Emmanuel's land, where the sun shines and the birds sing night & day.

There is no stagnancy for the God-directed soul. He is ever guiding us, sometimes with the delicacy of a glance, sometimes the firmer ministry of a grip, but He moves alongside us always, even through 'the valley of the shadow of death.' Therefore be patient, my soul! The darkness is not your end, the tunnel is not your abiding home! He will bring you out into a large place where You will know 'the liberty of the glory of the children of God.' "

Spencer Landis Doss and her husband Conall will be in Ketchikan this summer working for the museum. They are looking for house sitting opportunities and will be in town from May 12-August 11. Please contact Spencer if you can help her out. Her number is 907-617-5307.

Four Questions for...*Mtr. Barb Massenburg*

Now that you've retired from both the Forest Service and as active senior clergy at St. John's, what do you fill your hours with?

(laughs) Whatever I want! You know, I'm approaching my 88th birthday. My grandmother, who everyone says I'm a clone of -- I look just like she did at this age -- lived to be 98, so I figure I've got at least another decade. I actually want to beat her and live to be one hundred. You know they put your picture in the paper when that happens, but I want to start a new tradition for people who hit that milestone. I thought about this when I opened my fuel bill a few days ago, and found I owed \$700! It's kind of a wild idea, but I think people who reach a hundred years old should get their photo published AND a full tank of fuel, free.



We interviewed JoCarol a few months back and asked her about the dart that's embedded in the ceiling of St. John's. She very politely said that the person who put it there was a member of a prominent family in the church....

Oh, that was George Mather. His dad was the priest at St. Elizabeth's at the time. It must have been back in the 1930s there was a popular toy that you wound up with a rubber band and the propeller would shoot up into the air whatever missile you wanted to launch. When George

was a boy he had one of those, and he was the one who launched that dart. It hit so hard, the point stuck into the wood, and now, almost a hundred years later, it's still there.

In his later years George returned to church, and when he came to St John's, he sat in the pew below where the dart is embedded. He used to say, "When that comes down, I'm getting it, and keeping it!"

Who, of all the clergy you've associated with over the years, was most inspiring to you?

Father Gary Herbst. No question. He had so much energy, and was so positive. If you had a creative idea for how to do something different, you know, try something new, he'd always encourage it. It wasn't "No, we have to do things the way we always have," it was "Let's try it!" The church grew when he was here, and he was here for about 15 years. He was kind of like a kid in that he took delight in little things, spontaneous ideas.

There was one Easter Sunday that happened to be a gorgeous sunny day, green things were waking up, and after church Gary said to a group of us who were talking, "Let's take my canoe up to Harriet Hunt!" Why not, we thought, and so I threw a picnic lunch together and Bob & I, I think Earl and Lana, drove up there. And guess what? Harriet Hunt was frozen over. We could not believe it! Ward Lake wasn't frozen, and everything down below seemed so much like spring, but...well, we just had our lunch on the tailgate and chalked it up to a good story to tell in the future.

What was your biggest challenge the years that you were Rector, in between Father Gary and Father Ron Kotrc?

Let's see, when I was running the show I had a certain amount of confidence that I could do it because of Gary's example and the parish

seemed to be behind me. But you know, I never got over the nervousness that comes with being up at the altar saying those words and knowing how important consecration of the bread and wine is to people. Every Sunday in some sense it was “the first time” for me. It felt that way.

And yet...it was never quite the same every Sunday. There would always be some phrase or word in the liturgy that would stand out to me. You’d think it would get to be monotonous, but it wasn’t. Another thing is that I never felt alone when I was up there behind the altar. All the priests who ever served at St. John’s and St. Elizabeth’s were with me in some way.

We’ll come back and ask you some more questions when you’re a bona fide centenarian! Thank you, Mother Barb, for all your service to God over the years *and* for the great stories!

Sermons from the Vault

PASSING THE PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING

by Stephen Bradford delivered October 15, 2023

Horrible atrocities in Israel! Unimaginable things done to babies, children, families, and elders. And next comes the retribution in Gaza, with more suffering, misery and death yet to occur.

Unspeakable war crimes and 600 days of Russian invasion into Ukraine, with no end in sight. Death, suffering, and destruction!

Our own U.S. Congress, indeed our entire political process, frozen and incapable of effectively governing. And instead of serving our best interests, many of our politicians instead choose to go on television or social media to make wild accusations, score political points, or ask for donations.

Closer to home: for our commercial fishermen, the salmon season was effectively cancelled early because there is no market for the abundant catches our friends and family members were making. It will be a tough winter for many.

The world is in chaos. The sky-is-falling headlines grab our attention, which is what the newsmakers hope. But they also grab our thoughts and cause us to worry about our future, or the futures of our loved ones. a never-ending newsfeed delivers a constant drumbeat of the bad things happening in our world.

And then today, we get a little bit of advice from the Apostle Paul. Our second reading is from the epistle written by Paul, who also names Timothy as a co-writer. This letter is addressed to the church in Phillipi, a large city in Greece. Let's hear a part of it again, starting with verse 4 in Chapter 4:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Now here is my paraphrase of these three verses:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, all your concerns and worries. And don't forget to thank Him for His blessings – for all that you have – and for the answers

He provides. If you become good and consistent at doing this, you will experience the peace of God, which cannot be understood. It is beyond us, but it will lift your spirits, blunt your worries, and will also guard, protect, and keep your hearts and minds focused on Christ instead of on the evil of the world.

Good advice if we can keep it.

Our reading today, and the portion I just read again, includes one of my favorite phrases from the Bible: “The peace that passes understanding.” I think one reason for my affection comes from Vacation Bible Schools and the Sunday school I attended as a child. A chorus we frequently sang begins: “I’ve got the joy joy joy joy down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart!” The second verse asserts that “I have the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart!” But my favorite verse of that song went, “I’ve got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart!”

For some reason, this childlike faith that joy, peace, and love are alive in our hearts has always stuck with me and provided comfort. And isn’t that a great example of what we hope Sunday School and teaching our children about Christ will do? Provide peace and comfort. That peace we have but cannot quite understand has personal meaning for me in another way. Some twenty-five years ago a very dear friend of mine, Dan, a man with whom I had shared a men’s Bible study for several years, was dying of a brain tumor. He was only forty-five, with a wife and two teenage kids.

He had been sent home from the hospital for his final days, and I went to visit him and his wife. They had set Dan up in a bedroom on the main level of the house, down the hall from the entry, so when I arrived, I was whispering to his wife, Janie, being careful not to make any unnecessary noise. She and I sat at the kitchen table when I heard

this voice from down the hall say, “Is that Stephen? Come in here and see me!” After a lovely conversation with Dan I left him and returned to sit with his wife a bit longer. I inquired as to how she was doing, and whether there was anything I could do, and her response was, “Steve, we are fine. We will be fine. We have the peace that passes understanding because we have Christ.”

She could have been mired in sadness worrying about her future, her kids’ future. She could have been focused only on losing her husband, or on the suffering he was enduring. Instead, with the knowledge that Dan was going home to be with Christ, and that Christ would continue to comfort and be with her, she was living the peace that passes understanding.

And here in today’s appointed epistle is that phrase from Philippians again, which brings back memories of Dan and the old Sunday school song. I have often hearkened back to that time I spent with Janie, filled with admiration and respect for her, and a hope that I too can find the peace that passes understanding through my relationship with Christ.

It isn’t easy. But I will say this. If we turn off the news channels, put down the phone, and just consider all our blessings, or simply reflect on the love of Christ, or have a prayer conversation with God, it can do wonders for a person’s attitude and outlook. I cannot encourage you enough to do this.

Oh, and one more thing about that chorus that I still love. For an 8, 9, or 10-year-old boy, the really fun Sunday school teachers would let us add onto the end a different verse that went like this: “And if the devil doesn’t like it he can sit on a tack! Where? Sit on a tack!”



Where are They Now?

Maria and Ray Pointer, former parishioners from the previous and early 21st centuries, have made their home in Port Isabel, Texas, near the South Padre Island Causeway. That's about as far south in Texas that you can go and still be in the United States. You might remember a Gulf disaster in 2001 when at night a pusher tug rammed into the causeway and passengers, because

they were driving uphill and couldn't see the caved-in road, drove off the cracked open causeway and eight people were killed.

Before the Pointers moved to Port Isabel they had a different house, the last one on the Texas side on Hwy 4 before BocaChica Beach. New neighbor SpaceX, however, "consumed our homestead, fruit trees and gardens" when they erected the huge Star Factory that builds rockets. "Needless to say life has never been the same or as wonderful," Maria says, "you just can't find spots like we had anymore in this world."

Now they live in a resort area four and a half miles from their previous home. "They seem to love us here," Maria says, although it's obvious as former Alaskans that Maria and Ray feel like they're in "a different league." "I was always lumped into the Canadian introductions when we first arrived. Alaska was too hard to digest or categorize for most folks," Maria laughs. Elon Musk's Space X interests have inflated the local economy, another big change from the early years of the Pointers' time in the area, and Maria says many senior citizens who used to split their time between northern plains states or Canada and

the Port Isabel area now struggle financially. Although the Pointers are retired, Maria retains "a little postage stamp sized piece of property on the Rio Grande, and I run what is now a little dry campsite for Space X rocket launch viewing.

Maria and Ray's challenges since the pandemic have been major. She has had major surgery on her neck and back, and Ray endured a cancer battle. They were uprooted from their first home in the area, and Maria's former husband, Paul Crowl, passed away. They tried the local Episcopal church and although the people were nice and there is nothing wrong with the parish, Maria said they had a hard time feeling connected there. After moving away from Ketchikan about 15 years ago, the Pointers lived in Haines, where they attended St. Michaels and All Angels Episcopal Church. "That place is just as special as St John's in a different way," Maria said. "The sadness of leaving St John's was blunted by how at home we felt at our Haines church. And we continued to Zoom with them until after Covid was over, and then they stopped videoconferencing the services, and so now both places are 'former churches' of ours. But I love visiting them both when we travel in the summer."

Maria's daughters Chelsea and Cynthia, who were raised at St. John's, are both doing well. Cynthia married Peter Amylon and lives in Ketchikan, working at KIC. Chelsea is in Oregon and very busy working in social media tech.



Clergy: Mtr. Barb Massenburg, retired; Deacon Alan Rockwood

Clerk: Ossie Knowlton

Sexton: Ellen Funk

Organist: Samantha Funk

Altar Guild Chair: Ellen Funk

Members of the Vestry: Stephen Bradford, Senior Warden; Hunter Davis, Junior Warden; Ellen Funk, Peggy Pennington, Dr. Priscilla Schulte, Samantha Snodderly

Scroll editor: Rod Landis

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