



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

We seek to share
the unconditional love of God.

From Your Rector

The holidays bring with them stress and, sometimes, sadness and isolation for many of us even in “ordinary circumstances”. COVID-19 adds an extra layer to this sense of being out of control and to our stress. Many of us who want to see our families (our families of origin as well as our church family) but aren't sure whether these gatherings are safe. Preparations for the holidays also cause more anxiety because nothing works as it did before.

Here are a few ideas and resources to help us all cope during this time.

First, remember that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Christ is always here for us, going before us, beside us and behind us in everything we do. Nothing defeats Christ.

Please also remember that your pastor and parish family are here for you virtually or only a phone call away.

Taking time apart to meditate or read Scripture also can help us cope. Many of us have our own favorite resources for meditation, but, here are a few:

> Habits of Grace, with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

<https://episcopalchurch.org/habits-of-grace>

> Daily Prayer by Forward Day by Day

<https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/>

> Meditations from Catholic Health

<https://www.chausa.org/newsroom/coronavirus-resources/spiritual-resources-for-covid-19/meditation>
> Pray As You Go, which has both an app and a website

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

> Morning and Evening Prayer from the Mission of St Claire

<https://www.missionstclare.com/english/>

> Benedictine Sisters of Erie Pray With Us

<https://www.eriebenedictines.org/daily-prayer>

> Lectio Divina Journal, which also has both an app and a website

<https://www.lectiodivinajournal.com/>

> Lectio 365, which is an app that can be found for Android or Apple

Here also are some webinars that might be helpful:

> The Quiet Center, a webinar on creating spiritual practices,

<https://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/245/the-quiet-center-cultivating-inner-peace-in-unsettling-times>

> Mourning Our Changing Church, a webinar to allow you to move through the grief process about the inability to worship in-person,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpBVPkUIUEo>

Randi+

Digital Worship at St. Andrew's

The Corona virus pandemic has pushed us to bring worship to our parish in a unique way. When our church was completely closed down last spring, we conducted our church services on the Zoom video conferencing format. Rev. Randi would lead the service from her laptop at home and we could connect to that digital broadcast through the Zoom app on our phones or laptops. Zoom allows us to see and hear each other as well as our Priest or speaker.

We realized that St. Andrews is resilient; we had reasonably good attendance on this new digital format, often as good as live attendance in church. We at St. Andrews are a social group of worshippers, and we enjoy seeing each other as well as our priest during the service. Hence our preference of the Zoom format over Facebook Live. We realized that digital worship at St. Andrews is here to stay; we can include people virtually who live far away from St. Andrews or who cannot attend in person for other reasons.

Eventually we had the opportunity to return to a church worship service with limited attendance of a maximum of 25 people. In addition, no live music could be part of the in-house service, as singing further enhances the risk of the spread of the virus. To be able to have live worship in our church building we had to meet a strict list of requirements set out by our bishop, including maintaining a digital video worship footprint.

Our goal in preparation of hybrid services was to maximize the experience of the St. Andrews service for both the people attending in person as well as those attending on-line. We wanted to include music in our services, as music has always been a big part of the St. Andrews experience. The hybrid service format created several technology challenges. We needed to bring the images and sounds of the church service to the digital audience on Zoom, and also bring the live music created from a remote location to both our church and digital audience.

Our St. Andrews Broadcast Workstation is located in the Choir Loft at St. Andrews Church. It features an HP laptop generously donated by Marty and Rachel Gregg (Thank you Marty and Rachel!), two Sony Video Cameras, a Blackmagic Design video switching device, a small 7



inch video monitor to help the operator, a small headphone amplifier that helps us to send the remote music signal to our Church PA system, and all the cables required to connect this system. Total cost of our broadcast workstation is approximately \$1500 to date, but with all the donations received we were able to keep the net cost under \$500.

We also have four tech savvy volunteers to be broadcast producers. Thank you Justin, Jamie, Pam and Lynn!

Although we started strong with our hybrid services, with a lot of participation in the church and on the Zoom broadcasts, we were shut down from in church services by the bishop after just two weeks due to the rapid increase in the virus infections in WNY. But stay tuned, we will be ready to go just as soon as we're allowed to back in church!

Doug Wintersteen

From Your Senior Warden

If any year could be named after a movie, it would be 2020. The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. It's been a year of testing our faith, which I know I've struggled with. I want to thank everyone that have worked so hard at getting our church opened on November 1st. There were no words to describe the feeling of worshipping together again as a family.

But now onto 2021. There will be new vestry members, junior warden and yes a new president that will all have challenges ahead of them that they never thought of. Please remember them in your prayers.

Now just a little reminder of the that Amazon logo on St. Andrew's web page. If I can manage to remember to use it, you all can. St. Andrew's gets a small rebate each and every time you use it. Just think back over the last six months you all have ordered from Amazon. Wow! So with Christmas coming, please, please try to remember to bookmark Amazon off our website.

And finally, as I finish up as warden Thank You! It's been a pleasure. I have made mistakes and learned so much and love you all.

Meg

Vestry Highlights

- >Brookside Chapel will be used for services in Summer 2021
- >Vestry discussions regarding a Deanery collaborations and fundraisers
- >Reopening Committee is ready to resume in-person worship once the Diocesan suspension has been lifted. The vestry would like to thank the committee and all the in-person volunteers.
- >The vestry would like to thank everyone that donated toward the Adopted Families for Thanksgiving & Christmas.
- >Vestry brainstorming for upcoming fundraisers. The Pampered Chef fundraiser runs thru December 12th.

2020 Vestry Members

Wardens
Meg Whitmore
Doug Wintersteen

Vestry
Kay Mayer
Rob Pritchard
Jamie Gailie
Sue Villeneuve
Lynn Schauer-Bewley
Chris Jordan

Treasurer
Bill Buchanan

Vestry Clerk
TBA

Deanery/Convention Delegates
Sue Villeneuve
Cindy Harrington

Financial Status as of October 2020			
Total Expenses	\$141,898	% of Pledges on Time	50%
Actual Income	\$105,361	Goal for Pledges on Time	80%
Income Equals	74.3%	of Expenses	

Diocesan News

In-Person Worship and Gatherings Suspended

Dear People of God in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania,

Earlier this week, we heard encouraging news about a COVID-19 vaccine that could begin to be available early next year in limited quantities. I give thanks for this source of hope, especially as the virus is now spreading at an unprecedented rate across our region.

Although we hope that 2021 will bring some relief, public health experts and epidemiologists warn that between now and then, cold weather and ill-advised holiday gatherings make it likely that this current surge of infection will not peak until January. For those reasons, I am once again suspending in-person worship, meetings and other gatherings in our church buildings effective immediately. We will reevaluate the situation in December, although I believe that we should prepare to worship, meet, and gather online through the end of 2020. The only exceptions to this suspension are lifesaving feeding and sobriety ministries, which should be conducted according to the guidelines in the diocesan reopening plan.

I reached this decision after consultation with the Standing Committees and other diocesan leaders yesterday, and this morning, I met with the clergy of the diocese to discuss this situation with them and review the data and public health advice that led me to this

conclusion.

It pains me deeply to take this step, knowing that it may keep us from observing Advent and celebrating Christmas in person. This is certainly not the way I had hoped to begin the new liturgical year. But, as precious as in-person worship is to us, the lives of people in our congregations and communities are infinitely more so.

While in-person worship is suspended, I will resume hosting live online worship via Zoom each Sunday at 10 a.m. This Sunday, November 15, I will preach and preside, and we will enjoy music from the Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie. You can join this service using this Zoom link and the password lakeerie.

I encourage you to continue gathering online for Bible study, check-ins and the many creative types of gatherings that people across our partnership have developed during this long pandemic. And I urge you, too, to be generous to those who are in need, especially essential workers and their families who may need our support and assistance.

I will be in touch again in December as we continue evaluating the changing public health situation across our region. In the meantime, you will be in my prayers as you help our church navigate these difficult times.

Faithfully,

Bishop Sean

Sharing God's Love 

You can't go home again.

Thomas Wolfe wrote this in 1940.....and now with this pandemic, I have experienced this also.

First Covid made itself known in our community and our dear St. Andrew's had to close it's doors. Locked us away from our church service, our coffee hour, our fundraiser..fish fry..and our church family.

Then gloriously, our hard working church folks got us up and running on Zoom. Oh, how I remember the first Sunday I got to actually see and hear our beloved church family. And it was enough. We had our church service, we could sing our hymns at home and we had our virtual coffee hour.

But, something was lacking for me. I wanted to sit in our church and take part in actual communion.

So finally, after months away, our church made it happen. I could go to church and see other people face to face, although masked and socially distancing.

But sadly, just as Wolfe wrote how you can't go home again, I found out that our church has forever changed. We are now a church still on Zoom and also a church with members sitting in the pews.

The good news is that from now on folks who chose to remain home can now remain home and attend our church. And for that I am thankful.

But, we are still evolving. Our Sunday school still has to be worked out. Our kids deserve the church to reach them also.

I was reminded that when Sarah Hornquist brought her beautiful children to church because her little girl, Lana, had asked her one Sunday after a Zoom service...." Is church just for grown ups now?"

And my heart literally broke when after the service was finished, Lana, recognizing me, came running with arms outstretched for a hug. As she was about to enfold me, she abruptly stopped looked up at me and said, " I can't ". How sad that this horrible virus has taken hugs away.

Yes, our church is forever changed because of Covid and St. Andrew's is changing and moving on to a new kind of congregation.....on line and in person. But, that's how we keep up with the world. Which is sometimes a little hard for this old lady to accept. But, I am willing to keep on, keeping on, so they say.

Just wanted to say to all of you reading this that on line or in person, we are all one church family. We are St. Andrew's.

We are here and welcome all.

Lizzy Depew



Christmas Pageant 2016

ADVENT BIBLE VERSES

These Bible verses speak to believers in themes of waiting in preparation for a coming King. They talk about the promise of a Savior, light in the dark, good news of great joy.

Jeremiah 33:14-16

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness."

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 11:1-10

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear.

Luke 1:26-38

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace

her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

Luke 2:8-20

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people"

Luke 2:6,7

While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Matthew 2:1,2

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Romans 15:12,13

Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE." Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

All scriptures from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).



St. Andrew's Community Christmas Craft Kits

Celebrate the Christmas Spirit
Making Fun and Easy
Christmas Tree Ornaments!

Available December 4th - December 24th

- Craft Kit Pick Up Locations -

St. Andrew's Community Store

Wednesday 11 am - 4 pm

Thursday 1 pm - 4 pm

Friday 12 pm - 3 pm

Saturday 10 am - 2 pm

St. Andrew's Church

Wednesdays & Thursdays, 2 pm - 5 pm

or Call Pam (716) 807-9535 for delivery



Kits contain small
parts - supervision
required for small
children

Sponsored by St.
Andrew's Episcopal
Church, Burt NY
StAndrewsBurt.com

Virtual
Christmas Eve Service

December 24th, 2020
7:00 pm Christmas Carols
7:15 pm Service

Bring Candle to Light During Silent Night

St. Andrew's, Burt (Prayers of the People)
St. Paul's, Lewiston (New Testament Reading)
St. John's, Wilson (Old Testament Reading & Psalm)

Find Zoom Link & Bulletin at StAndrewsBurt.com

Epiphany ~ January 6th



Pastor Randi's 10.18.20 Sermon

What do you think of when you see that drawing of Col. Sanders atop the red and white painted fast food restaurant?

I think of fried chicken that's finger-lickin' good. When I see Col. Sanders's image, I associate it with a particular brand – KFC. Because we see an image of Col. Sanders at the top of the restaurant, we identify that restaurant as belonging to him. When we see that image of Col. Sanders at the top of the restaurant, we realize that Col. Sanders owns that restaurant (or at least did own those restaurants until he sold them for the equivalent of \$16.5 million in the 1960s.)

Caesar's image was on the coin of the realm. Caesar's image on the money showed that he ruled the secular kingdom. So, the Jews needed to pay to him the taxes of that earthly kingdom. We know those taxes are his because his image is on the money. Jesus said to Give unto Caesar what was Caesar's, so paying homage to an earthly kingdom is OK.

But when Jesus answered the question about whether paying taxes to the emperor was lawful, he also added a phrase. He said to give to God what is God's. The word for "give" can be translated to give back. For Jesus to add this phrase without being asked about it means that Jesus wants to make the point that we should not neglect giving back to God what is God's.

So, what is God's? The things that are God's are the things that have God's image on them. Human beings are created in the image of God. We all are stamped as belonging to God because we all are created in God's image. We are to give ourselves to God – our whole selves.

All these parables we've read over the past few weeks stress the importance of giving back all of ourselves to God. The one last week about the guest who came to the wedding without being appropriately dressed. The two sons – one of whom said he would go work and didn't, the other who said he wouldn't and did. The servant who wouldn't forgive debts owed him even though the master had forgiven him. We are created in God's image, and we belong to Him. When we give to God of our talents and treasure, we are only giving back to God what God owns anyway. We are called to give back to God what God owns. Jesus refers to this call when he adds that we should give to God what belongs to God.

Let's think about what giving ourselves to God means. It means that we continue the work of God even in times when we don't understand what God is doing. Like, now, for example. We have no idea why God is letting this virus continue to kill people, make people sick, and change our happy little lives into something more complicated. But, whether we understand or not, we are created in God's image, and we keep on working in God's church and in the community for good because we, ourselves, belong to God. Eventually, we may see what God is up to, but whether we do or not, we keep using our talents, treasure, and time to worship God, to help support God's church and God's people who need help.

Let's take that a little farther. Suppose we are unhappy with someone at God's church or something at God's church. Maybe we don't like something that happened at the church 10 years ago, 5 years ago, or even last week. Perhaps we don't like something the priest did or didn't do. We are still stamped with God's image. We give to God what is God's – our treasure, which means our money -- our time and talents – which, of course, means we still worship in whatever way is safe for us. It also means we always help with outreach, fellowship, stewardship, or whatever ministry we've been called to.

The church, although not perfect as Christ is, is a primary way in which we who are baptized into it serve God. Whether we are happy with everyone in it or the actions it has taken or not – as long as it hasn't turned into a pagan custom – we still support it. We are called to give back even if we don't always understand or agree.

We are created in God's image and marked as Christ's own. God owns us and all our gifts and our money. We are called to give to God those things that bear God's image. No matter what happens, we still bear God's image on us. We are called to give all of ourselves, always.

Give to God what is God's.

Find more of Pastor Randi's and Deacon Martha's sermons on our website StAndrewsBurt.com

Pastor Randi's 10.25.20 Sermon

Jesus summed up how we are called to live in just two sentences. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and Love your neighbor as yourself. Sounds simple, but, of course, it isn't. Our sense of self-preservation seems to override our best instincts, especially when we feel insecure or threatened or too vulnerable. It's hard to think about and empathize with the needs of others if we are focused on ourselves and afraid for our losing something dear to us – whether a sense of security, or a sense of control, or even that old security blanket of being angry with someone or nursing an old hurt.

Loving God and loving others seems even more challenging when we begin to grasp the concept that our love or lack of love for others impacts the world's future. These commandments aren't just about loving for right now, but also about loving for the future. They aren't just about loving in Wilson, Newfane, or Lewiston, or Lockport, or Niagara Falls, but also about taking actions to show love to all humanity. The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead referred to this concept as "objective immortality." From my Christian theology, I prefer to think of it as our role in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

To do that, we are called to let go of our own self-interest and see the grandeur of the world that God made. That grandeur helps us hear the call – the call to move from individual interest into what is best for all the community, all the nation, and all the world that God created for all time.

Take Moses, for example. God had told him some time ago that he wouldn't live to enter the Promised Land. Still, he led the people faithfully, putting up with a lot of their whining and lack of faith. He was called to make it possible for them to enter the Promised Land and did so. When the people acted up and mistreated him, he must have been tempted to just walk out – after all, he was doing all this work and wasn't going to get to enjoy the benefits anyway. But he loved them, and he loved God, who had called Him to lead the people. So he put their needs and their children's needs ahead of what might have been easier for himself.

The apostle Paul talks about how he proclaimed the Gospel to those in Philippi and Thessalonica despite significant opposition. Paul didn't do that with a view only of himself, nor did he view it only in the short term. He loved the people so much that He wanted them to know about the greatest story ever told – Jesus—for themselves and for their children, despite the dangers to himself.

As we think about love within the context of these two examples, we realize that not only is everything NOT about us,

but everything also is NOT about doing what is comfortable in the here and now. Love is about doing what is right for God and others in the long-term.

So, we may give up buying something on impulse to give that money to God's church instead. Or we may give up a moment of sitting in the chair watching TV to build a Habitat home for someone or to teach someone to read. We may take the extra time to recycle rather than throwing away because that means future generations can enjoy God's world. We may sense the call of God to embark on a new ministry that will bear fruit in the future, leaving behind an old ministry that is comfortable but may have run its course. We may give up the privilege of sitting around wishing that things were as they USED to be and instead focus our energy on co-creating with God the goodness that CAN NOW be. We may give up the fear of the future and its impact on us to hope for a future that benefits everyone – even if we know we won't live to see that future.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree today." Apple trees bring food and shade, and beauty to many people for many years. To plant a tree amid chaos and doom is to let go of your own fears and choose to be hopeful. It is to let go of your own doubt and love others enough to do something that will help them even if you may not live to see it. It's to realize that the Kingdom of God is built by all of us lovingly planting seeds for a brighter future for those that come behind us.

I invite us to be willing to let go of ego, of wanting everything right now, and of fear and doubt. Be ready to put the call of God and the needs of others for all-time ahead of what may feel comfortable now.

Love God and your neighbor. In the midst of whatever fear tempts us to protect ourselves, keep planting.

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Pastor Randi's 11.22.20 Sermon

Anyone watch the Crown – a Netflix series?

The last scene of Season 4 features a conversation between Prince Philip and Diana, the Princess of Wales, during the family Christmas celebration at Balmoral Castle.

Both Philip and Diana are outsiders who married into the Royal Family, and they talk briefly about what that feels like, Diana describing it like being in a cold tundra with no break. At one point, Prince Philip says something like, "We are all lost, unseen, and irrelevant except for the queen. No one matters but the queen. She is the oxygen we all breathe."

Let's contrast this concept of a sovereign with that of Christ as sovereign. Yes, Christ should be the oxygen we all breathe – we should always try to live as Christ did. But the significant difference is that with Christ, those society fails to see and believe to be lost and irrelevant are, in fact, those with whom Christ most identifies. These aren't outsiders in Jesus's kingdom; in fact, Jesus is seen most clearly in the faces of those society often casts as outsiders – the needy, the poor, the sick, the different, the other, the outsider.

Jesus also tends to his subjects as the Good Shepherd – caring for those vulnerable sheep and protecting them from all the perils of the world that might await them. In Jesus's kingdom, the most important thing is to care for the hungry, the poor, the sick, the prisoners – all those who are most vulnerable.

We all are subjects in this kingdom. We joined it in baptism when we accepted Jesus as our Savior and promised to respect the dignity of every human being – those that society sees and thinks of as insiders, as well as those that society overlooks and thinks of outsiders.

One way we do that is to continue to wear our masks and to social distance, especially when we are around those who are considered vulnerable to the virus. Another way is through reaching out to this group with phone calls and offers to help shop or do other activities for them so that they are not endangered.

Another way we do this is to really look at people as we go through our day. Sometimes we barely glance at those people we encounter every day. What are the needs of the person in the line in front of us or behind us? What is the need of the person in the car next to ours? What is the need of this person we see in the church store or in our office? What is the need of this child we see in school or preschool?

More importantly, where is Christ in that person? Because Christ is in that person – Christ is in every person whether they

know it or not. When we look at people as bearers of Christ inside them, we really see them. When we really see them, we can see their needs and respond to those needs. When we are compassionate and respond to those needs, we have responded to Christ. We have followed the example and commandment of our Shepherd King.

The world judges success based on status or possessions. God's kingdom is different. Status and possessions are immaterial. God will judge our lives based upon how well we have "seen" those around us who society often makes invisible. God will judge us based upon how well we have welcomed those that society deems to be outsiders into our inner circle.

Bishop Steven Charleston once wrote about this paradox between what society considers as strength and success and what God considers strength and success:

We are strongest when we show our tenderness to others when we bend the rigidity of culture and custom to care for those in need. Virtue is not attained by following the rules; righteousness is not a

reward for never smiling. Prejudice has made

compassion break into history, upset the morality of the moment, and open humanity to a new understanding of justice and mercy.

The Spirit dares the conventions of our time so that love can reach out as far and wide as it can. Those from whom we would turn are those from whom we would learn. Kindness is both a risk and an invitation.

Jesus urges us to reach out in love to everyone – to see everyone and to be kind to everyone.

In Jesus's kingdom, like in the realms of the world, the sovereign matters – the sovereign is the one to whom we hold allegiance. However, the difference is that in Jesus's kingdom, the ruler is seen most clearly in the outsiders rather than in those who seem to have all the world has to offer. We honor our sovereign best when we help these vulnerable members of society.

Jesus's kingdom isn't or shouldn't be like a cold tundra, but rather a warm place where all can find shelter. It is a place where we genuinely see everyone and provide for their needs. See others. See Christ in them. And meet their needs.

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Pastor Randi's 11.29.20 Sermon

When my father was dying, my mother and I were with him. My mother took my father's hand and said, "You can't die. I don't know how to do all the things I need to do." And she began to list the things she didn't know how to do, one of which was how to put gas in her car at the self-service pump.

After my father died, we grieved for him. To use an Old Testament word, we lamented for him. Of course, the lament was even longer and more profound for my mother because everything about her daily life had suddenly changed. She had been married to my father since she was 17 years old – all of her adult life. She no longer had his companionship, his presence, or his help. She'd have to learn to do new things – such as how to pump the gas in her car. And she'd have to learn how to do tasks in new ways. Cooking for one is different than cooking for two. Although we knew that my father was in a better place, we cried out to God with the pain of losing him.

The passage in Isaiah, and the Psalm, are laments. The Isaiah passage was written when the Israelites returned from having been in exile from their homeland. The Israelites had high hopes for their return that weren't immediately realized. Things were not as they had been in the past. They faced a difficult journey of rebuilding and knew that what they built would be different from what they had left. Their lives had changed, and they felt that God wasn't doing God's part to restore things to the way they had been fast enough. Getting back to normal was taking too long. Some things were lost forever. They lamented what had been lost.

We are facing a difficult journey. Our lives have changed because of the pandemic. God isn't making this thing go away fast enough. It's as if we've experienced the death of someone close to us (and, perhaps, we have) or we've experienced an exile, or maybe a combination of both. We feel that getting back to normal will take a long time, and some parts of our lives are lost forever. We'll have to learn to do new things and do old things differently, just like my mom had to learn to put gas in her car and cook for one instead of two; just like the Israelites had to learn to find God in new ways. We wait for God to help us, and we lament.

Ah! But here's the good news in times of personal and corporate loss. It's found in what Paul writes to the Corinthians:

"You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him, you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

So, God has provided for us as we wait for God to help us. God has provided for us the gift of strength. God is faithful. God is here.

If we look closely, we see God in how many of us have given up personal desires for the collective good. Closing our church again to in-person worship is an example of that. We closed because we wanted to keep the infection rate down to try to keep businesses open as long as possible into the holidays. We want our neighbors who are small business owners to be able to salvage their year. We also want to keep the infection rate down so that we don't flood the hospitals with too many cases, meaning there's not enough care to go around. God is in our decision to sacrifice for our neighbors.

We also see God's spirit working in us to create something new. Church will be different even after everyone has the vaccine and we can sing again. We will have built virtual relationships that will continue. We will re-envision ways of being the church, including more collaboration with sister churches and a close look at what "church" really means. In fact, we've already begun that work as we realize that church isn't so much about the building as it is about our church family and our impact on the community.

God creates anew. This creation is a continual process; once in a while, these life-changing experiences move that new creation forward quickly. We will rebuild anew after this pandemic, and what we build will be Spirit-filled, life-giving, and relevant to the world around us. We'll rebuild just as the Israelites eventually rebuilt their world, just as my mom and all other widows eventually, with God's help, find a way to create a new life for themselves.

After my mother and I had our cries, and a few days had passed, I took her to the gas station and showed her how to pump gas. It signaled the beginning of her new life as an adult, independent of anyone else. Although she always missed my father, she had a new freedom. She could and did make changes in the home – creating a sunroom out of the porch and putting mauve draperies and carpet in the living room – something my Dad probably wouldn't have gone for, but that she really enjoyed. She also spent more time in outreach ministries that blessed the community.

Waiting for God to complete God's transformation in our lives and in the world sometimes is frustrating. And during that waiting time, it's all right to lament what we've lost. But, in the fullness of time, we move forward and, with God's help, give birth to something new.

Find more of Pastor Randi's and Deacon Martha's sermons on our website StAndrewsBurt.com



Join us for an online Pampered Chef
Fundraiser
Hosted by Pam Leibring
to benefit St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
November 15-December 12
pamperedchef.com/party/pamleibring110

Order Online or Contact Pam for Ordering

Mark Your Calendar:
— Virtual Annual Meeting —
Sunday, January 31st
Following the Service - Details TBA

Dates

December Dates

Dec 9: Vestry Meeting, 6:30 pm via Zoom

Dec 12: Last day to order from Pampered Chef

Dec 22: Staff Meeting, 5:30 pm via Zoom

Dec 24: Office Closed

Virtual Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 pm via Zoom

Dec 25: Christmas Day

Dec 31: Office Closed

January Dates

Jan 1: New Year's Day

Jan 6: Epiphany

Jan 10: First Sunday After Epiphany

Jan 13: Vestry Meeting, 6:30 pm via Zoom

Jan 18: MLK Day, Office Closed

Jan 26: Staff Meeting, 5:30 pm via Zoom

Jan 27: Café Service, 7:00 pm via Zoom



January 27th at 7pm

To join in, the zoom link is on the website, and if requested, the password is "Ontario."

VIRTUAL SERVICES ONLINE

— Sunday Service at 10:45 am —

— Cafe Service at 7:00 pm —
Every 4th Wednesday

FIND THE ZOOM LINKS ON FACEBOOK & StAndrewsBurt.com



Schedules

Lay Reader Schedule

Dec 6: Stacy Lampman & Liz Depew

Dec 13: Steve Clark & Susan Lasker

Dec 20: Susan Lasker & Lynn Schauer-Bewley

Dec 24: Steve Clark & Susan Lasker

Dec 27: Steve Clark & Susan Lasker



Adopted Family and Our Little Roses

If you have any questions regarding adopted family donations, or would like to donate, or have a letter to give to Evelyn please contact me:

Jamie Gailie 716-270-7066 jgailie30@gmail.com

Community Store Hours

Wednesday 11am - 4pm

Thursday 1pm - 4 pm

Friday 12pm - 3pm

Saturday 10am-2pm

LIVING BY FAITH

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

2239 West Creek Road, P.O. Box 133 Burt, New York 14028-0133
Office@StAndrewsBurt.com www.StAndrewsBurt.com 716.778.7633

Office Hours:

Officer Manager: Shawn Slother

Music Director & Organist: Joe Breczka, Jr.

Treasurer: Bill Buchanan

Vestry Clerk: TBA

Sexton: Jerilyn Carney

St. Andrew's Community Store: Cynthia Harrington

Church School Superintendent: Nancy Pestinger

Choir Librarian: Shirley Litz

Altar Guild Director: Dorothy Cheasty

Convention & Niagara Deanery Delegates: Susan Villeneuve & Cindy Harrington

Bishop of Western New York

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe

Rector

The Rev. Randi Hicks Rowe

Wardens

Meg Whitmore

Doug Wintersteen

Vestry

Chris Jordan

Sue Villeneuve

Kay Mayer

Rob Pritchard

Jamie Gailie

Lynn Schauer-Bewley

December 2020/January 2021 Newsletter

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
2239 West Creek Road
P.O. Box 133
Burt, New York 14028-0133

Dated Material

To: