

ST. LUKE'S NEWSLETTER

Demonstrating God's Love through Christ to the Community and to the World

Views From the Pews

Following our Who's New in the Pews Column, we are getting some perspective from some longer time parishioners this issue Pg.3-4

What's Cooking at the Food Pantry

Read a message from our the Food Pantry Chair and get a look at what's happening at the Pantry. Pg. 5-6

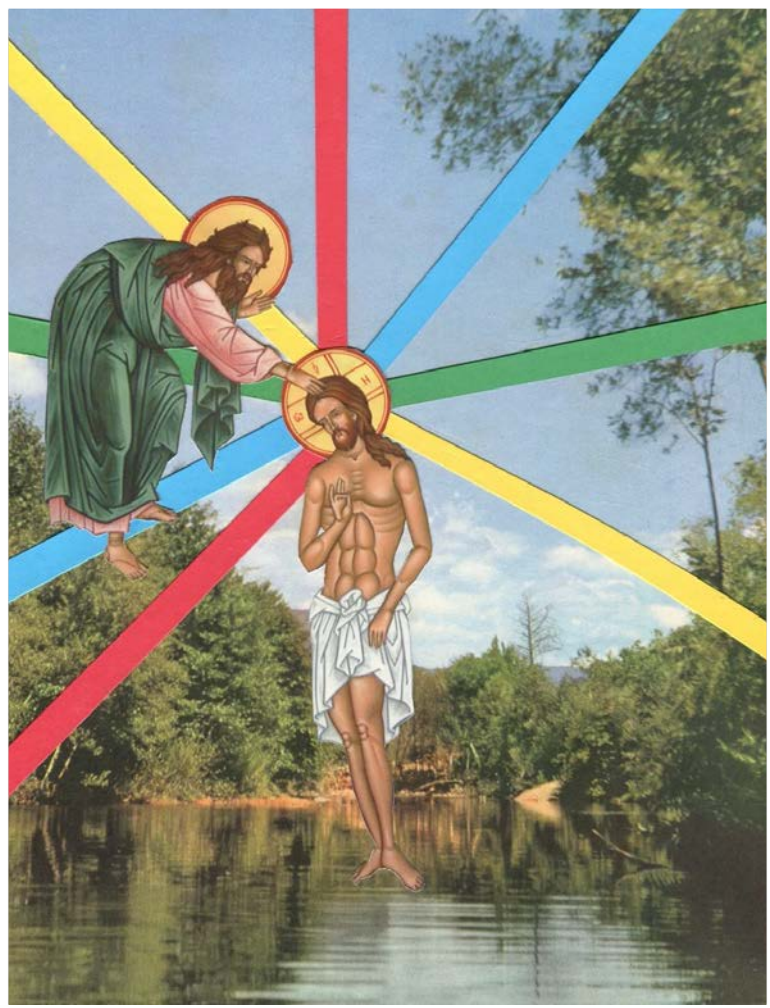
2022 Stewardship Campaign

We had a robust and successful stewardship campaign for 2022! Read all about it. Pg. 2

The Pastor's Corner

Read a new message from Father Mike in "The Pastor's Corner" on Pg. 15-17

And More.....



Artwork by Peyton Watson/www.peytonwatson.com

“All of the things in our world are continually being renewed. Among the things that are renewed and transformed come from the world of human action—how our own works carry out eternity’s grand plans for Renewal and for giving us Hope in each other. We live with Hope every day, and that Hope, in a continuous cycle, leads itself to Renewal.” ~ an excerpt from Father Mike’s address, pg. 15



Ongoing Ministries at Saint Luke's

Some of the many ongoing ministries at St. Luke's:

- Altar Guild
- Counters
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Plant Sale
- Thrift Shop
- Food Pantry
- Morning Prayer Services
- Discovery Hour
- Sunday school
- Music

Full ministry reports including the Wardens' and Treasurer's reports are available in the Annual report on our website

www.slcsomers.org

2022 Stewardship Campaign

By Lynda Magrath

2022 Stewardship campaign raises spirits as well as funds

The first formal Stewardship Campaign in several years was not only successful in assuring our financial health for the near future, but also in rallying individual and communal spirits at a time when "Covid fatigue" could be felt in one way or another.

Thanks to Campaign leaders and committee members: Stewardship Chair and Vestry member Herman Clarke; Priest-in Charge Fr. Mike Watson; and Senior Warden Karen Kellogg. Fr. Mike officially opened the campaign at Sunday service in early November, and introduced Stewardship Committee members who would address the congregation at the 10:00am service for the upcoming weeks: long-time parishioner and former senior warden Ann Hansen, newer but committed and valued members Evelyn and Ira Weissman as well as Herman Clarke.

Each speaker gave personal testimony as to the importance of St. Luke's in his or her life. In addition, Karen Kellogg wrote a heartfelt Stewardship letter to the parish, and Fr. Mike continued to inspire as ever-guiding spirit. Herman Clarke closed the campaign with a memorable and energizing call for each of us to continue to support our beloved church.

Congratulations and gratitude surely go to the leaders of the 2022 Stewardship Campaign! And remember that our success is also due thanks to the generosity of each and every parishioner who invested in St. Luke's via pledge or plate, contributed time or talent, or participated in his or her own way. This was a robust campaign! Our future outlook is positive: as the pandemic continues to wane, our Sunday traditions and special events are gradually being restored. St. Luke's is alive and well, thanks to all of us!



Views from the Pews

By Sue Willis

Beverly Cheney and John Meixner

Until I had the chance to interview Beverly and John for this article, I greeted them only briefly during the past few years. However, once I had this opportunity to pose questions and to receive feedback, I was immediately affected by the warmth their hearts emitted. This was during those winter weeks when the sanctuary was an igloo, yet I felt quite comfortable!

Beverly recounted that she was “a member of the Church of England but was not a regular churchgoer. John’s parents were long time members of St. Luke’s Church. When John’s mother Gloria died, we arranged with Fr. Mike to have her ashes buried in the Columbarium with those of his father.” Adding that they felt an instant connection with Fr. Mike, they decided to join St. Luke’s. After attending ‘Episcopal 101’ classes, they were confirmed by Bishop Dietsche in January 2020.

John grew up in Somers as a talented baseball player who was accustomed to being applauded. However, when he asked Beverly out on their first date, he was booed! Not by Beverly, of course, but by the rival Mahopac High School baseball players whose scorekeeper was Beverly! After graduation the high school sweethearts attended different colleges and, as Beverly noted, “Life happened.” Each married other people and eventually divorced. Thirty-five years later, John hit a home run by tracking Beverly down. Since then, they have been living at Heritage Hills. Neither has children, but they are devoted to kittens Buddy and Rocky. Additionally, they volunteer as cat rescuers and kitten trainers for Forgotten Felines.

An Anglophile, Beverly has spent many summers in England (where her mother came from as a War Bride.) A sports devotee, John once attended a basketball camp and bunked with a lanky kid who had to bend his 7’ 2” frame to enter the tent. John and his brothers thought this kid was “too goofy and gangly to ever play basketball.” Little did the Meixner brothers know that this kid would one day become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, one of the greatest NBA players.



Reflecting on this newsletter’s theme of *Growth, Renewal, and Hope*, John recalled a quote from the basketball phenom Abdul-Jabbar: “One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.” Beverly also shared about a silver bracelet a good friend gave her. Its inscription is from Proverbs 31:25: “She is clothed in strength and dignity and laughs without fear of the future.”

Since retirement from fulfilling careers in insurance (John) and advertising, graphic design, printing, and healthcare (Beverly), they would like to become more involved in the Church’s outreach programs. Beverly has already begun by following in Gloria Meixner’s footsteps as an Altar Guild member.



Views From the Pews

By Sue Willis

Ira and Evelyn Weissman

The Brewster community and St. Luke's Church have been enriched and blessed by Evelyn and Ira Weissman who moved here after retirement from - as Ira puts it "the North Country." Evelyn explained, "Ira and I moved here to be closer to our children and grandchildren." Ira added, "Family is very important. We have 4 children and 5 grandchildren." The congregation has met Rebecca, who worships here with her parents.



Both expressed to me that in addition to family, "having a church community has always been important to us." During the height of the global pandemic, they appreciated the chance to worship weekly via live video from the sanctuary. Having participated a few times in the Discovery Group via Zoom, I can attest to the wonderful spiritual and intellectual insights they bring to the discussion. Ira commented, "This Wednesday discussion group is like a family." Evelyn noted that "participating in the Stewardship Committee gave us an opportunity to learn more about the parish and to know more parishioners in greater depth." Ira praised Father Mike's sermons as "very interesting and thought provoking" and recognizes the Church's outreach as "a true reflection of Jesus's teachings."

When asked to reflect on this newsletter's theme of *Growth, Renewal, and Hope*, Evelyn remarked, "I believe one is never too old to grow or to hope. I am always willing to learn something new or to learn something old in a new way." She added that "often the path is not clear", but her favorite verse from Psalm 119 has been a guide throughout her life: "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path."



In addition to commenting about the goings-on in the sanctuary, Ira mentioned important undercroft matters: "I do miss coffee hour and hope we can continue it once the pandemic is over." I agree wholeheartedly that coffee and conversation are a necessary complement to the final blessing. Once we do resume fellowship in the undercroft you may enjoy chatting with Evelyn about her hobbies, which include knitting, needlework, painting, and vocal music. You may like talking with Ira about his pastimes, which include reading and doing Wordle, Jumble, and the *New York Times* mini crossword.

In addition, this reporter recommends reading Evelyn's book *Jairus's Daughter*, a "modern tale of religious conversion", reflecting her own life. I was captivated by the creative title and impressed with how Evelyn moved so deftly from medicine to memoir. I am also captivated by Ira's ties, each Sunday depicting lively and colorful characters! Besides winning the St. Luke's sartorial award (just edging past a guy named Mike who wears fancy collars), Ira must have surely put smiles on the faces of his pediatric patients. As I have gotten to know Ira (retired pediatrician) and Evelyn (a retired general surgeon), I can't help but think how lucky their patients were. The Drs. Weissman are very intelligent, but they also exude a sincere kindness and compassion. Throughout our lives, I think we all hope to be treated by doctors who display such skill and competence as well as "good bedside manner."

A Message From our Food Pantry Chair

By Lynda Magrath

Volunteers & Supporters. Ask and it shall be given you...

More than likely, you know that our Food Pantry has been in operation for eight years. And that since the beginning of the Covid Pandemic, we have utilized a Drive-Thru distribution model, providing fresh and non-perishable food plus extras to an average of 30 families per week.

It is also important to know that all these activities are planned, implemented, and maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers. We are mostly retirees; many, but not all of us are members of St. Luke's Church. We are fortunate to have some younger (and young-at-heart) volunteers who take time out from work or family obligations to join us on a regular basis. We all work well together, care about our patrons and each other, and share a common purpose and camaraderie that makes being a part of the Food Pantry fun!



Lynda Magrath, Pantry Chair

Matthew 7:7 advises us, "Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find." This could well be the St. Luke's Somers Food Pantry motto. And it is applicable in more than one way. Our patrons sometimes ask – for diapers, or pet food, or for a grocery gift card – and we do our best to provide. But there are other "Asks." As Chair I often ask volunteers for help in addition to the Drive-Thru: to come in earlier to help sort, pick up donations, staff community Food Drives, shop for produce, and more. It is reassuring to know that everyone who is able will say yes! There has not been a single time in the last two years that we were without enough help at regular or special activities - despite snow, ice, hail, heatwaves, and a tropical storm – not to mention an ongoing pandemic. And what do volunteers most often ask? Of course, it's "What else can I do? How can I help?"



Volunteers at Halloween and Thanksgiving



What's Cooking at the Food Pantry



Food Drive with Senator Pete Harchham

On February 26th Senator Pete Harchham partnered with St. Luke's Somers Food Pantry and the New York State United Teachers to hold a food drive at Somers Middle School benefitting the food pantry.

With the hard work of Senator Harchham's wonderful team, our dedicated volunteers as well as fellow volunteers from the teachers' union, and several students from the local schools we had a very successful drive!



Blessing of The Animals & Fall BBQ

By Duanne Simon

Anyone entering the Sanctuary last October might've thought they had stumbled upon a casting call for the PBS series "All Creatures Great and Small"!

Anyone entering the Sanctuary last October might've thought they had stumbled upon a casting call for the PBS series "All Creatures Great and Small"! In fact, the pews were taken over by Saint Luke's beloved furry friends, arriving for their annual blessing! Each year we're amazed at how well behaved these four-legged, feathered and whiskered parishioners are, with nary a "meow", "arf", "baah" or "cheep" to be heard. It's as if they're aware of how special this day is, and the sacred aura St. Luke's exudes.

Did you know that the St. Luke's blessing used to be held outdoors? And almost 800 years before that, Christians around the world began celebrating the ritual started by St. Francis of Assisi. It was St. Francis who preached that human beings are only one of God's many creations, and that all of them, including animals, are blessed by God.

Most churches hold their Blessing of the Animals on the Saturday or Sunday closest to October 4. Why? Looking at a liturgical calendar reveals that October 4 is the feast day celebrating the blessed St. Francis of Assisi.

Everyone has seen a statue of St. Francis, probably in a garden and possibly with a bird in his hand. And, it's a story of St. Francis and some birds that leads us to our modern ceremony. Francis was contemplating [Mark 16:15](#), which instructs the disciples to "preach the Gospel to all creation." He began to believe that such a command, and the Gospel itself, was not for humanity alone. He soon found himself preaching to some birds he met on his path, telling them of the reasons we should be grateful for God.

Churches began to follow Francis's lead, taking seriously God's love for all of creation, and eventually organizing services whereby they bless the pets of parishioners on or around St. Francis Day. Over the years we have consecrated a menagerie of dogs, cats, birds, fish, horses, mice, turtles, snakes, guinea pigs, hamsters, even a chicken. There's a place here for all creatures of our God and King.

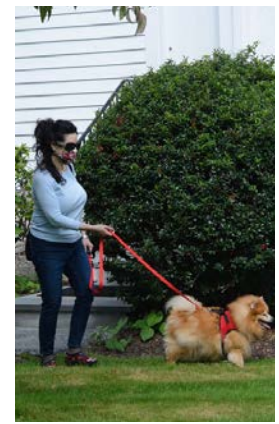
Last year, after the animals had received their spiritual nourishment, everyone gathered on the lawn to join in fellowship and enjoy a deliciously simple barbecue, prepared by members of St. Luke's Vestry.



Some fun photos of parishioners and their furry family from the 2021 Blessing of the Animals at St. Luke's!



And the BBQ following the Blessing of the Animals - October 4, 2021



Let's welcome the newest members of the Vestry!



Mary Pat Sweeny, Class of 2025

I am a lifelong Westchester resident; we've lived in Somers for 23 years. I graduated from College of the Holy Cross and St. John's University Law School. I am married to Kevin Sweeny and mother of Emma and Tim. Since 1989 I've served as a senior trial attorney and regional manager at the Legal Aid Society of Westchester.

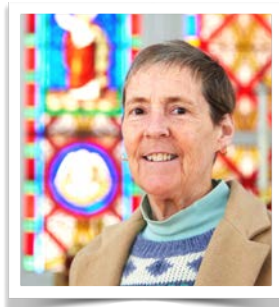
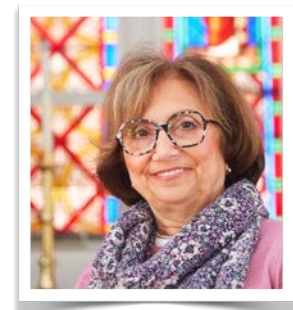
I was formerly a Westchester Assistant District Attorney. My community service includes serving on the Board of Youth Theatre Interactions in Yonkers, participating as a mom in the Somers Schools and Girl Scouts, and teaching Religious Education at St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's Churches for many years.

My family and I felt "at home" at St. Luke's Church for the past 14 years. I've met some truly wonderful people, and hope to meet more as we build a bright future as a community.

Nadine Fletcher, Class of 2025

I grew up in Bayside Queens, where I attended Catholic elementary and high school. I worked in the healthcare field as a Radiologic Technologist for 40 years. I live in Carmel, NY. My late husband, an Anglican, and I were married in the Methodist church in 1999. We attended that church for a while, but it wasn't right for us. We attended Episcopal churches in the Westchester-Putnam on-and-off.

After my husband Bob passed away in August 2019 after a very brief illness I wanted to have a service to celebrate his life. Fortunately my friend Karen Kellogg introduced me to St. Luke's and Father Mike. It was like I finally found my home. Fr. Mike has made the time since Bob's passing less painful. Since then I have attended the 10:00 service, where I serve as a greeter/usher; I enjoy being a regular volunteer at the Food Pantry. What I love most about St. Luke's is the warmth and family atmosphere.



Sue Willis, Class of 2025

Prior to joining Saint Luke's, I was involved in various ministries in the Catholic Church in CT, OH, MO, FL, NY, and England.

I've served as Eucharistic minister, lector, Vacation Bible School and retreat leader, high school Theology teacher, parish council member, and instrumentalist/singer in the choir. At Saint Luke's, I help at the Food Pantry, serve as a LEM, and proclaim the Word at liturgy.

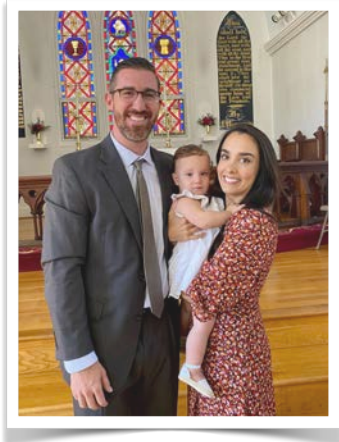
I earned a B.A. from Salve Regina University and an M.A. from Wesleyan University. After several years in secondary school administration, I now Chair the English Department and teach Literature, Composition, and Summer School at Kennedy Catholic High School in Somers. I was officially received into the Episcopal Church in 2019 in a ceremony here at Saint Luke's.

Recent Baptisms!

St. Luke's welcomes our newest Christians!

Zoe Murray on September 25th and Luke Loveless on November 6th.

Congratulations to the families!



Zoe Murray with Parents Victoria and Kevin and Godparents Joanie and Patrick



Luke with Parents Amanda and Ryan Loveless and family



Special Events

Happy Birthday Father Mike!

We celebrated his Birthday which was November 1st after the 10AM service at one of our first Coffee Hours. And of course there was carrot cake!



Ordination of Mary McCarthy

On March 12, Mary McCarthy was ordained as a Transitional Deacon. She will be ordained to the Priesthood on September 24. Mary's journey and call to serve began here at Saint Luke's



Something for the Kids! (And the big kids) By John Simon

Celebrate Spring at St. Luke's with an Easter Search Game! Let's have some Easter fun, we'll find lots of cool things before we're done!

There are so many eggs and jellybeans to see.
Do you spy the robin watching from a tree?

Can you find all the bunnies,
which ones do you like? Look, I even found one
who's riding a bike!

I hear pretty music but how can this be?
There's a band of chicks playing a symphony!

Spring is when blossoms pop up from the
ground. How many tulips and sunflowers have
you found?

Quick, find two hummingbirds before they fly
away. And where's Father Mike, he's been
missing all day?

That tiny ladybug is such a little guy,
If you can spot him, you've really got a great
eye!

Here's a hint on how many butterflies you can
score,
There are more than two and less than four!

I spy a teacup and Saint Francis as well,
and even a bunny popping out of a shell!

Do you see any crosses? I spot a pair!
Now let's find Saint Luke's and bring them
there.

It's time to make a list of everything we see.
Happy Easter to you and to me!



Objects Photo by Duanne Simon

WELCOME

Worship with us! All are welcome. Join us for these upcoming events.



Holy Week 2022

- Palm Sunday, April 10 - 8:30 & 10am
- Maundy Thursday, April 14 - 7:00pm
- Good Friday, April 15 - 7:00pm
- Holy Saturday, April 16 - No Service
- Easter Sunday, April 17 - 8:30 & 10am



Think Spring!
St Luke's Episcopal Church in Somers

Spring Plant Sale!

10am - 4pm
Friday, May 6 - Saturday May 14

- Great Mother's Day gifts
- Quality annuals & perennials
- Beautiful mixed flower baskets

Saint Luke's - demonstrating God's Love through Christ, to the community and to the world.

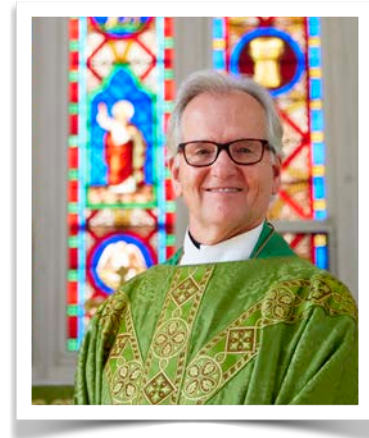
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The Pastor's Corner

By the Rev'd Michael T. Watson

“Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us.”

I was delighted when I was asked to reflect on the words “Renewal and Hope,” because I believe that those two words are the two most important words that surround all of the stories of our lives. All of these stories are really about the history of humankind....the history of the rising and falling of human beings, as told in Scripture. It is the constant change in us that governs our lives, makes us alive, and gives us an appreciation for the way in which we are guided by a spirit—a spirit that not only guides us, but also prepares us for, and sustains us, on life's journey.



One thing that is so very wondrous about Renewal and Hope is that the joys and sorrows encountered along our paths of Renewal and Hope are never separated. When our hearts rejoice at a spectacular view, we may miss our friends who cannot see it, and when we are overwhelmed with grief, we may discover what true companionship is all about. Joy is hidden in sorrow and sorrow in joy. If we try to avoid sorrow at all costs, we may never taste joy, and if we are suspicious of ecstasy, agony can never reach us either.

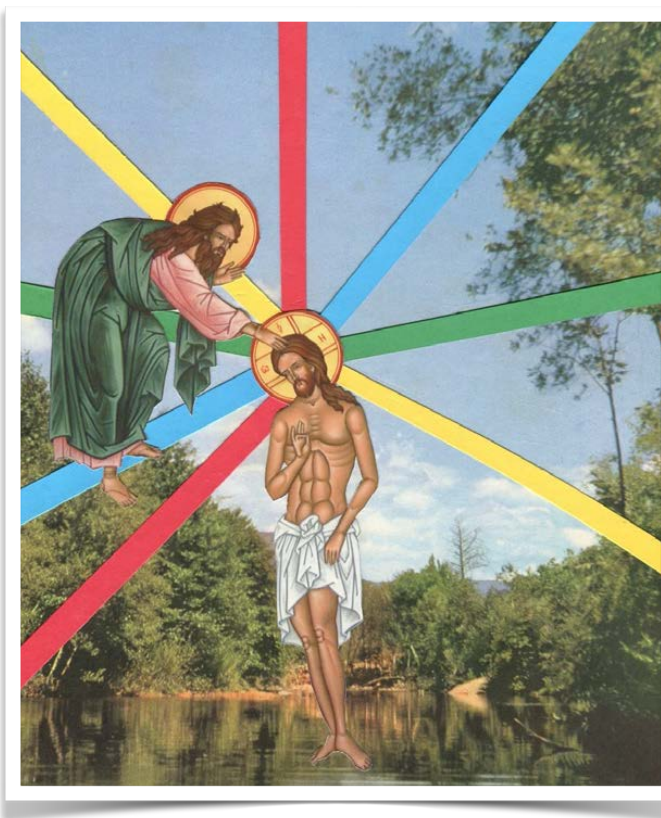
Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. At some moments we will experience complete unity within us and around us. This may happen when we stand on a mountaintop and are captivated by the view. It may happen when we witness the birth of a child. It may happen when we have an intimate conversation or a family meal. It may happen in church, synagogue or mosque. Those moments are glimpses of the eternal, if we can only perceive them.

All of the things in our world are continually being renewed. Among the things that are renewed and transformed come from the world of human action—how our own works carry out eternity's grand plans for Renewal and for giving us Hope in each other. We live with Hope every day, and that Hope, in a continuous cycle, leads itself to Renewal. They are, together, self-fulfilling. The Hope and Renewal we see in all parts of creation are what give us our own Hope and Renewal. We give, so we receive. And it never fails that we get more back than we ever give. We can never give too much because we can never give enough. The struggles of humanity, the people in their stories, and the histories of the people in the events of history, always speak of the need for Renewal of relationships, either with each other or with a supreme being; and the constant presence of Hope for all of humankind and the world.

The Pastor's Corner

Without these visions we will be dulled and our lives will become flat, boring, and finally destructive. With these visions our deepest aspirations, which give us the energy to overcome great obstacles and painful setbacks, enable us to live the full life. Are these great visions I share with you more than just utopian fairy tales? Yes, they are! These visions represent the very deep desires of the heart and raise the point that is waiting to be revealed beyond all the deceptions of our egos. These visions satisfy our deepest selves. They are able to strengthen our hearts. They offer us Hope when we are farthest from hope. They offer us the ability to refuse to give up on life. They offer us trust when the more logical attitude would be suspicion. Life can be so unpredictable. So what is there to hold on to? What is there to feel secure with? What is there to trust at all times?

Renewal and Hope require of us that we be on a journey with others—to clap and point at small miracles; to jump up and down at every shiny, lovely thing. There is pleasure in taking hold of joy. But there is also simple beauty yielding a deeper vision of truth. If our beholding is honest, here, too, is pain; but it is pain that can enable us to unlock the storehouse of



Artwork by Peyton Watson/www.peytomwatson.com

compassion that is part of all of our own hearts, if we will only reach. This is the glitter of the wrapping paper that, when torn open, makes way for the gift *within*. When we make our way to the home of our own souls, knowing *with our whole being* that we have not merely been informed or entertained or gotten a good bargain out of the experience; rather, *we have seen our souls, and they are indeed, as God called creation, good.*

In response to this mystical inspiration, I repeat a time-tested response: solidarity with the material universe embraces all matter, but especially the human person, who is but a tiny speck of that universe, a universe that longs to find a world renewed, and continue, through us, its own saving work. We are essential, our love is essential, and our assent to this journey is essential.

We must do it, but part of the joy is in the fact that others will walk with us on that journey.

The Pastor's Corner

Martha Graham, the visionary pioneer of modern dance, gave some astonishing advice about this personal involvement and consent to a divine, creative force. A colleague, Agnes DeMille, recorded a conversation she had with Graham in 1943, at a moment when DeMille felt tempted to doubt the value of all her previous work. Graham counseled:

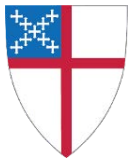
“There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening
that is translated through you into action,
and because there is only one of you in all time,
this expression is unique.

If you block it,
it will never exist through any other medium
and be lost.
The world will not have it.
It is not your business to determine how good it is;
nor how valuable it is;
nor how it compares with other expressions.
It is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly,
to keep the channel open.

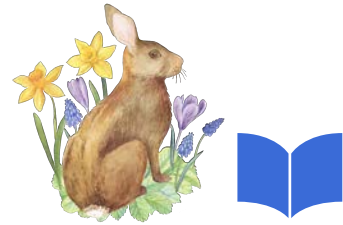
This process is not driven by motivation to express one's individuality or to leave a mark on the world. There is no recipe for this process, and it is never complete in this life. Each baker must bake this dough in their own oven, with the hope that it will be perfected in time. Your soul or your body – or both – bear the stretch marks and the scars of your bearing this gift for others.”

We might ask for a renewal in ourselves—for the child-like wonder that is inherent in us as human creatures. Today, as we exit this pandemic that has been more than horrible in so many ways, it is as if we are holding a bright, but broken mirror, and gazing unselfconsciously at a new image of ourselves. We can do so with quiet surprise in an expression of that same hope for which everyone longs. Perhaps we can find that Hope in the telling and re-telling of our own stories as we re-gather after two difficult years, knowing that strength and constancy is begotten from weakness and turmoil.

Much love and many blessings. Mike+



ST. LUKE'S NEWSLETTER



The St. Luke's Newsletter is one of the publications produced by the Communications Committee. Our charge is to implement St. Luke's Mission by sharing news of our worship and ministries to the parish and to the larger community.

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John Simon, Guest Contributor

Sue Willis, Editor, Contributor

Fr. Mike Watson, *ex officio*

We thank everyone who submitted articles and photos to this issue, and invite parishioners to share suggestions and material for future issues. Please speak to one of the Communications Committee members, or contact the Parish Office.

St. Luke's Church

The Rt. Rev'd Andrew M.L. Dietsche, Bishop of NY

The Rt. Rev'd Allen K. Shin, Bishop Suffragan

The Rt. Rev'd Mary Glasspool, Assistant Bishop

The Rev'd Michael Watson, Priest-in-charge

Joyce Ottinger, Director of Music

Lester Ottinger, Organist

Janet Repman, Parish Administrator

Debra Ramnarace, Bookkeeper

Santos Cardona, Sexton

St. Luke's Vestry

Karen Kellogg, Senior Warden

Joe Ciavardini, Junior Warden

Eric Rieder, Treasurer

Class of 2023

Angela Garr, Lynda Magrath

Class of 2024

Mary Churchill, Herman Clarke

Class of 2025

Mary Pat Sweeny, Nadine Fletcher, Sue Willis

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