



## Reflections from Your Stewardship Committee

In these extraordinary and challenging times, as we deal with cascading pandemics of Covid-19, racism, and environmental degradation; it seems important to return to the basics.

And with that in mind, I find myself asking again what a congregation is. During this season, I resonate most keenly to a very simple definition – a congregation is a community of companions whose shared life is centered on the love of God made plain in Jesus Christ.

Such a view of a parish allows us to accompany one another in both joyful and sorrowful times, relying upon the presence of Christ. Belonging to him, we each discover that we belong to the community as well. And from that belonging springs our desire to tend, console, encourage and affirm one another. From

that belonging comes our ardor to deepen our spiritual life and our togetherness. From that belonging is born our longing to serve the people of the world both far and near. And from that belonging comes our impetus to care for the creation God loved into being.

My small offerings of prayer, time, talent and treasure are given to foster growth in this community as we seek to accompany one another in our walk with Christ.

- The Rev. Shariya Molegoda

My personal faith has been enriched and strengthened by our St. Andrew's Church community of faith as we have continued to journey together. For my own family, both of my parents and most of my siblings, have been actively involved in many of the ministries of church. Brenda and I were married at St. Andrew's and both of my parents are resting in peace in the Garden of Resurrection. Becoming actively involved in the church's ministries provides the opportunity to know your fellow parishioners at a much more personal level while pursuing common interests and activities. This adds to the richness of the fabric that we call a community of faith that has grown to support each other when needed with cheer, hope, and faith.

- Gary Naegel

The pandemic has imposed upon me a disquieting separation from St. Andrew's. I miss worship in the sanctuary, chatting with friends after the service, dropping by during the week to chat with Shariya and Anita. But at the same time the separation has affirmed my faith. In the absence of hugs, handshakes, smiles, words of thanks and praise I have come to appreciate their value more deeply. In the absence of packed pews, shared bread and wine, hymn-singing, my longing for God has grown. I have come to see that St. Andrew's and the St. Andrew's family are special, and much deserving of support in these difficult times. I hope you will join with me helping as best you can in this season of stewardship.

- John Armstrong

***Please return pledge form in the envelope provided by November 15. We will celebrate Commitment Sunday on November 15 as we celebrate St. Andrew's Day.***

Living through Covid shutdowns has made me prioritize. Like others, I have had to think before I made choices to gather food, go to work, go to stores, and meet with friends and family. This time has also been special. I have felt that fragility of life and been afraid but the decision to attend church was easy for me. I have loved the Zoom services. While I miss seeing everyone in person and I miss the natural way of speaking with fellow parishioners, the virtual services have allowed me to worship conveniently with my family even as they are spread around the country. I have had special time with my adult children and visits with my mother that have become precious in a way that is difficult for me to describe. We often have family Zoom after church, so it has given structure to our week in a way we didn't seek in our pre-Covid life.

What have I learned? I've learned that listening is so important. Without the preparation and participation of social gatherings, of travel, of so many things that aren't part of my life right now, I've been forced to be quiet and to discern what is absolutely essential. Having prayer, having God through the community of St. Andrew's, having a thoughtful and present Rector, being part of a thoughtful and earnest Vestry, these are the things that I've clung to during this unusual time. I am so appreciative of the life I've been given. I want to share those blessings with others and will do what I can to give to St. Andrew's. I hope you feel the love of St. Andrew's and the love of God.

- Laura Downes

COVID-19 may have changed St. Andrew's in superficial ways, but not in its essence as an Anglican community. We are building faith together and sharing the strength that comes from examining our spiritual and secular lives together. From Shariya's homilies, from the Wednesday book-based discussions of what it means for us as Christians to address racism, and from many other activities, St. Andrew's has been attending to my and the community's needs. I am profoundly grateful to St. Andrews for opening its arms to a newcomer to town. But community cannot be a one-way street where all the attention goes to the needs of community members and to the less fortunate in our town. Community also involves stewardship of the institution that is St. Andrew's. If we ignore the financial health of the institution, the institution will eventually be unable to sustain the St. Andrew's community. Although the pandemic has produced unexpected hardships and special requests for financial support to address those hardships, we should not assume that we can ignore our responsibilities to provide for St. Andrew's without consequences for us to be able to continue to share strength and build faith. We cannot ignore our duties of stewardship. We need St. Andrew's and St. Andrew's needs us.

- Robert O'Connor

In the world of ophthalmology, 20/20 is normal vision. Clearly our world in 2020 has been anything but normal! Already suffering dual pandemics of racism and the novel coronavirus, Hurricane Isaias also tested our strength and resilience. And yet we know that God will not give us more than we can handle. Though meeting virtually, the St. Andrew's community remains active and engaged. We are a people of many talents, and together we can continue to carry on God's work around us. Remembering that all that we have comes from God, it is our responsibility to remain good stewards even in times of great difficulty. Please join me in your commitment to St. Andrew's for 2021.

- Rebecca Rastetter

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