

ST. ANNE'S EYE

Proclaiming the Stories of God's Love
at St. Anne's Episcopal Church,
Trexlerstown, Pennsylvania

INFORM INVOLVE INSPIRE

September 2018



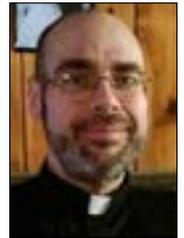
St. Anne's sign dedicated in memory of Elfie Maniatty

On Sunday, August 5, we dedicated our new LED sign in loving memory of Elfie Maniatty. The Maniatty family generously bequeathed the funds to purchase and install the sign. George and members of his family joined in celebration of Elfie's life and faith, and George's birthday.



When the indispensable becomes disposable

We have many needs and desires in our lives. We seek to prioritize what is most important and what is not as important. Most people want to make the best decisions possible in prioritizing their lives. To forsake one option in favor of another means that something is sacrificed. In some cases what is sacrificed is almost as important as what is kept.



Most choices we make are more significant than whether we will take Route 22 or 78. Travelling across the Valley to get to a movie or to visit someone has a timely quality. However, the critical element increases exponentially if we are in the back of an ambulance and we need to get to the hospital. Being late for a movie or a gathering is disappointing. Not receiving critical care quickly is certainly on a whole other level. There is no comparison.

Deciding about what priority our faith has is not easy. Life is not the same as a generation ago. Our lives are fuller. There are more families where both parents are working. The amount of time spent on the job and commuting back and forth has increased. The activities our children are engaged in take more

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Hearing God's message through the Gospels

By Father Don

As you may know, the readings for Sunday are on a three-year cycle. The church has creatively named them "A," "B," and "C." In year A, the Gospel is from Matthew. In year C, the Gospel is from Luke. This year, we are in year B. The Gospel is from Mark. While there are some exceptions, from the beginning of Advent until the end of the Pentecost season, we hear from one Gospel.

A very notable exception to this pattern is the interruption of the readings from Mark during the summer. For several weeks we read from the Gospel of John, particularly the "Bread of Life" discourse. Whatever the human intention, anytime something out of the ordinary happens, it is wise to be attentive (more attentive than usual) and see what God is showing us.

Most of us, as lifelong Christians, are used to and familiar with the 6th Chapter of John. Individuals as well as entire denominations will interpret these passages differently. It is remarkable how diversely it is taken. While God's word is rich and defies any single/static meaning in most cases, we must be wary of human agenda when it comes to matters of faith. The question we need to ask is: "What is God's message to us?"

The same richness of meaning and relevance found in all Scripture is present in John 6. While there are certain elements that are written and meant to be understood as analogy, most of John 6 is not analogy but statement of fundamental principles of our faith. Jesus repeatedly informs his listeners that, no matter how wonderful current or past religious figures, all comes from the Father. Whether it be the manna given in the desert, the bountiful multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the Bread of Life, or Jesus himself, all given from above by the Father. Even the teachings of Jesus come from the Father. "All shall be taught by God. (6:45).

Hopefully, Jesus' teachings have our full attention, because it did not get the proper attention of many of his disciples and those who were following him. After hearing Jesus' teaching, they became angry and/or went away,



Given the fact that many of the people following Jesus were consistently complaining and challenging his teaching, it is not surprising that they were enraged, and no longer followed him. Their hearts, minds, and souls were closed. Isn't it remarkable how quickly they forgot the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus walking on water, and the many things Jesus said and did in their presence up to this point?

How narrow minded! How sad! How tragic! How typical! We wouldn't have reacted that way! Or would we? Do we? What was so difficult and controversial about Jesus' teaching? Why did many of his disciples ask: "How can anyone take it seriously?" (6:60). It turns out that Jesus' words were neither difficult nor were they controversial if one heard them in faith and took them seriously. Jesus, in very explicit terms, describes the intimate relationship God wants with and for us all.

In the face of such a stark and definitive invitation to set aside all pretense and illusion that we use to hide our true selves, we can see the fear that underlies the faithless response of so many of Jesus listeners/disciples – both then and now. Some of the greatest aberrations and distortions of Christianity come from insecure people trying to avoid truth and hide their fear when faced with the call to live by faith. Whether it be negativity, prejudice, judging others, or persecuting/bullying those who are different, we have a way of avoiding

what we need and desire most; which is to be loved and accepted for who we are. This has been God's will for us from the beginning of creation (see Genesis – and all the other books of the Bible).

Why, then, do we embrace all of the division and drama? Much of the negative things that goes on in life can be avoided or lessened. Are we going to follow our first impulses or strive for something better? It all boils down to faith. Scripture tells us that faith can move mountains. Why aren't we moving mountains? Are we faithless? If we are tempted to say that we do not have that kind of faith, we are right. We don't have it (or at least enough of it). It come from God. What we do not have, He provides. That is why the 6th Chapter of John starts with the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It clearly shows us that God takes what we do have and miraculously (and to a overabundant degree) magnifies/multiplies it.

Like a dog chasing its tail, the thoughts of: "I am not worthy," "I don't have enough faith," "I don't have time" will always lead to disappointment, failure, frustration, and emptiness in life. We are not called to chase our tails but go straight to God. If we feel that we do not have enough faith, we need to ask for it and expect God will provide it. If we feel that we do not have enough time, we need to prioritize our lives as GOD calls us to.

With all of this in mind, what is the definitive message of John 6? Firstly, God provides abundantly for all of us. Secondly, we must share. Realizing the unconditional love of God for us as we are, we also must recognize that God loves all others the same as he does us. This love requires us to set aside prejudice, ill-treatment, judgment, and gossip. Jesus does "give his flesh for the life of the world." We must also give our lives for the good of others. We must set aside selfishness and, in love, serve and care for our sisters and brothers.

Therefore, as our season of hearing from the Gospel of Mark is interrupted by the readings from John, it is important to take notice of the special message God is giving us about His love for us. NOW is the time to take notice and receive the invitation that is being offered.

Journey to Generosity

Life is an opportunity. Life is a journey. A journey to saying “yes” to God who calls us the Beloved. Life is a journey to love; a journey to welcome; a journey to invite; a journey to peace; a journey to generosity.

From the moment we draw our first breath to the moment we breathe our last, we are both receivers and givers. How we move from takers of everything given to us to sharing everything we have is one measure of how we live into saying “Yes”

On our journey to generosity, we learn from our parents and other family members. We learn from friends and church members. We learn through our own actions and from hearing the stories of other generous people.

The gospel stories of Jesus inform, challenge, and inspire us. Whether it's the story of the Good Samaritan, the rich young ruler, or Zacchaeus, Jesus

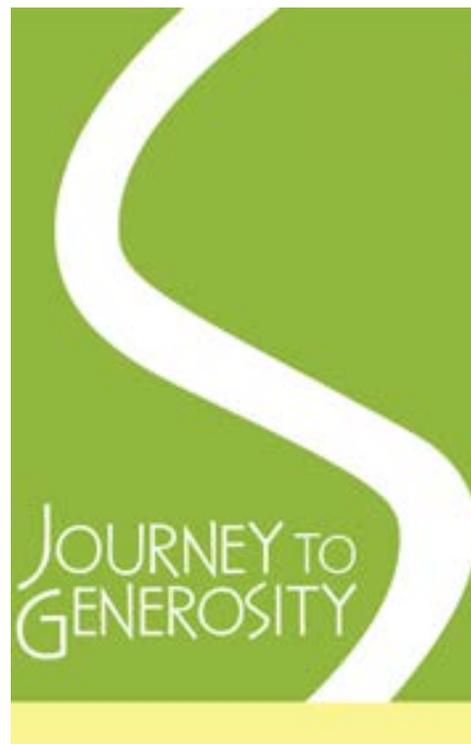
invites us into what the journey to generosity looks like.

We have chosen “Journey to Generosity” as our theme for our Fall Stewardship campaign this year and invite everyone on our journey. It is not simply about how much we give to support the Mission and Ministry of St. Anne's. The journey is about how we live our lives as followers of Christ.

Are we generous in our dealings with others? Are we generous when we welcome the stranger and the unfamiliar to Church on Sunday mornings? Are we generous in our forgiveness and in our acceptance of forgiveness?

We hope you will find our upcoming reflections helpful as our church travels on the Journey to Generosity. Pack your bags and join our journey!

St. Anne's Stewardship Team



Beyond the Broken Heart

There are so many ways each of us experience grief thru loss in our lives. The loss of someone we Love. The loss of a pet. The loss of a job. The loss of a friendship. The loss of our health.

Whatever way we come to grief doesn't matter. Grief is overwhelming in the beginning and crippling at times. Grief is a journey. One that we needn't take alone. As with any journey it is comforting to have someone beside us to talk to and to reassure us that we are headed in the right direction.

Beyond the Broken Heart offers just that. Companionship on your journey. A safe place where people who are grieving come together to share with one another and listen to one another. A place where people navigate loss together

This group meets once a month on a Sunday, 9:00 a.m. at St. Anne's church. All are welcome.

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time and require more transportation demands. ETC. When it comes time to go to church on Sunday, we are faced with giving up needed rest and giving up activities that never used to be scheduled on Sunday mornings (sport programs as an example). Additionally, this does not take into account church activities that occur outside of worship time. Weekdays, Sunday afternoons, evenings, Advent (right before Christmas), Lent (in the middle of winter), are not necessarily better times and add to an already overloaded schedule. What is one to do?

Time is not the only consideration in prioritizing issues of faith. Many in the current generation view religion differently than their parents and grandparents. In our society the meaning of “practicing faith” has changed in the last several decades. N.T. Wright, in his book, Paul, has an interesting observation: “Today, ‘religion’ for most Westerners designates a detached area of life, a kind of private hobby for those who like that sort of thing, separated by definition...from politics and public life, from science and technology” (Wright, p. 22).

Wright may have a valid point. Maybe he doesn't. However, the premise behind his observation is most important. Religion, or the practicing of faith is more than an unrelated or isolated part of our life. Faith does not

work well when it remains separate from the rest of our lives. If we wish faith to be what we expect is to be and bring the benefits we want, it needs to be integrated into every aspect of our lives. It is not an activity, it is a way of life. This does not mean that we need to be the one with Jesus stickers all over our cars and preach at the water cooler and in the lunch room. We are not called to look disdainfully on our “sinful” coworkers or classmates. Simply, what it does mean, is that we are called to be in a relationship. This relationship, by its nature, must be intimate and unconditional. It must be inclusive and respectful of others. It must be selfless. In a word, our relationship with God and others must be loving. The big caveat here is that must love as God does, not in the way the world would espouse.

The practice of faith is not primarily attending services and engaging in church activities. It does not expect or require perfect attendance. The practice of faith is loving our sisters and brothers. A faith relationship is being with them. It is being there for our brothers and sisters. Faith is being in relationship with each other. Thus, when we are in a loving relationship with God and others, we will, in turn, be with each other in church, at church activities, as well as other aspects of our lives. Faith begins with the priority of putting God first and letting all other decisions and activities of our lives flow from that first priority.



NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR



We are pleased to welcome Jim Reichard as our new Music Director. As many know, Jim has been our interim organist. He has also helped with music at the parish picnic the last two years. Jim has been involved in church music for a number of years. He has also played in several bands, including a stint with Bill Haley and the Comets. He is currently a member of a blues band.

Jim officially starts September 1st. He will be seeking choir members and will appreciate the help and support of all as he begins this new part of his music ministry at St. Anne's.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY SUNDAYS

On Sunday, September 30th, we will have the first of our quarterly "Friends and Family Sunday" celebrations. There will be one service at 9:30 a.m. and a social time afterwards. These Sundays being offered as a response to requests to have opportunities for people from both services come together, pray, meet, and renew friendships. We hope to offer some special refreshments and an activity for the children. It will be helpful to for all planning on attending respond with a count to assure the proper amount of food is prepared. We would also like to know how many children there will be (and their ages) so that we can have sufficient supplies for the activity as well as have enough for that would be enjoyable for them.

We would like to give out invitations to this event. There are two reasons for this: The first is that each person knows that they are wanted and welcome in our church. The second is an opportunity to update our register and assure that we have correct contact information.



As the name implies, all parishioners are welcome. Equally welcome are all who would like to attend and join us for worship, refreshments, and the opportunity to enjoy each other's company. In short, all are welcome.

As an added blessing, Colette's grandson will be baptized at the service.

If you have ideas for this celebration (either the liturgy or the gathering afterwards) please contact Fr. Don. Future Friends and Family Sundays are being planned for Advent, Lent, and Spring.

PASTORAL CARE SUNDAY (PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING)

We will have prayers for health and healing on Sunday, September 23rd at both services. We will also celebrate and thank those involved with pastoral care at St. Anne's. Additional volunteers will be sought.

ADULT FORUM DAYS

September 23, and October 7 at 9:15AM

EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday evenings at 6:30PM starting September 12.



Beyond the Physical Needs

The Outreach team, along with the congregants of St. Anne's, continues to reach out to others both locally, and throughout our world, helping with physical needs like food and clothing. The Outreach team mission statement is "To live God's love, and tell God's Story as we journey using our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to reach out to those who we can support in their time of need. We do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and for His glory."

Although I believe meeting physical needs is important, recently I have thought we should be focusing on spiritual needs as well. A friend recently shared an excerpt from a sermon where his priest challenged them to consider that we may actually be spiritual beings with a physical aspect, rather than physical beings with a spiritual aspect. I think spiritual needs are a little harder to define, but really just as important. In fact, I wonder if the spiritual needs of individuals were better met, perhaps they would have a stronger support system and fewer physical needs. Wouldn't it be better to be proactive instead of reactive?

How can St. Anne's assist in meeting the spiritual needs of the community? What are these spiritual needs? Well, I googled it and found the following from Methodist minister, and pastoral counselor, Howard Clineball. He believes all people need to pay attention to these seven spiritual needs in

order to feel whole and fulfilled. They are as follows:

1. Healing and empowerment of love - from others, self, and an ultimate source.
2. Experience renewing times of transcendence
3. Sense of meaning
4. Values, priorities, and life commitments
5. Develop their inner wisdom and creativity
6. Awareness of oneness with other people
7. Spiritual resources

In Father Don's recent sermons, I have heard a challenge to explore, and be inspired to reach out beyond our comfort zone, to make a difference in our world. While at the library a few weeks ago looking for an audio book I came upon one featuring Pema Chodron on Fail, Fail Again, Fail Better. Her emphasis was that we have many failures or mistakes in life, but they can be times of great opportunity for discovery, growth, and forward movement.

So how we can use the gifts intrinsic to the people of St. Anne's and minister to the spiritual as well as physical needs of those around us? What are these gifts? Can we come together as a parish, take an inventory, and create a plan on how to use these gifts to minister to others? Let us move forward, together, with purpose.

Linnae Goda, Outreach Team

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EYE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

12th - Wednesday evening Bible Study begins
23rd - Healing Service Sunday, Adult Forum
29th - Blood Drive
30th - Friends and Family Sunday

OCTOBER

7th - Adult Forum

NOVEMBER

10th - Fellowship Potluck; Bingo Night

WELCOME NEW COMMUNITY GROUPS

Zumba - weekly Wednesday classes

Parkland Art League - monthly meetings

My Smart Hands - Sing & Sign Classes for babies, children,
parents & educators

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SERVICES

Sundays: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. The Holy Eucharist and
Sermon

10 a.m. Church School

September - May