

November

NEWS FOR ALL the SAINTS

November 2019



The Thankful Season

All Saints Memorial Church
P: 732-291-0214 F: 732-291-1605
www.allsaintsnavesink.org



EVENTS CALENDAR

Most Sundays

8:00am HE II (CH)

9:00am Family Service (second Sunday each month Sept—May)

10:00am Choral HE II (CH)

Tuesdays

7:00pm Quiet Time w/God (CH)

8:30pm AA (PH)

Wednesdays

10:00am Healing Eucharist (CH)

6:00pm OE Anonymous

7:00pm AA (PH)

Second Wednesdays

ECW Meetings (12:30)

Third Thursdays

7:30pm Vestry Meetings (PH)

Fourth Thursdays

7:00pm Landmark Trust Meetings (PH)

Fridays

7:30pm DRA Meetings (PH)

Saturdays

8:00am AA Meetings (PH)

5:00pm Outdoor Summer Service (June - Aug)

Mother Debbie Contact Information

The Rev. Debbie Cook

Rector, All Saints' Memorial Church

(Office) 732-291-0214

(Cell) 732-492-1943

(Rectory) 732-204-2836

mother.debbie@comcast.net

Remember Mother Debbie's day off is

Friday (except for

Pastoral emergencies).

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday November 3

ECW Coffee Sale after 10:00am service

Sunday, November 17, 2019

***The Candlelight Concert & Reception
In the Church & Parish House***

Saturday, December 7, 2019

8:00pm SCP Present Gift of the Magi

Sunday, December 8, 2019

2:00pm SCP Present Gift of the Magi

Saturday December 14, 2019

Mother Debbie's Schedule

Sabbath Day: We are all in need of time to rest and renew--and sometimes, just to catch up on other 'life' things, like laundry! Just a reminder that Friday is Mother Debbie's Sabbath day. While she is always available for pastoral emergencies, please honor her day off in parish communications that day, particularly via phone or text.



A WORD FROM MOTHER DEBBIE

For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9



As All Saints' has progressed through its Cornerstone Capital Campaign, which is inherently building focused, such passages have become more meaningful to me—but not necessarily how you might think. For me, the Church is not and never has been about the buildings. Part of it (a large part) is my knowledge and commitment that the Church is the people, the assembled community around Christ. But a lesser part, one that I only discerned recently, is the fact that I don't connect a building to my spiritual formation; a 'church home', as it were.

I was raised Roman Catholic, and we moved to Freehold in 1966. We began by attending St. Rose of Lima in Freehold Borough, where I received my First Communion and made my first confession (now called the Rite of Reconciliation). But as Freehold was growing, often times the congregation was too big to fit in the old church building, and masses were held in St. Rose school gym. In 1971, the Diocese decided to plant a new church in the Township: St. Robert Bellarmine, and we were to be founding members of that congregation-- one without a building until 1975.

Worship was held in various schools; the Pastor (Fr. Dentici) and the other priests lived in a suburban home near the high school. A group of Sisters of Mercy nuns lived for a time in home at the end of my block—and it is there I received middle school religious education. Other CCD classes were held in various parishioner homes; my father taught for a brief while too. My confirmation took place in Laura Donovan school. So, for me, who worshipped in a variety of secular spaces, church was never about the space—but it was about the people: the priests and nuns, the parents of my friends who taught and served, the people who gave and worked to build the community. Each person a part of God's building, Christ's body.

And it is the people—the assembled community around Christ—that does the work of the Church: the Church's mission of love, reconciliation, justice and peace through worship and prayer, evangelism and care for those in need. Yes, it helps to have a space to do that in—but it is not necessary. However, what is necessary is for people to give to foster, sustain and grow



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that mission: in time, in talent, and yes, in resources.

Each parish or mission congregation in the Episcopal Church has its own dynamics to work with: whether one has a full or part time priest, or a deacon in charge; whether it has no paid staff or multiple paid staff; new or old buildings, surrounding land or cemetery, or a small spot on a street, or even a rented store front. All however gather for worship and prayer; all are connected through our Diocesan structure. Here at All Saints' we are blessed to have clergy and staff, buildings to use and to share with the community. The extent of mission we do and can continue to do is up to us, based on our sharing of our time, talents and resources. Certainly we could do without a number of things—many do. After all, all we need is Jesus Christ and those willing to follow him, living out their faith in action. Regardless there is a cost: primarily, surrendering ourselves to Christ; and second, giving of ourselves for God's mission .

This mission has been ongoing at All Saints' for over 150 years—which means multiple generations of lives being touched in some way through this place. We hope and pray that will continue for generations to come—but each of us has a part to play in that story: each of us represents a stone in God's building, a planting in God's field. What we do or share, or choose not to do or share, has an impact on the structure of that 'building' or the harvest of the 'field'.

So, this month, as we reflect on and give thanks for God's good gifts and how we are to be good stewards of them and God's mission, ask yourself: *How can I help further God's mission in the world? What kind of 'building' or 'harvest' do I want to be part of? What am I willing to give of myself and my time or talent or resources so to make that happen?* Each of us have a part to play—for WE are the Church. Let us work together as God's servants—and keep building on the foundation laid for us, that of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In peace,

Mother Debbie+



AT ALL SAINTS'

Stewardship

First, Thank you! to all those who have made Giving Commitments for 2019, and those who have faithfully given this year. The Church is grateful that you have stepped out in faith this way, giving intentionally and in trust.

Making a financial commitment to contribute to the church, or any organization, for a future time (annually, or committing to make a certain contribution per week, etc), can feel unsettling. We all know how things can change suddenly and/or surprisingly: job losses, illness, home or auto repairs, you name it. And so our tendency is to be cautious, to hold on, to give AFTER everything else is taken care of—‘just in case’.

But God asks us to trust, and to give out of our ‘first fruits’. In other words, to give off the top, to give to God first. Why? First, all we have is from God, and so to give is to acknowledge that by giving thanks in a tangible, sacrificial way; and second, to give ‘up front’ exercises our spiritual muscles of trust in God’s provision and love and generosity. Just like honoring the Sabbath disciplines us to let go and trust that God is in charge, and that it’s not all up to us—so does intentional, practiced giving help us build trust in God, and help us realize that giving does not diminish us.

The Church fosters the development of that spiritual disciple through an invitation to making a Giving Commitment (or ‘pledge’) to the church. The ancient Israelites brought forward their first fruits offering to the temple in remembrance of all God had done for them—and these offerings were used to sustain the temple, its priests, and be used to help those in need. In our modern day context, we ask persons to consider giving a portion of monetary income which is used for similar purposes: the mission of the church, local and global. So, yes, a Giving commitment helps the church fund things like operational costs (staffing, utilities, etc) but also funds local outreach, and even global outreach though the parish’s giving ‘upward’ to the Diocese, who then passes a portion of the funds onto the larger Church.

This November, each of us will be invited to consider to stretch and strengthen our ‘stewardship practice’—while strengthening the ministry of All Saints’ as well. Please prayerfully consider taking a step forward in faith in making and/or increasing a Giving Commitment to All Saints’.



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Second Sundays @ Stone Church

A service for Children and Families returns!

Second Sunday of every Month at 9 a.m.

This Month: November 10th

Join us and invite your friends! 'Second Sundays @ Stone Church' is on November 10th at 9 a.m. and will continue on the second Sunday of each month. This service closely follows a regular Sunday service in the Episcopal Church with prayers, readings, and music in a child friendly format. This service allows for children to experience the service of Holy Eucharist in a different way—encouraging their full participation not only in the congregation but as leaders as well. Children, youth (and their parents) are invited to do the readings, lead prayers, usher, and assist at the altar. In November, we will focus on giving thanks.

Sunday School Sundays at 9:45 am

A welcome to all our students ages Pre-K through Grade 6! Mrs. Shanley is ready for you, and excited to see you all. She always has a lot of fun lessons and activities planned, good for all ages, and invites to come and join the fun!

Sunday school meets most Sundays (except for Second Sundays) upstairs in the Parish Hall beginning at 9:45 am; students will rejoin the 10 am service around the time of the Peace. For more information or just to touch base with Mrs. Evane Shanley, our teacher, please email her at: evanemshanley@gmail.com.



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Adult Formation

Taste and See

By Margaret Feinberg

Beginning October 30th

This book (with a DVD study) provides a culinary exploration of Scripture. You'll virtually visit places such as the frosty white caverns of a salt mine, the Sea of Galilee, a remote island in Croatia to harvest olives, and others. With each visit, Margaret asks, "How do you read these Scriptures, not as theologians, but in light of what you do every day?" Their answers will forever change the way you read the Bible - and approach every meal. Recipes included!

Monday evenings at 7 pm

New Spiritual Exercises, The: In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

By Louis M Savary

Written by Jesuit, this book presents a spiritual renewal system for contemporary believers. It is grounded in the Ignatius Spiritual exercises and inspired by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Written in accessible language, this book helps readers practice the Exercises that help us discern God's presence and movement in our lives.

Monthly: A Saturday at 9 am

Women's Bible Study

Join us in the rectory for Bible study—women only! Stay tuned for the November date for study, conversation and fellowship. Learn more about the bible, yourself and others.



AT ALL SAINTS

Proposed By Law Changes

To be voted on our January 2020 Annual Meeting

The current Vestry (governing board) of All Saints' consists of the Rector as President, our Sr. and Jr. Wardens, and 9 Vestry members, making a total of twelve. For a parish our size, with an average Sunday attendance of about 60 to 65 or so (sometimes more), this is a bit large, and many churches our size have smaller Vestries. Diocesan Canons state the Vestry terms shall be three years in length and we can have as small as 3 and up to 12 Vestry members.

In order to balance our congregation size with our Vestry size, the Vestry has voted on a by law change for there to be six (6) Vestry members, plus two Wardens and the Rector. This means there will be two persons elected each year, vs. three. A small Vestry means that instead of serving on Vestry, this may free persons up to chair or lead a ministry group—which is itself a leadership ministry. The old and new bylaws are below: per our bylaws they need to be published in advance for discussion. These will be voted upon by the congregation in the early portion of the Annual meeting before conducting elections.

CURRENT:

Article II, Section 2

The Vestry of this Parish shall consist of a Senior and Junior Warden whose terms of office shall be two years each, or any unexpired part if required to fill a vacancy caused by an unexpired term, and nine Vestry members whose terms of office shall be three years each, or any unexpired part if required to fill a vacancy caused by an unexpired term.

PROPOSED:

Article II, Section 2

The Vestry of this Parish shall consist of a Senior and Junior Warden whose terms of office shall be two years each, or any unexpired part if required to fill a vacancy caused by an unexpired term, and six Vestry members whose terms of office shall be three years each, or any unexpired part if required to fill a vacancy caused by an unexpired term.



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CURRENT:

Article IV, Section 1

To constitute a quorum of the Vestry, there must be present:

- A. The Rector, one Warden and five Vestry members, or
- B. The Rector, both Wardens and four Vestry members, or
- C. The Rector and six Vestry members.

Or, if there be no Rector, or if the Rector is unable to attend, a quorum shall be deemed present:

- A. One Warden and six Vestry members, or
- B. Two Wardens and five Vestry members.

PROPOSED:

Article IV, Section 1

To constitute a quorum of the Vestry, there must be present:

- A. The Rector, one Warden and three Vestry members, or
- B. The Rector, both Wardens and two Vestry members, or
- C. The Rector and four Vestry members.

Or, if there be no Rector, or if the Rector is unable to attend, a quorum shall be deemed present:

- A. One Warden and four Vestry members, or
- B. Two Wardens and three Vestry members.





AT ALL SAINTS

Daylight Saving Time Ends!

Sunday, November 3rd

Sunday, November 3rd (at 2 am) marks the end of Daylight Saving Time—so remember to set your clocks **BACK** one hour before going to bed on Saturday night (and get an extra hour of sleep!).

All Saints' Sunday

November 3rd

Though All Saints' Day is officially on November 1st, it is often moved to the Sunday after (or before) the Feast Day. Here at All Saints', it is our 'Name Day', so of course we will celebrate it! Join us for the 8 a.m. or 10 am service that day, and celebrate what it means to be 'saint of God' in the Church!

Mother Debbie's November Schedule

As is usual in November, Mother Debbie will be attending the annual Clergy Conference, which is held the Seaview in Galloway Township, NJ from Monday November 11th through Wednesday November 13th.

Mother Debbie (and Jim) will be on vacation November 18th through November 25th. Pastoral coverage will be provided by Deacon Michelle and area clergy, and our guest preacher/celebrant on November 24th (Christ the King Sunday) will be The Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg.

Wednesday service will be cancelled for November 13th ; we will keep you posted on the 20th. The Vestry meeting scheduled for November 21st will be led by our Sr. Warden, Bonnie Roberts.



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SAVE THE DATE—WINTERFEST

It's that time of the year again! One day only Saturday Dec 14, 2019 from Noon to 6pm
We will be having the **Live Nativity** back this year, come and join us for food, children make and take events, shop crafters and more! And of course a visit from Mr and Mrs. from the North pole! Times for events will TBA....Save the date!! Volunteers are needed!! Call /text bonnie Roberts 908-461-9457 email robfam13@verizon.net



FALL CLEAN UP AND CARD WRITING PARTY-

Saturday November 09, 2019 (rain date 11-16) From 1030am to 1200pm we need help doing our fall clean up on the campus!! But if clean-up is not your thing, please join us for Christmas card writing to the Troops! Pam Ryan the founder of Project pets, who we partner with for our pet pantry has always sent Christmas cards, or pictures children drew to overseas troops who cannot be home for the holidays. This year a special donor will be giving \$10 per card or picture to project pets for food! So we will be having a card writing party in the parish house the same time as the cleanup. Good opportunity for parents to help while the kids stay inside and draw some pictures! This is a win win win outreach opportunity for our servicemen and women, our pets and a local pet store (feed and seed-where the monies will be given for a credit to the pantry)! Please consider helping with either or both projects- contact Bonnie Roberts 908-461-9457

November

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Blessing of the Animals 2019



Pot Luck Supper 2019



November

AT ALL SAINTS

Pot Luck Supper cont'd



ECW Coffee Sale– Sunday, November 3 !



COMING SOON POINSETTA AND WREATH SALE!





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**Men's Bible Study, Prayer, and Breakfast
Saturday, November 9th at 8:15am**

This committed group of men and young men in the parish meet monthly on the 2nd Saturday of the month for prayer and bible study, as well as fellowship and a hearty breakfast! This month's meeting will be on the 2nd Saturday, November 9th at 8:15am



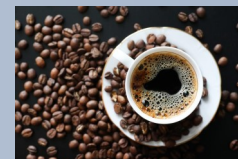
All are welcome to join as you are able.
For more information or to RSVP,
contact Jim Cook at 732-614-3134.

ECW News

Please note the following information on the November ECW Meeting:

Meeting Wednesday November 13

Coffee Sale November 3



FOOD PANTRY FOR November suggestions

November 3, 2019	Canned Fruit
November 10, 2019	Ready to Eat/Microwave Shelf Meals
November 17, 2019	Hot/Cold Cereal
November 24, 2019	Non-perishable boxed Milk (All Sizes)



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CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT THROUGH GIVING

The giving and receiving of gifts is a beloved Christmas tradition in our culture, but sadly, there are many in our larger community who cannot participate due to fiscal or health circumstances. Our parish has for many years joyfully embraced our Giving Tree project to help bridge this gap by providing Christmas gifts to folks in need through our three local charity partners: St. Mark's Center for Community Renewal, CPC Behavioral Healthcare, and Collier House. Look for the tree and its selection of needed gifts at the back of the church on Sundays, November 25, December 2 and December 9. All gifts will be due back to the Church no later than Sunday, December 16. Don't let travel plans, a busy schedule, or an aversion to shopping stop you from participating – personal shopping services will be available again this season. You can contact Beth Polonsky (bethpolonsky@yahoo.com) to arrange to contribute money for a gift. Join in this special ministry and share the Christmas spirit!



Thank you to... Our Staff!

While our Church budget does not have room for Christmas bonuses, we do wish to show appreciation for our staff at this time of the year. In the past, Vestry members contributed as they could and the monies divided among staff members: office administrator, bookkeeper, music director, our landscaper/snow/cleaning team, and our Sunday school teacher. However, since they work for the benefit of all of us, and not just the Rector or Vestry, we invite any who wish to contribute to a Christmas fund for our staff. All contributions welcome! We will place a collection box in the rear of the church for donations. If you have any questions, please see Mother Debbie, Bonnie Roberts, or Michael Parmelee.



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A 15 Year Blessing >From A Homeless Person

This is a story that happened 15 years ago but it has always stayed with me since then.

On the way back from work every evening, more often than not there would be a homeless man standing at the exit of the freeway. He looked to be in his late 40's but was probably a lot younger. He had shoulder length straight black hair a short beard, and he was of average stature.

His eyes were what struck me the most about him, they were brown and they had a sparkle. Like an inside light that was beaming out of his eyes. His eyes, I thought, represented the man in general. People say they can tell a lot from a person's eyes. It was certainly true in his case. He always waved at every car, he was always happy and smiling and sometimes almost dancing.

Every day after work I would remember to gather any spare change, and put it aside to give to him if I saw him. A feeling of joy would come over me every time I saw him, as I came off the ramp. He had that effect.

I'd quickly roll down my window and give him the coins. Occasionally the red light would be on for a minute and we would ask each other about our day. His answer would always be the same, "I'm blessed!".

I knew what his answer was going to be every time, yet I would still ask. It amazed me that even in his situation of being homeless he was so positive, and his answer would remind me of how blessed I was. A single mother of four amazing kids, with a place to call home and with a job to provide for my kids.

Then one day I was called into my boss's office and was told that I was being laid off due to the economy. A feeling of worry engulfed me, and for the rest of that day all I could think of was "how am I going to provide for my kids, how am I going to pay rent, what am I going to do?"

Needless to say that on my way home that day I was very sad and upset. I didn't remember to look for my spare change and keep it ready like I usually did. I wasn't feeling the joy as I got off the ramp where the homeless man would be. Yet there he was as always, as I turned the ramp. He set his eyes on me, while still smiling and waving at others.

I'd hoped to catch the green light, but I missed it. While I was waiting for the red light to turn, he strolled over to my car. He had a big smile he looked me straight in the eyes and said



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“today I will give you a dollar”. He then reached into his pocket and pulled out a dollar bill. I was blown away. I burst into tears. I wanted to jump out of my car and hug him! You see that day he gave me more than a dollar bill, he taught me a valuable lesson. No matter what material things are taken from you, no one can take away your choice to be joyful. My ride home was smooth sailing, I had lost my job, had no savings, but I knew I was blessed!

Every time I’m faced with challenges, I think of the homeless man’s valuable lesson and remember that I am blessed.

Take a moment to remember how Blessed you are



‘Tis the season!!!!

The Stone Church Players will be presenting “The Gift of the Magi” adapted by Jon Jory from the story by O.Henry. The Players will be adding their own flair by performing as if they were actors recording a broadcast during the golden age of radio! The show will also include songs performed by the actors under the music direction of Mike Kabash.

Michael McClellan will be directing the production featuring Lindsay Abbot, “Juice” Jackson, Cynthia Dannen, Caitlin Martin, Catherine Creed, Hunter Thomas among others.

The two performances will be Saturday, December 7th at 8:00pm and Sunday, December 8th at 2:00pm. All tickets will be \$10.00 at the door.

We can’t wait to see you! We promise some wonderful holiday surprises!



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Dance For Kindness was initiated in 2012. It is a worldwide event in celebration of World Kindness Day which falls on second Sunday in November. Groups from across the globe join together to perform a Kindness Freezmob/Flashmob to the same song, same dance, all happening on the same day. The purpose of Dance for Kindness is to show that regardless of the differences in race, religion, ethnicity culture and background, the common thread that ties us together is kindness.

The Dance for Kindness flagship location is in the heart of NYC - Times Square. The event takes place on the second Sunday of November which usually just follows World Kindness Week.

The logo for "lifestart inside" features the word "lifestart" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. A red heart shape is positioned above the letter "i", containing a white silhouette of a person. Below "lifestart" is the word "inside" in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Save the Date!

*Dance for Kindness
Sunday, November 10*

12:00-2:00 pm

Broad Street & White Street
Red Bank

www.DanceForKindness.com





Thanksgiving Services

What better time to give praise and thanksgiving to God for all our blessings than Thanksgiving?

Please join us for one of two options:

Community AACC Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday evening, November 27th, 7:30 pm

Atlantic Highlands Navesink United Methodist Church, 96 Third Avenue, Atlantic Highlands.

Preacher: Mother Debbie

All Saints' Memorial Thanksgiving Day Service

Thursday, November 28th, at 9 a.m.

All Saints' Memorial Church

Join us for simple service of Holy Eucharist.

All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.





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ALL SAINTS MEMORIAL CHURCH *39th Annual*
Candlelight Concert
Sunday November 17, 2019 at 4:00pm

Featuring the
Wyrick Chamber Players

Performing

Mozart Quartet No. 1 in D Major, K.285

Allegro • Adagio • Rondo
Fanya, Mayumi, Alisa, Mariko

Ravel Quartet in F Major


Allegro moderato - très doux
Assez vif - très rythmé
Très lent
Vif et agité
Eric, Mayumi, Alisa, Mariko

Intermission

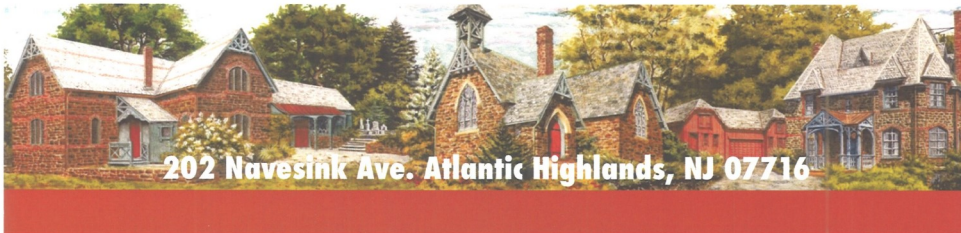
Brahms Quintet in B minor, Op.115

Allegro • Adagio • Adantino • Con moto
Amalie, Eric, Mayumi, Alisa, Mariko



 *Reception* Featuring hot & cold Hors d'oeuvres
Specially created by Harry's Secret Supper Club
Come mingle with the performers and don't forget to try
All Saints' famous Hot Cider to warm the soul!

Ticket Price: \$35.00 | For Reservations
Call 732-344-9081 or Email stonechurchevents@gmail.com



202 Navesink Ave. Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716



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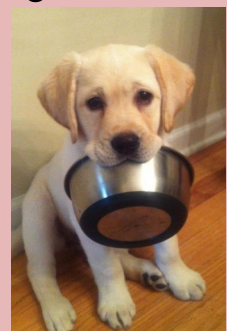


Is anyone interested in having Weight Watchers start a group at All Saints? We need 15 people, (we are at 6) who would be interested in Tuesdays Weight Watcher group. We will receive a discount. Sign up with Bonnie Roberts robfam13@verizon.net or 908-461-9457.

Auction Committee will be starting soon! First meeting will be January. Look for the date in next month's newsletter and consider joining this great committee!



Project pets is thankful for All Saints help. We now feed 41 cats and 17 dogs. Please remember them when you are shopping or you can go to the amazon link of www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2LCODPHSN4V8K?ref_=wl_share .Pam Ryan the founder of Project pets, who we partner with for our pet pantry has always sent Christmas cards, or pictures children drew to overseas troops who cannot be home for the holidays. This year a special donor will be giving \$10 per card or picture to project pets for food! So we will be having a card writing party in the parish house the same time as the cleanup. Good opportunity for parents to help while the kids stay inside and draw some pictures! This is a win win win outreach opportunity for our servicemen and women, our pets and a local pet store (feed and seed-where the monies will be given for a credit to the pantry)! Cards need to be unsealed and dropped off at the parish house inside the pet pantry food box no later than Sun 11-24 to insure mailing.





Dear Fellow Saints!

Ephesians 1:15-16 (CSB) **Prayer for Spiritual Insight**

¹⁵ This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

As we enter the month of November, there are many things to observe. The beautiful colors of Fall, November is the perfect balance of fall and winter. The crisp, fresh air you get to break out your cozy sweaters, watch the leaves change color and eat pumpkin flavored everything. We are urged this month to be aware of Diabetes, Epilepsy, Veterans and Caregiver's and last but definitely not least - Thanksgiving. I'll go ahead and acknowledge the giant turkey in the room, Thanksgiving can be the pits for people who are grieving. Many of the values, traditions, and messages associated with the day, like warmth, comfort, gratitude, and family togetherness, can feel in direct conflict with a grieving person's actual reality. If you are grieving, you probably know what I mean by this. Basically, grief can make people feel cheated, angry, self-focused, bitter, lonely, isolated, resentful, guilty, sad, anxious, worried, or depressed.

Although you may be hesitant to admit it in the face of all the festivities, the '30-Days of *Thankfulness*' challenges on Facebook, and Charlie Brown and his dang pumpkin. Know that you are amongst friends who have experienced loss. And, it's okay to admit that you're feeling just a little (or a lot) less grateful than you have felt in years past. After a death, it's common for grieving people to feel apathy towards the experiences and activities that used to bring them joy. This is not a deliberate choice anyone makes, grief just changes the way life looks and feels. Sadly, this loss of joy may seem like a secondary loss, especially if you feel out of touch with things you previously cherished, like holidays and special days. What you wouldn't give to feel those old familiar and enthusiastic holidays feelings, but instead, it feels like you're standing out in the cold, watching through a window while everyone else enjoys the warmth and togetherness of the holiday season.

With all the uplifting and nostalgic holiday messaging, no one would blame you for feeling left out. Many people feel like the holidays are only for happy people and so those who are sad either need to shape up or ship out. However, I'm here to refute this notion. Your invitation to the holidays isn't revoked simply because you don't embody holiday cheer.

Please know many of us experience the heavy thoughts and distressing emotions of grief and



you may not be the only one thinking about scraping Thanksgiving altogether. I know my 1st Thanksgiving was awful; I worked and then went to bed. Maybe you're dreading the grief triggers, maybe your loved one seemed so central to the day that you wouldn't know how to carry it off without them, or maybe you're just feeling anything but grateful.

A side point. There are those who grieve holidays not because those who have died are no longer with them, but because they never had the "Norman Rockwell" celebration that is offered up as the expected "norm".

If it's the latter (a sense of gratitude) that's making you feel cut-off from Thanksgiving, I would like to present some simple suggestions.

Just as the holidays aren't only for happy people, neither is gratitude. You don't have to choose between grief or feeling grateful. You can feel two things at once. In fact, **grief is fertile ground for experiencing conflicting emotions**. So may I offer this, try (Yeah, I know it's easier said than done) to have a balanced outlook towards gratitude this Thanksgiving. Why is this suggestion important? Because, frankly, it stinks to feel alienated, isolated, left out, and disconnected, especially during the holidays.

Okay, there are two parts to this, so here goes.

Part 1: Remember, it's okay to feel not grateful

I know that other people may be like, "*Rah, Rah. office gathering or party!*" Which may leave you feeling cranky or sad; you are simply a person who is having a difficult time particularly during this time of year. It's okay to acknowledge this and to recognize your grief, anger, apathy and sadness. You don't need to stuff your feelings for the benefit of other people. I know grief is something that everyone experiences yet no one is comfortable with - but, the bottom line here is that it's okay to acknowledge all the reasons why you are anything but grateful.

Part 2: For every gripe, find a gratitude

Look, we know the world has robbed you of someone so incredibly precious to you, and so it's beyond annoying for me to come along and tell you to be grateful. I don't offer this suggestion lightly because I know finding gratitude may feel like a stretch. Let me suggest this - balancing your outlook is important. Finding gratitude doesn't have to be complicated. It's simple, actually. As simple as seeing the beautiful colors of the leaves or enjoying a child's laughter ...

Even though Thanksgiving **will** feel different this year, actively seeking gratitude can be an empowering way to reclaim a part of the holiday for yourself.

By His Grace

Dcn.Michelle 



Blue Christmas/Longest Night Worship

By His Grace,

Blue Christmas, also called the **Longest sleep** in the **Western Christian** tradition, is a day in the **Advent** season marking the **longest night of the year**.^[1] On this day, some churches hold a **church service** which recognizes that the holidays are sometimes "blue" or filled with difficult feelings around painful life events. Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. There is a growing attentiveness to the needs of people who are blue at Christmas. Increasing numbers of churches are creating sacred space for people living through dark times. The **Holy Eucharist** is traditionally a part of the **service of worship** on this day.^[3] The services are reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope.

I would ask and cordially invite you to join us to celebrate & honor each other and our memories ...

When: Sunday, December 15th, 2019 at 3pm
- with a potluck(light) repast afterward

Where: All Saints' Memorial Church

Time: 3pm

Dcn.Michelle 