

St. George's Episcopal Church

Uniting in Worship.
Welcoming in Grace.



5224 Minnetonka Boulevard

St. George's Episcopal Church

This is a free publication for members and friends

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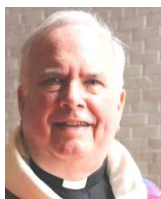
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September 2021

Volume 28, No. 9

MOVING FORWARD CAUTIOUSLY

by *The Rev. Tom Gehlsen*



As we continue to move through a very strange summer, Covid and Variants continue to be the top story around as well as the drought in Minnesota. I would like to reflect with you a bit on the continued presence of Covid-19 and the Variants in our lives at St. George's.

The recent updates on Covid restrictions from both the governor and the CDC have made it clear that the coming months will bring more complexity and uncertainty as we live through the later stages of the pandemic. Churches and other organizations are scrambling to figure out how to best guide their communities, and the online voices are growing as people react in many ways on what they think everyone ought to do.

It has been my hope and desire that by this time we would be fully opened as a church, and our community would begin coming back together. It appears that the latest surge in cases of the virus has kept us from moving on to the late stages of the pandemic. The CDC has renewed its recommendation that people wear masks when indoors in areas with high rates of infection. Right now the positivity rate in Hennepin County is 4.7%, just under the 5% when restrictions and shut-downs were begun.

At this point the recommendations from ECMN indicates that decisions about whether and how best to worship in person remain with the canonical leadership of local congregations. We here at St. George's, for safety, will continue to wear masks

indoors during our indoor services. We will constantly monitor the situation in our county and state as to our moving forward.

At our most recent Vestry meeting, the Vestry has recommended that we continue to move forward slowly. With safety in mind, you will notice blue tape blocking entrance to every other pew in the church. Besides our continuing to wear masks, we have again implemented social distancing in the name of safety for our community. We will keep you informed as we move forward based on the best information we receive.

I'm sure this is a disappointment for many. I for one am probably the most disappointed. Our community, as I mentioned in a sermon not too long ago, needs to be re-established. This will take time and energy. So, I would encourage each and every one of us to make our presence known at our Eucharistic celebrations.

As you know, we have had tremendous leadership as we chart our path through the pandemic. I want to thank each and every person in the parish for their cooperation and assistance on this journey with our committee's tough decisions regarding our journey and most of all for keeping the safety of our community as the top priority.

The most effective way for each of us to continue this journey is to never lose sight of Jesus and His love and mercy for us. We can never go in a wrong direction if our faith and hope are illuminated in the Light of Jesus crucified and risen from the dead! In addition, be sure to get vaccinated and encourage others to do the same!!

God Bless Each of You!

Fr. Tom

What is the StG's Strategy Project?

By Bruce Becker



Even before Covid-19 hit last year, St. George's was facing attendance and financial issues. Then in March 2020, Covid-19 forced us to stop live services and operate on a virtual basis for the rest of the year. With uncertainty about the long-term impact of these trends, the Vestry felt it would be helpful if a small task force, representing different groups in the congregation, worked on how St. George's should look in the future.

The task force members were:

- Bruce Becker (Chair)
- Father Tom Gehlsen
- Rachel Santos
- John Rash
- Jane Jacobson
- Fran Bly
- Tom Harmon
- Ellen Doering

The team went through a series of online exercises and virtual meetings from April through July of this year. We visualized what we thought St. George's needs to look like in the future demographically as well as in terms of services, programs, outreach and the use of our facility.

After the visualization exercises, we conducted an idea generation exercise and came up with 46 specific ideas we could consider in the future. We then went through a rating process to see which ideas we felt should have the most priority.

This information was presented to the Vestry in the July meeting and discussed in more detail at the August meeting. We plan to present these findings to the congregation at a Sunday Adult Ed in September.

The Vestry is beginning discussion on how we might implement some of the top ideas. While this newsletter isn't the appropriate format to get into the specific ideas, as a "teaser," the top ideas fell under 3 broad conclusions:

- To be a stronger church 5 years from now, St. George's needs to be much more active in outreach.

- There is a need to become more active in offering programs and services for young families and children.
- There is a need for a marketing effort to build awareness of St. George's and publicize our programs and outreach activities.

To follow through on these ideas is going to require the efforts of many of you to make them happen. So think about the areas you have some passion for and let's build a stronger future for St. George's.

Education Update

Submitted by Heather Whitesell



Things are ever-changing as we transition to fall. Father Tom and I are working together on Adult Education offerings and will provide updates as all is firmed up. I am hopeful that youth will be able to once again share connection time. As we move into a new school year, let us focus on positivity and grace. The following prayer is for students, but we can all benefit from these words of wisdom.

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of education in every form. As our children prepare to start a new year, may confidence be their foundation, may grace be their guide and may hope be their compass towards a bright future. I pray they would have eyes to see the needs of those around them and a heart to love well. May they face each day with positivity knowing that no matter what comes their way, they don't have to face it alone. Amen.

A BIT OF HUMOR

From The Rector

When looking at the ECMN tomatoes grown from seeds – a gift from the Bishop, a friend of mine wrote: "Great looking tomatoes, Tom!"

"Oh, you're looking great too!"



A BIT OF HISTORY

By Camille Schroeder



If you've had a chance to walk to the front doors of the church along Minnetonka Blvd, you may have noticed the copper sculpture on the Christian Education Building. It is a depiction of St. George slaying the dragon and is symbolic of the victory of Christ over the evil of the world. It was commissioned by the Vestry and was created by a Mr. James Young who was an elementary art teacher in the Anoka school system.

The artwork was given as a memorial to Fred Furber who was the first senior warden of St. George's. The memorial was given in 1970 by his daughter, Betsy Furber. The Furbers lived diagonally across the street from St. George's and were on site when the original Quonset church burned in 1949. Betsy Furber was in the first Sunday school class at St. George's.

The sculpture needs to be cleaned to return to its original beauty. If you know anything about this process, please contact Camille Schroeder at 952-470-5730 or at camillesschroeder1@gmail.com.

OUTREACH

By Camille Schroeder



The St. Louis Park Emergency Program (STEP) has two events coming up. The first is the **STEP-Up Breakfast** which is on Friday, September 17, from 7:15 to 8:30 am at the Metropolitan Clubroom in St. Louis Park. The breakfast is free for this fund-raising opportunity. You can make reservations by calling STEP at 952-925-4899 and asking for Faith. She will take your reservation. If you wish to sit with your fellow St. Georgites, request a seat at Camille Schroeder's table.

Winter coats and accessories: STEP is collecting winter coats, jackets, snow pants, etc. to be given out to clients in October. Please check your closets for those items you will no longer be wearing, see that they are clean, and donate them to STEP.

St. George's will have a rack in the Narthex in September for your donations. Children's clothing is especially needed. Also, if you have winter footwear in good condition that you no longer need or use, consider donating it to STEP. Thanks so much for your participation in this project.

Food and school supplies: We donated 40 pounds of food and 2 bags of school supplies during the months of July and August. The Back to School project is over as of the end of August and about 300 children were served.

As for food, there is always a need. Toilet paper, tooth paste, Kleenex, feminine supplies, diapers (large sizes especially), and wipes are always needed. Just donate what you and your family might use. Again, thanks for your generosity.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE CHOIR?

By John Hoffacker



We're all looking forward to singing together again, but if it takes a few more weeks of keeping our germs in own throats, then that's what we'll do. Right now, singing as a group is too dangerous. Let's beat this thing!

Among our Artists-in-Residence, Cristina Czaia and Ben Jeitz have been singing in worship all summer, joined from time to time by Eryn Tvette. It's been glorious! Cristina moved to St Paul, too. Christina Christensen launched a new nonprofit which has kept her awfully busy, and she has just moved as well! Billy Vaughan spent this summer, as he does every year, working at a language camp in beautiful Bemidji.

As soon as we can sing in church as a choir, I'm hoping we'll be back at full strength.

This is a very friendly, talented bunch, and if you'd like to give it a try, we will be delighted to welcome you!



Zoom Church Continues! (For A While)

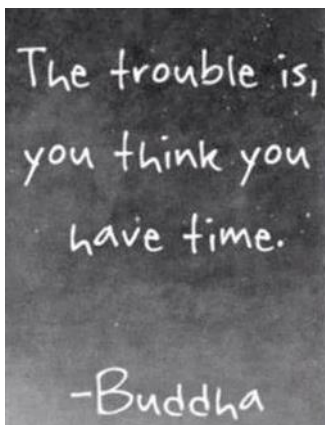
By Tom Boe

In late August we announced that we'd be switching from Zoom to YouTube for our virtual worship option on Sundays. That makes total sense when we have a large in-person group of worshipers in our sanctuary and a smaller group of online worshipers.

BUT...the pandemic seems to have other plans. We may have to go back to virtual-only attendance soon, based on ECMN guidelines and current infection rates. And for virtual-only attendance, Zoom continues to be our best option.

We want to avoid giving people whiplash—changing worship platforms from week to week. So we're postponing our switch to live-streaming until the current pandemic wave clearly subsides and most folks can be safe and comfortable worshipping in the sanctuary.

Keep an eye on St. George's weekly email and listen to announcements at church. One of these days we'll switch to YouTube live-streaming. Just not yet.



COVID-19 UPDATES

*By Kathleen Boe
Rector's Warden*



For those of you that have attended in-person worship, you will have already noticed that we've closed off every other pew to encourage some social distancing. Reckoning with the risks of transmission from Covid continues to be challenging.

One metric we are paying attention to is the case rate per 100,000. The Diocese guidelines allow meeting in person when the rate is below 25/100,000. As I write this note, the rate is at 19.8. There is a real possibility, that as schools resume and we move indoors in the cooler weather, that this rate will climb to a point that we need to return to on-line worship only. We will continue to watch this metric closely and communicate via email and newsletters if our in-person worship plans change.

The Diocesan Covid-19 information can be found [here](#). The current Covid-19 data for Hennepin County can be found [here](#).

Thank you for your continued patience with all of this. As Father Tom says separately in the newsletter, the health and safety of our community remains a priority as we evaluate these decisions.

In Sympathy



Our sympathy goes out to the family of Jan Whipple who passed away on July 17, 2021 in Beverly, Massachusetts. Jan's funeral was held at St. George's on Tuesday, August 24, 2021.

Jan was a long-time member of St. George's. She started attending in 1960 and raised her children in the church. Jan was a member of the choir since the time she started coming to St. George's.

When interviewed for the newsletter in the summer of 2020 and asked about her favorite thing about our church, Jan said, "I liked it so well in every way. I just liked everything, I guess."

A Book Share from Rachel Santos

"MIRACLES AND OTHER REASONABLE THINGS."



A story of unlearning and relearning God

By Sarah Bessey

A charismatic Christian who grew up in the Word of Faith movement which embraces the gifts of speaking in tongues, Bessey is a traveling preacher, author, conference leader and mother of four children who enjoyed a busy life of activity and convicted faith.

When a horrific car accident left her in chronic pain, everything that was normal in her life changed. Admittedly skeptical and prejudicial of liturgical churches, by an odd set of circumstances she is invited to Rome to be part of a papal audience. Dragging her pain-racked body to Rome where she has an eye-opening experience with the Pope, and two mystic priests, she struggles between the tradition in which she was raised (and it's assumed "rightness") and these other ways of worship that ultimately involve as much Holy Ghost as her charismatic upbringing.

She unpacks the slow process of learning that saying "I'm not ok" doesn't necessarily demonstrate a lack of faith, but rather, faith had become her stalwart and sometimes silent companion in the endurance of pain. God is still with her, in her physical brokenness.

Another hurdle to cross was no longer being able to pray in the style that had been the mainstay of her life. The tongues had fallen silent, and the prayer formula of **Pray, Repent, Ask and Yield** no longer filled the tank. She found succor in the prayers from another liturgical treasure, the Book of Common Prayer.

The following quote best sums up her experience. "Every time I build an edifice for God to live within, God transcends it while still abiding within it...just when I am certain that I will always experience God in the same ways, a new path opens."

Help Our Afghan Siblings

From Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

We continue to witness the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and are learning that we will see an influx of Afghan refugees throughout the United States in the near future. The **Episcopal Public Policy Network** has issued an **Action Alert** for Episcopalians to call their elected officials asking to increase funding for evacuation and resettlement care.

Episcopal Migration Ministries is offering ways to help those fleeing Afghanistan and is looking for donations in support of this work. Our local partner assisting with refugee resettlement is the **Minnesota Council of Churches**, and they are in need of more hosting congregations. If you'd like to learn more about becoming a hosting congregation or participate in resettlement, we encourage you to connect with Kathryn Berger, Volunteer and Outreach Specialist with MCC Refugee Services, at kathryn.berger@mchurches.org.

Bishop Curry has **asked us to pray** for all involved.





Check out the events in September!

SOME EVENTS ARE ONLINE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 11 a.m. GBD (Zoom) 6 p.m. Choir picnic	2 6 p.m. AA	3	4
5 9:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist	6 	7	8 11 a.m.- GBD (Zoom) 7 pm – Peer Support Group–closed (PH)	9 6 p.m. AA	10	11
12 9:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist	13 7 p.m. Finance Committee	14	15 11 a.m.- GBD (Zoom)	16 10:30 a.m. Welcoming Committee (Zoom) 6 p.m. AA	17	18
19 9:30 a.m.- Holy Eucharist	20 12 noon Women of St. George 7 p.m. Vestry	21	22 11 a.m. – GBD (Zoom) 7 pm – Peer Support Group–closed (PH)	23 6 p.m. AA	24	25
26 9:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist	27	28	29 11 a.m. – GBD (Zoom)	30 6 p.m. AA		

**GOSPEL-BASED DISCIPLESHIP – 11 A.M. EVERY WEDNESDAY – <https://zoom.us/j/397934453>
Meeting ID: 397 934 453 – You may also join audio by phone: +1 312 626 6799**

KEY: GBD – Gospel-based Discipleship HE – Holy Eucharist CEB – Christian Education Building
LL – Library Lounge G – Garden PH – Parish Hall



MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARISTIC ASSEMBLY

	SEPTEMBER 5	SEPTEMBER 12	SEPTEMBER 19	SEPTEMBER 26
Readings	James 2:1-10,(11-13,14-17) Psalm 125 Mark 7:24-37	James 3:1-12 Psalm 19 Mark 8:27-38	James 3:13-4:3,7-8a Psalm 1 Mark 9:30-37	James 5:13-20 Psalm 124 Mark 9:36-50
Lectors	Tom Harmon	John Rash	Sarah Schulte	Cyprian Troyer
Altar Guild	Kitty Reese Bill Stromberg	Kathleen Boe Katy Campbell Rachel Santos	Nancy Becker Bruce Becker Kathie Brown	Jane Jacobson Gregg Jacobson
Ushers	Bill Stromberg Bruce Wachutka Tom Harmon	Tom Zaun Bob Jones Jane Jacobson	Bill Stromberg Gregg Jacobson Bruce Becker	Tom Zaun Sarah Schulte Lou Michelich

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

5 Fr. Tom Gehlsen
8 Owen Monroe
11 Camille Schroeder
13 Harold Morgan
16 Kathie Brown
17 Rachel Holbach
Sarah Rash
Brianna Rouselow

19 Nancy Taylor
21 Gloria Monroe Johnson
Claire Holbach
23 Devin Snyder
25 Julian Mejia
27 Jill Burns



About St. George's

5224 Minnetonka Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952-926-1646

www.stgeorgesonline.org

Office hours Monday-Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

PARISH STAFF:

Rector: The Rev. Thomas J. Gehlsen,
Ph.D. tomg@stgeorgesonline.org

Deacon: The Rev. Diane McGowan
smarl@aol.com

Parish Administrator, Heather Grieger
office@stgeorgesonline.org

Music Director, John Hoffacker, D.M.A.
johnh@stgeorgesonline.org

Children and Youth Coordinator,
Heather Whitesell
heatherw@stgeorgesonline.org

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE:

Christina Christensen, Mezzo-soprano
William Vaughn, Bass

VESTRY:

Kathleen Boe, Rector's Warden; Sarah
Schulte, Parish Warden; Bruce Becker,
Jill Burns, Gregg Jacobson, Jane
Sandsmark, Rachel Santos, Cyprian
Troyer, and Bruce Wachutka.

Clerk of the Vestry:

Laura Harmon

Parish Treasurer:

Connie Kotula

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY SERVICES ARE NOW IN PERSON AND ONLINE WITH ZOOM

Sunday Worship at St. George's
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Worship Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/141788041>

You may also join audio by phone:
+1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID: 141-788-041