

THE CALL

ST. ANDREW'S
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St Andrew's: Our Spiritual Home



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

WHEN I WAS AN EXCHANGE student from my seminary in England at the Episcopal Church's seminary in California, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, my work study job was being a janitor in the student dorm. I was very good at it! One of my co-janitors was Sarah, and we joke about how we met mopping floors. My other co-janitor was another exchange student, Maung Doe from Burma or Myanmar. He is now a bishop in the Anglican Church of Myanmar.

One day when we were mopping the floors of the refectory, I asked Maung if he missed his home in Myanmar. His response surprised me. He said no because his true home was with God and because God was always with him, he was always at home.

I have often thought of his words, and it has impacted the way I think about home. If you asked me now where my true home is, I would say it is wherever Sarah and my family are, but it also with God. In this sense my

response reflects the incarnation of Christ whose home was both among us on this earth, but also with God the Father.

I believe my response reflects that for many of us our idea of where our home is located is complicated and is about more than a single physical space. And I know from my conversations with you, that many of us think of St. Andrew's as our "spiritual home" which is why Homecoming Sunday is such an appropriate name for the first Sunday after Labor Day when we return home to St. Andrew's after our summer break.

The whole notion of "home" is very important to us as human beings and thus is explored in many psychological studies. In an article entitled "The Meaning of 'Home'" in *Psychology Today*, the Yale trained psychologist Roni Beth Tower examines four ways of looking at what "home" can mean. All four of these approaches can be used to explore how our church can be our spiritual home.

The first approach is from environmental psychology and concerns the impact that the physical space of a home can have on people. For a church, this is reflected in the importance of church architecture in creating a holy atmosphere in which the presence of God can be felt whether in the grandeur of an ancient cathedral or the warmth and intimacy of a small parish church. At St. Andrew's when you come into the sanctuary, many of you speak of how it feels you are entering a holy space of prayer in which the nearness of the divine can be felt.

The second approach is that of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in terms of a home being a place where basic and fundamental human needs are met: for shelter, nutrition, hygiene, safety, work and play, and interpersonal needs for contact, communication, companionship, and belonging. At St. Andrew's, this second approach to being a home is reflected in two ways. Firstly, St. Andrew's is a place where our need for belonging, and companionship is met through our experience of God's love in the St. Andrew's community. The importance of this experience is why St. Andrew's parishioners often report back to us that the sense of community at St. Andrew's is one of the things they value the most at St. Andrew's. But this approach is also reflected in our outreach ministries in which we seek to share that love we have experienced in giving financial and other resources for those in need outside the congregation who need shelter, nutrition, and safety.

The third approach is that of "attachment and memory" which sees home as the center for forging and nourishing human attachment bonds. From a Christian perspective this means that the church, as our spiritual home, is where we learn and are reminded that of the attachment of love that God has for each and every one of us, and that we are called to share that experience of love with our neighbor.

The fourth approach to the meaning of home is that it is a place where we can have the freedom and safety

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to explore our identity and possible selves. From this "personality" perspective, psychologists suggest that the home allows us to craft an identity from internal experiences like temperament, needs, and desires, as well as through our relationships with others, and with the larger social and cultural systems in which we are embedded. In terms of the Christian spirituality, the church should be a spiritual home where we are invited to explore and imagine what it would be like for us as individuals to live more fully into the calling that God has for each of us to use our time, abilities, and resources to bring Christ's love into the world.

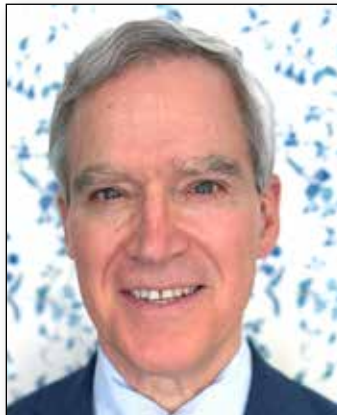
As we look forward to the new church program year beginning on Homecoming Sunday after our summer break, the clergy and lay leadership of St. Andrew's are committed to making this parish your spiritual home. Our hope is that St. Andrew's is a church where you can experience all of these different approaches to what it means to be a true spiritual home where you can flourish in the warmth of Christ's love.

Yours in Christ,



Warden's Letter

"The world is bright with the joyous saints. . ."



Tom Faust, warden

this feast day, including one of my personal favorites: "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God." This beloved hymn, by the Englishwoman Lesbia Scott, was written while a mother in her twenties to sing to her own children. First published in 1929, it remains an enduring classic.

The hymn's third stanza memorably submits that saints lived not only in the distant past, but can be found even in modern times among Christian people who lead lives of virtue in service to God:

*They lived not only in ages past, there are
hundreds of thousands still,*

*the world is bright with the joyous saints
who love to do Jesus' will.*

*You can meet them in school, or in lanes,
or at sea, in church, or in trains, or in
shops, or at tea,*

*for the saints of God are just folk like me,
and I mean to be one too.*

Over the last several months, a group of St. Andrew's parishioners has been working through a discernment process with Adrian and a master stained glass artist to

CELEBRATING All Saints' Day on November 1 is a tradition in western Christianity that dates back to at least the eighth century. From its beginnings, All Saints' Day has honored the saints of the church—those individuals, both known and unknown, deemed worthy of veneration for their good works and closeness to God.

At St. Andrew's, the commemoration of All Saints' Day traditionally includes the singing of hymns commonly associated with



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develop a recommendation to the parish to replace the large Porter window on the west wall of the sanctuary overlooking Washington Street. Largely a blank canvas today, the west sanctuary window provides an extraordinary opportunity to express our values as a church community both to our-

selves and to those many passing along Washington Street each day.

As envisioned, the updated window would pay tribute to a range of historical and modern-day saints whose gifts of loving service, charismatic leadership, artistic ministry and enduring faith may inspire present and future generations at

St. Andrew's, and represent to the outer world the Christian ideals we strive to uphold.

As the discernment process continues, we look forward to sharing with the broader parish, renderings of the proposed new window and aspirations for it to inspire the saintliness within each of us.

The "Welcome" in Christian Hospitality



The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

Don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.

—Hebrews 13:2

OUR EXTENDED SUMMER is coming to a close, and it is time to turn to the vital energy of St. Andrew's fall term. Homecoming Sunday is September 8 and our big fall picnic will be Sunday, September 15. Mark your calendars!

As we regather after summer vacations and summer schedules, I find myself thinking about our membership committee and the hard work the nine members do to be sure newcomers are greeted in a glad and friendly way, not just at the narthex door on Sundays, but also during coffee hours, and in emails and phone calls during their first months with us. Our regathering this fall is the perfect time for all of us to become an extension

of our membership committee's Christian hospitality by being both curious and friendly.

Are you a longtime member of St. Andrew's? We invite you to be part of the welcoming community that reconnects to old friends, but also welcomes over 40 new families who have joined us in the past two years.

Are you a newcomer? Our Christian spirituality invites you to be a welcoming presence too, maybe to newcomers newer than you are, or to returning members who haven't met you yet.

Our St. Andrew's parish is a place of profound welcome and acceptance because we all choose to treat one another with Christian hospitality. We are genuinely friendly, ready to welcome and serve one another, and our larger community, in the name of Christ. When we say, "Good to see you; how was your summer?" we mean it.

During his time on earth, Jesus was both a host and a guest. He intuitively understood that humans flourish by both giving and receiving. Making room to sometimes be a host and sometimes be a stranger or newcomer expands many parts of our souls. We flourish when we welcome others and allow others to welcome us when we are new to a gathering or a program. To be confident as a welcomer, and to be thankful when we are welcomed, is part of our Christian spiritual rhythm.

You are invited to be a welcomer this fall, but you are also invited to experience the spiritual growth and contentment that comes from being a welcomed newcomer too. There are many ways to ground yourself and your family in welcoming communities at St. Andrew's. Here are a few ways to try if you haven't tried them before:

- Read our summer book and join in on two discussions this fall.
- Come to a Sunday 9am Christian learning class in the parish hall. We reflect on elements of our Christian faith and get to know one another better. We have babysitters for parents with young children.
- Join our St. Andrew's Turkey Trot team. Last year, over 70 of us (kids and adults) ran the Wellesley Trot on Thanksgiving morning. We raised money for food pantries and cancer research, ran 5K and wished each other a happy day as we posed for our annual photo. (Thank you, photographer Peter Lull.)

This fall, you are invited to participate in the art of Christian hospitality by engaging both sides of this life-giving practice.





Benefits of Faith



The Rev. Dr. Sarah Robbins-Cole

DO YOU EVER HAVE those moments when someone is surprised that you go to church? Or when someone finds out that you are Christian and then they ask that dreaded question, “Does that mean you are religious?” And maybe even worse, they follow it up with “why?” And then your mind shuts down and figuring out what to say is nearly impossible. And then, Good Lord, if they start throwing words and phrases at you like “evolution” and “the Virgin Birth,” doesn’t that make you want to make excuses like “I mustn’t monopolize you” or say, “Just a moment, I need to go refresh my drink.” I find small-talk faith-splaining to be one of the most painfully difficult conversations unless the person I am speaking with is a genuinely interested and sympathetic interlocutor. And believe me, this is true for me even after nearly three decades of ordained ministry.

My doctoral research is one of the ways that has helped me overcome this fear. My research into the field of happiness and well-being has not only convinced me that religious life helps people experience happiness, a sense of meaning

and purpose, as well as a profound sense of belonging, but my research has also given me the words to explain why this is so. There are, of course, many other benefits of faith that I could share with those who ask me about Christianity, such as the assurance of God’s love, forgiveness, comfort, and peace. But usually, when I mention happiness, that’s enough. People want to hear more because most people, maybe all people, want to be happy. Yet, many people don’t know where to find it, so theologians, philosophers, and social and cognitive scientists keep writing on the topic.

So, this brings me to what’s up next for me and this research. One of the things that is up next is: Adrian asked me to invite the entire congregation to participate in a similar experiment to the one I conducted with teens in the spring of 2023. He would like to make this happiness experiment a significant focus for this program year. I will be preaching on the topic on Sunday, September 15, and talking about it during an adult education class on Sunday, September 29 with a start date of Tuesday, October 1, when you will be invited to:

1. Complete a four-question multiple-choice subjective happiness survey and turn it in (using your real or pseudonymous name—just use your pseudonymous name throughout if you choose one).
2. For 30 days, answer five short questions at the end of each day and record your answers in the best way for you. If you are comfortable, turn those answers to me so they may be coded and assessed. You may submit your recorded answers.

3. After 30 days, retake the four-question multiple-choice subjective happiness survey to assess if there has been a change in your perceived subjective happiness, and again, turn it in.
4. After those 30 days and over the next several months, you will be invited to be interviewed by me or another member of the clergy team. Alternatively, you may complete the 20-question interview question sheet on your own and turn it in.

Sometime in the winter, we will report what we have learned.

When I asked Adrian why he was interested in running this experiment with the broader congregation, he answered in typical episcopal style—he said there were three reasons.

The first is that Adrian believes, and the RenewalWorks survey that was conducted in 2022 confirmed, that one of the areas that people would like most to grow is in their spiritual practices and their relationship with God. This experiment does just that with a practice that may take only five to ten minutes daily. The second reason is he believes that what we learn from this experiment will offer us, and potentially other churches, a way to help their congregants grow in their faith and help people feel happier. Finally, Adrian believes that participating in the experiment and practicing these spiritual practices will help people talk about their faith with others with more conviction and less awkwardness.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me in person, via email, or call me.

Parishioner Reflections

Our Spiritual Home

Our Church Wherever We Are



Lisa Onorato

BEING RETIRED, my husband, David, and I are now able to travel in ways we would not have during our demanding career years. Hiking, sailing, and skiing in Europe and the Rockies. Visiting countries in Africa have been especially exciting and educational, experiencing wildlife and cultures different from our own. Regardless of the adventure I am always filled with gratitude upon my return home. Our home is now found in Massachusetts and

increasingly Vermont, but beyond geography, it is where we find community, support, and acceptance. We attend services online more often than in person now and appreciate the work and planning that has gone into making this access work. St. Andrew's community and spiritual home is one that welcomes us back, no matter how long or far we have been away.

Empty Nesting



Sam and Heater Schaefer

THE END OF SUMMER is always bittersweet but especially this summer for the Schaefer family. After a fun, family-centric summer, filled with

travel and adventure, Heather and I return to St. Andrew's this fall as empty nesters. Both Norah and Coley are now off to college. For the first time in nearly 22 years, home will have an entirely new look and feel for us, decidedly more quiet. Unfamiliar, perhaps scary for us both. For Heather and me, this represents an opportunity for us to re-engage and recommit to the St. Andrew's community. We will certainly have the time! We will need to redirect our energy and our love to things that fulfill us.

Our goal as empty nesters will be to keep things constant, familiar and then look for new ways to invest our time and efforts in things that make us feel at home

and grounded. St. Andrew's can help ease this transition and help sustain and feed our spiritual growth. Heather and I feel most at home at St. Andrew's when we are involved, engaged, and contributing to the health of our community. Specifically, Heather is looking forward to getting engaged with Soul Sisters as well as the fall fellowship event. I find peace and serenity while serving as a lay Eucharist minister and I am fulfilled with my work on the vestry. Heather and I look forward to seeing familiar faces and friends in the pew on Sundays. Home is where the heart is and our hearts will be at St. Andrew's this fall.



Photo: Peter B. Lull

Deepening Our Commitment



Terri Rawson-Wakefield

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN a moment when my family and I didn't feel at home at St. Andrew's. From the very first time we attended in 2001 right through to today. Every Sunday, every holiday, every church event,

every ministry meeting, I am reminded that St. Andrew's is the home of my family's soul. Both of my girls grew up at St. Andrew's, from church school to Rite-13, confirmation and youth group and, even though they are now both out of college, they still attend St. Andrew's when they are in town and reminisce about all of the wonderful times at the annual parish picnic, pancake supper and Bargain Haul.

In early 2020 my then-fiance Mike Wakefield and I asked Adrian if we could exchange our vows during a 10am Sunday service, so the entire congregation could participate, similar to when we all gather around the baptismal font to embrace the newest members of our faith. We couldn't imagine

a more fitting way to receive the sacrament of marriage than being surrounded and supported by our spiritual community.

Unfortunately, the pandemic upended those plans and our ceremony was moved to our garden, officiated by Adrian so St. Andrew's was still with us. Since then, St. Andrew's has played a spiritual role in the marriage of Mike's son, and memorials for both of Mike's parents, as Adrian has officiated those services as well. We look forward to Homecoming Sunday in September when our spiritual community comes back together refreshed from summer, ready to welcome new members into the St. Andrew's family and continue our journey of faith together!

Veterans



Charlene Smith

BARGAIN HAUL, 1960, is 14-year-old Paul Shackford's induction into the chaos, clutter, and camaraderie of Bargain Haul. Stepping outside to take in some fresh air, he finds his 18-year-old brother, Reeve, guarding a 12-year-old Packard automobile at the behest of an elderly parishioner. Paul chuckles at the memory.

Service is a Shackford trait, so much so that 64 years later, Paul was busy helping sort, fold, hang, and price menswear at the 90th Bargain Haul. For many volunteers, Bargain Haul feels like a homecoming. We meet old friends, make new friends, and innovate together. For 40 of Paul's 64 years of service, he has seen Barbara Horan volunteer in various departments with her friend and fellow parishioner, Debbie Monti, former housewares chair.

Two decades ago, Barbara encouraged hubby, Bernie, to volunteer in the electronics department. Bernie is indefatigable; he won't pause until an electrical item is fixed. This year it was a grimy vacuum cleaner that he tried to repair despite clouds of dust and clotted grey dirt. Sexton Steve Killeen cleaned the filter, while Bernie persisted until the orphan of electronics was mended.

While Barbara was color coding dinnerware to enhance displays, Jill and Jack Whiting collected tarnished silver to take home to clean. Jack and Jill have been hauling bargains home for repair for around 25 years. Jack, at 91, is one of the electronics whizz kids. He and Jill love challenges. Last year, when housewares despaired of some sad cast-iron pans, Jill took them home. The next day, she delivered transformed, seasoned cast-iron cookware that sold fast.

Susan Kemp has been a Bargain Haul volunteer for more than three decades and the chair of three different departments. Husband, Dan's first year as a Bargain Haul worker was 2014. They're in charge of the place most of us promise ourselves we will avoid and then find ourselves dashing in for "a quick look," coming out with arms laden. It's the bookstore.



Bargain Haul is a family tradition for the Kemps. Dan notes, "After his college graduation, our son Andrew moved to New York for five years. He and his girlfriend Natalia returned every year for Bargain Haul, where they always found high-quality clothes. Later, they moved back to Wellesley, where both became Bargain Haul workers."

Andrew has been the best salesperson in housewares for the last two years, even with a toddler in tow.

"In the book room, we do our best to sort and organize," Dan says. "This is easy for grown-up books, but youth books are always a challenge. But every year someone appears to save the day. This year it was Karen Pekowitz."

And ingenuity is an invisible thread among volunteers. "One year, someone donated a beautiful book of Japanese prints. We knew it

could not go for the regular hard-cover price, so we sold it on eBay for \$75 to add to the Bargain Haul proceeds," Dan recalls.

"As technology has changed, so has the mix of things donated. When DVDs became popular, we were overwhelmed by VHS tapes. Something similar happened when CDs drove out cassette tapes. This year, it seemed everyone had started relying on digital downloads, so we received three times more CDs. I'm sure many have converted to e-readers, but we still have a lot of books.

"The book room is a very nice place to be. It is quiet compared to the rest of Bargain Haul, and you can count on having something in common with everyone who walks in. In our haste to categorize books, a few mis-filings provide amusement. This year's best was finding *Anna Karenina* filed under biography. Someone noticed that a

down jacket in the book room was similar to one they had donated. It was the same jacket. When I told them I had found a car key in the pocket, it was a lucky coincidence," Dan said. In a previous year, Wendy Barry's purse was mistakenly sold—with her passport in it. Fortunately, it was bought by another parishioner who took the purse and passport back to Wendy.

Dan reflects: "Some years ago, at the pre-Bargain Haul meeting of department chairs, there was discussion of possible shoplifting and how to prevent it. Should we have additional security people in the halls or the rooms? Then someone spoke up and said, 'Hey, we are a church.' That was all it took to remind everyone of our real mission, and the issue was dropped.

This is my favorite Bargain Haul memory. It is one of the things that makes St. Andrew's feel like home."

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