

Time Together

While We are Apart

Wednesday, May 13, 2020



Good day, dear church communities,

Our animal picture today comes from Frans and Daphne Kasteel (SMWC), and shows their beloved dog, Lil, who is a seven-year-old Shih-Tzu. Daphne got Lil when she was a tiny puppy, from a farm in upstate New York. As a puppy, Lil fit in the palm of Daphne's hand. Lil is beloved too by the Friday afternoon Book Group that meets at SMWC. Lil attends with Frans and while the group has a deep discussion of the assigned book, Lil investigates the entire parish hall and licks any available food off the floor! Frans says she does love to eat, even enjoying asparagus! Many thanks for sharing dear Lil with us, Frans and Daphne!

I recently received an article from the Diocese on pastor burnout during disasters. The writer offered good reminders that when you work from home, you can often never stop working.....And reminders about carrying the worries of others, as well as the worries about one's own family....And reminders about self-care.....

Thus I've decided to take next week, May 18-24, as a vacation week....though we will not be going mountain climbing, or jetting off to Acapulco. Tim and I will, of course, be at home, and I'll be available for pastoral emergencies. The Time Together newsletters will continue, though a little shorter perhaps. For the folks to whom I deliver the newsletter, please watch your mailboxes, as Paula will mail them to you. And Paula will be available as usual by email or text if you have a question or concern, as well as our able Sr. Wardens, Frances Callahan and Bill Pennell.

And I'm looking forward to sleeping in (maybe all the way to 7am!), reading a few novels, and cleaning out some closets.....way better than Acapulco!

Now, onward to a little more, "Time Together." -Megan

Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Sunday Newsletter. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists.

Notes for this week:

- Randy Romaine (SMWC) is having rotator cuff surgery, to repair the torn cuff and tendons, today! Randy sustained this injury while cutting trees, just before the Stay at Home order began and non-emergency surgeries were halted. So, he is eager to finally have this surgery and is hoping for much relief from the pain of the injury. Please keep Randy, and his wife Gloria, in your prayers, especially today.
- Chuck McGrath is slowly improving. His birthday is coming up this Sunday, May 17th, and I believe he is turning 95! If you would like to send him a birthday card, the address is:

P.O. Box 370
Irvington VA 22480

Please continue your prayers for Chuck and his family.

- Our healthcare workers are on all our hearts. Please keep them, and their families, in your prayers.

May and June Birthdays and Anniversaries

St. Mary's Whitechapel Birthdays: Karen Woodruff, May 4; Jean DeFilippo, May 12; Ernie Greene, May 13; Chuck McGrath, May 17; Randy Romaine, May 25; Rita Theisen, June 3; Ursula O'Bryhim, June 16; Ed Ramsey, June 16; Jane Henley, June 17; Jane Fortin, June 22; Warren Hottle, June 29

Anniversaries: Lucy & Warren Hottle, May 10; Donna and Pete Ransone, May 26; Ed and Sue Ramsey, June 15

Trinity Birthdays: Finn Pollard, May 2nd; Allen Cornwell, May 3rd;

Karen Woodruff, May 4th; Jonathan Chilton, May 11th; Hope Hayden, May 11th; Milton Kingsbury, May 13th; Owen Christopher, May 22nd; Spencer Cammarata, May 24th; Jenny Dunaway, May 24th; Jamie Hayden, June 12th; Jodie Hayden, June 12th; Alexis Hayden, June 15th; Cole Hayden, June 15th; Dinny Jackson, June 23rd; Julian Cornwell, June 24th; Curtis Walker, June 30th

Anniversaries: Carter & Cheryl Christopher, May 19th; Janet & Jay Davenport, May 20th; Gwen & Stan James, June 16th; Diane & Dukie Smith, June 18th



Announcements

The Scholarship Committee at SMWC announces that their deadline for applications has been extended until May 29th. More information, including guidelines and forms, is available on the SMWC website: stmaryswhitechapel.org

“Zooming Coffee Hour” is held every Sunday, at 3pm; all are welcome! Text, call or email me if you want to join us, and I’ll put you on the list to receive the Zoom invitation each week. Once you sign up you are on the list and can come any Sunday that suits you. (My cell number is 804-477-5515.) And if you would like to join us, but are not signed up for Zoom, Ellen Tracey from Trinity and Sharon and Richard Gill from SMWC are willing to help anyone get on Zoom. Ellen can be contacted at: 804-436-2371 and The Gills can be reached at: 804-462-9939.

For the season of Easter, I will be posting a video each Sunday, except for May 24th when I am on vacation. The videos will be available on the Trinity website and on our Facebook pages.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org.

Please let me know if you are in need of help with getting groceries or other necessities. Call, text, or email and I’ll connect you with a volunteer.

Many thanks for your donations to the Discretionary Funds. This week we helped individuals through The Link who are impacted by the COVID-19 virus. A small business owner, a waitress, and a daycare worker had all lost hours of work due to the virus and needed help with bills that are piling up. You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector’s Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church
PO Box 208
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC
5940 Whitechapel Rd
Lancaster, VA 22503



Thoughts from the Organ Bench

“WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS”

In 1844 a young Irishman, Joseph Scriven, had completed his college education and returned home to marry his sweetheart. As he was traveling to meet her on the day before the planned wedding, he came upon a horrible scene—his beautiful fiancée tragically lying under the water in a creek bed after falling off her horse.

Later, Scriven moved to Canada and eventually fell in love again, only to experience devastation once more when his fiancée became ill and died just weeks before their marriage. For the second time, this humble Christian felt the loss of the woman he loved.

The following year, he wrote a poem to his mother in Ireland that described the deep friendship with Jesus he had cultivated in prayer through the hardships of his life.

The poem was published anonymously at first under the title, “Pray Without Ceasing.” Ten years later, Scriven finally acknowledged this well-loved text had been written by him and his friend, Jesus. In 1868, attorney Charles Converse set the text to a tune and renamed it “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Ken Osbeck tells the story in his book *101 Hymn Stories*.

Instead of thinking God was punishing him, Scriven cherished God’s friendship through all of this hardship—a friendship he discovered in prayer.

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May we learn that our relationship with God will grow the same way—in prayer.

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Please enjoy this performance of “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” one of my favorites.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2jJPpjb_PM

Source: <https://factsandtrends.net/2018/06/25/the-unknown-backstories-to-3-well-loved-hymns/>

Reflection

Last Sunday, at the 3pm Zoom Coffee Hour we discussed many things...including recommendations for the best tomato plants to buy, and where to buy good local tomatoes, if the deer and squirrels routinely take one bite out of each of your garden tomatoes. We also came to the topic of when and how the churches might reopen. The first level of discussion was about how much we all miss being together, and how, even with the limits of technology, the Zoom Coffee Hour gathering was comforting, and lifted folks' spirits to see each other's faces, and to laugh together, and to pray together.

In the second level of discussion, we talked about the limits that will be on worship whenever we reopen. Allowing six feet of social distance on all sides will significantly limit the number of people able to be in the sanctuary at both churches. And if we open with a limit on the number of folks allowed....how do we set that limit? Would we have to require a reservation to attend church? And what about newcomers, unaware of the need for a reservation? None of us liked the feel of a pre-registration to be in church, but understood the absolute need to limit numbers, and wondered how to do so in a loving way.

We also discussed the possibility of meeting for worship outdoors, at the Labyrinth at SMWC or in the Pavilion at Trinity, again with limits on the number in attendance, but with the advantage of fresh air. As the discussion continued some offered that no matter how we arrange worship in the future, they will not be able to attend for a long time, perhaps even until an effective vaccine is developed. These folks are over 65, the age of vulnerability according to the CDC, and have underlying conditions or their spouse does, and thus they would not want to risk bringing home the virus from church. Eventually we went around the group and found that of the 10 folks there, none was ready to attend church in person at this time.

This small survey led me to want to hear from more parishioners in both churches. So please take a moment to email, text or call and let me know whether you would feel comfortable attending in-person worship in the future, with the six feet of social distance, perhaps masks worn by all, and most sadly, limits on singing. The
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research shows that singing spreads the virus as much as, or perhaps more than, sneezing or coughing.

The small sample in the Zoom Coffee Hour made me realize that I will need to develop on-line worship options for the future, and I plan, after my week off, to begin work on Zoom worship opportunities for us.

The Diocese of Virginia is developing processes to guide the churches in the reopening. However, no date has been set to even begin reopening.

In the meantime, please let me know your comfort with gathering in person for worship. I'll end with a quote from the Bishop of Maine, Thomas Brown, in an Episcopal News Service article on how the pandemic is reshaping how we all will approach worship:

“The world around us has changed. We are changed. If we think of the next couple months as simply resuming what we did earlier this year, we will be disappointed. God calls us to give thanks for what was and to move forward in trust and gentleness.”

Amen.

