

Note from Kirk Eichenberger, Vestry Member

As Rosalys mentioned last week, we vestry members decided to periodically include a personal note in the parish newsletter. I agreed to go next, and, in doing so, I suddenly realized that, this being my first year on the St Barnabas Vestry, I've never physically sat in a regular vestry meeting. We were visiting our daughter in Pittsburgh in February, and since then, all our Vestry meetings have been on Zoom.

So, it's now been almost 4 months since I've set foot in the St Barnabas Church building, and I thought I'd reflect a bit on some things missed, and also, some things gained. I know we all wish we were sitting in Communion with one another, listening to heart-felt sermons and quality music, and enjoying those amazing coffee hours; but I was thinking about some seemingly little things that I actually really, really miss; here's a short list:

- Correctly arranging (fiddling with?) the bulletin and music in my choir folder so I'm ready to sing the right stuff at the right time.
- Running the dishwasher in the church kitchen when it's the Sweet Pea's turn to host coffee hour.
- Walking with Peggy (often with headlamps in the rain) to the church on Thursday nights to choir practice; and, after singing and laughing with Paul and choir, occasionally stopping at the pub for a late dinner on the way home.
- Filling the altar candles and torches with oil when it's Altar Guild Team 3's turn to set up.
- Being one of the first persons to get to pull the ropes that ring the steeple bells at the end of services (as the choir exits first).

But, what are some new experiences that I've gained since we haven't been able to enter the church building?

- I can now see Rev. Karen's face during the sermon! When sitting in the choir we basically could see only the back of her head, and I didn't always hear so well. Now, with the online services, I get a close-up view; and I can hear the sermons clearly (and play it back if I need to). I knew our rector was a gifted preacher, but now I find I can appreciate this even more. Kudos to Rev. Karen, and, also Paul and all the other preachers, cantors and readers for their excellent work and I'm especially thankful to Jim for beautifully handling the videography; truly artful! We haven't missed a service!
- Reading the Daily Office: Shortly after we had to close the building, Rev. Karen asked if someone would be willing to host additional daily office services for the parish on Zoom. Peggy and I volunteered to handle Compline, which is a short prayerful service at the end of the day. We started in early April, and, with the help of Laurie and Phil Fergusson, Laura Carroll, and Brian Andvik, St Barnabas is now offering Compline every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9 pm. A faithful group

of about 16 has been attending. We say prayers for all on the St Barnabas prayer list and anyone can offer their own prayers or thanksgivings. All are welcome to join; it really is a “perfect end” of the day.

- Godly Play: From our experiences in previous churches, I knew what this was about, but, because we’re in the choir here, Peggy and I couldn’t easily participate. But Peggy has now started helping out with the Zoom Godly Play (9:00 am, Sundays), and I started watching a bit over her shoulder. Looks like 12-15 children are attending regularly. This week Peggy and I had fun singing “Arky Arky” (a song about Noah’s Ark). It was fun to see all the kids singing along!
- Actually getting to know people better: I’m seeing and talking to a lot of people via Zoom that I barely knew before; at Coffee Hour, at Compline, Bible study, at committee meetings (Finance, Vestry), etc. I’ve added a bunch of smart phone numbers and emails in my contacts and am regularly texting with some parishioners now. And I’ve even gone hiking over in the Olympics with some of you (driving separately, of course).

So ... these are a few of things I’m doing to stay close to St Barnabas in the “Time of Covid-19.” It’s helping me both mentally and spiritually. I hope you are finding similar avenues to stay connected. And, if you have suggestions of ways we can improve, please let us on the Vestry know. Take care... see you and God Bless You!

Kirk Eichenberger
keichenbee@gmail.com
(231) 881-2045