

# CCA Today

Sharing the news of Christ Church Anglican

*The joy of the Lord is our strength.*

It's been quite a while since the last newsletter, so why don't we work our way from the present and go back a bit so you can see what you might have missed...

## **Birthday Blessings— Two for the “Price” of One!**

On July 30 following the 10:30 service, the congregation celebrated Fr. Stan's birthday (August 7) and his wife Carol's (July 28). Happy birthday to both!



## **Visit by Bishop David Bena**

CCA extended a warm welcome to Bishop Dave Bena and his wife Mary Ellen when they visited on July 9. Father Stan celebrated the services and Bishop Bena preached the sermon. The service was followed by refreshments and conversation.



## Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter, and Pentecost (and an Easter Egg Hunt!)



## Mother's Day Outreach

Tote bags containing an assortment of both fun and useful items were distributed to the mothers and children residing at the New Reach Life Haven Shelter to help them celebrate Mother's Day. The Outreach Team leader shared that the gratitude of the women – and more especially the happiness on the faces of the children – as she delivers the gifts fills her own heart with joy.



## Some good news from 2022 . . .

### Christmas outreach to New Reach Shelter

Stockings filled with goodies and gift cards were lovingly prepared and hand-delivered to the mothers and children at the shelter.



### Outreach to Father Gil's Educational Center in Nigeria

In 2002 CCA continued to support Father Martins mission work in Nigeria monetarily and by sending supplies. School supplies were sent out to give the children of Father Gil's Educational Center a chance to see how loved and prayed for they are. Tote bags of supplies were sent to the Women's Shelter there as well. The following excerpted letter of thanks from Fr. Martins was received in late October.

Dear Karen and CCA,

You made tears run on my eyes today as I received the notification of \$1000 gift for our organisation in Nigeria and other countries of Africa as we work though education (Gil Literacy centre and CCA Women centre (where women are taught to make better use of their time during the dry season by engaging in sewing and knitting and making of beads).

Fr. Gil was our friend who initiated this partnership and it has not died after Fr. Gil's departure (I don't want to say died because he is alive here through these ministries and many other things like when I visit the fish restaurant by the water etc). This partnership is well and progressively impacting lives due to the fact that there are faithful people who continues to shine the light and bear the baton that Fr. Gil passed on.

It is notable that CCA has passed through many challenges, yet there are faithful people who are holding on and the light is still burning!!! Glory to God!

I can imagine Fr. Gil naval' smile as you continue to bear the light in the face of many challenges. Your life is a testimony and we are happy to share in it.

Thank you for loving us.

God bless amen.

Fr. Martins





# Personal Testimonies

## My Journey with Cancer

*by Doreen St. Germaine*

One day I'm feeling healthy. In the blink of an eye I'm hit with the diagnosis of bladder cancer. An ultrasound showed that the ureters from my kidneys were constricted. I was being treated for an overactive bladder. The MRI showed how pervasive the cancer was. I was scheduled for an outpatient procedure which led to a massive nine hour operation that included a radical hysterectomy, removal of my bladder and some lymph nodes. I woke up with a urostomy bag, a whole new adjustment to my bodily image and way of life moving forward. This had happened so quickly that I didn't meet my surgeon until the day of my operation! And right in the operating room I prayed aloud with the team for God's hand to guide Dr. Hesse during this surgery.

Because my kidneys were enlarged and not able to withstand chemotherapy, the operation had to come first, followed by four to six cycles of chemo. A port was surgically placed in my chest to be used for blood draws and infusion of two different chemicals to rid any residual cancer cells that could be still traveling in my body.

I was admitted three more times to the emergency department at Yale, St. Raphael's Hospital campus with infections to receive IV fluids and antibiotics. My indications that something was wrong were low grade fevers and lack of appetite.

I had gone from a very independent woman with a lot of energy; from mowing my own lawn at age 73 to now being totally dependent upon family and friends for rides to chemo, buying my groceries, and doing my laundry, as I was unable to go up and down stairs until I healed and got my strength back. Now I had home health care aids and an APRN nurse to show me how to replace my urostomy bags. I also had physical therapy with exercises to build muscle strength and stamina. Before surgery I would do 15 minute power walks on zoom with Leslie Sansone and do 30 minutes of yoga with a DVD in my living room. After surgery I was winded walking around the block and changing the sheets on my bed.

But God has blessed me so much through this trial. With my faith, with many prayer warriors lifting me up to the Lord, I am renewed and relying on His strength. My Wednesday night Bible study group, led by Greg Booth from Bishop Seabury church, prayed that God would use me to glorify Him. And those prayers have been answered! I stand in the mirror after a shower and look upon this 75 year old body with its sagging crepe paper skin, lack of muscle tone,



black and blues from IVs, my urostomy bag, scars from my surgery and an implanted port in my chest, and yet, I have never felt more alive! Strange, but the spirit of the Lord has gotten ahold of me ever since. I feel the urgency of sharing God's mercy and grace. I feel the Lord's love, His presence and His peace.

I have had so many blessings during this trial; people from many churches praying for me. My home church CCA in Branford with Fr. Stan anointing me with oil as all gathered around laying hands on me, including two of my daughters surprising me with their attendance this particular Sunday. Sermons from VOX Church, challenging me and inspiring me. Greeting cards pouring in from many friends. I now have a pen pal from Virginia. Greg Booth told his mother about me and she has sent many beautiful hand made cards filled with prayers and hugs and love. My sister Diane shopped for me, did laundry, vacuumed, came and stayed with me during my first day of chemotherapy. My daughters, Jessica, Jill and Jackie have taken me to appointments and to and from chemo. My brother David has taken me to many appointments and picked me up from the urgent care after staying with me until he knew I was being admitted. All while helping his own wife as she deals with pancreatic cancer! God has put my sister-in-law and I together on this journey for His purpose and to support one another. All I know is that God gives us trials to bring us closer to Him, to rely on Him for our needs daily. When we draw closer to Him, He promises to draw nearer to us.

A favorite hymn came to mind: "Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me, Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me." I am learning to be content and to praise Him in all circumstances. I pray that the good Lord will continue to use me here on this earth a little longer until He takes me to my heavenly home to be with Him.

