



Five Loaves. Two Small Fish. Enough for a Multitude.

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The Elwell Family: Making Connections

Connections can be tricky. I found myself considering this topic recently while en route to visit my sister in Pennsylvania. "Considering" is a rather euphemistic way of putting it; I was obsessing. The late arrival of my already delayed flight was getting perilously close to the departure of my connecting flight from Chicago's O'Hare, the Black Hole of air travel. As we sat on the tarmac waiting for a gate and the minutes ticked by, I imagined a variety of increasingly fraught scenarios – missing the flight to Harrisburg (that was a given), no additional flights from any airline that day, missing dinner (hey, that's a biggie for me), sleeping fitfully in the airport with one eye on my two carry-ons: the list went on and on. When we finally taxied in and the seatbelt light went out, I practically leapt out of my seat, grabbed the bags, and sprinted to.... Where?

The flight crew said the gates had all changed, so any connections were likely to be different than our online itineraries. I desperately searched the arrival/departure board, found the Harrisburg flight and gate, and set out with 15 minutes to spare. Gate 32, right? I started at 7. I was moving at a pretty quick clip until I realized, by about gate 27, that I was passing only odd numbers (have I mentioned I'm numerically challenged?). Doubling back, with heart pounding and palms getting sweatier by the instant, I found Gate 32.... Two gates away from my starting point, in the opposite direction. The gate was empty, save for a customer service rep who, upon seeing my frantic, winded state, smiled broadly and said, "Take it easy, hon. You're OK. We've been waiting for you." I wanted to hug her but settled for a barely coherent yet heartfelt "Thank you" and boarded the plane, all

dire thoughts immediately dispelled by her warm welcome.

When we make connections, whether of the aviation or personal kind, we feel safe, comfortable, and relaxed. That's how I feel when I see the Elwell family – any one of them; each member of the family has an easy manner that draws folks in.

Both Lee Ann and Bob Elwell are Maryland

natives; although she was born in New York, Lee Ann moved to Damascus early on, while Bob was born in Baltimore and grew up in Annapolis. Lee Ann and her older brother are cradle Episcopalians. Meanwhile, Bob, the oldest of three boys, was raised in the Byzantine Catholic church, which (fun fact!) is an Eastern Catholic rite sung in



Slovenic. Bob graduated from Drexel University with a degree in Physics, then went on to do graduate work in Computer Science at George Washington University, and worked for a defense contractor in northern Virginia. After graduating from West Virginia University, and University of Maryland as a physical therapist, Lee Ann worked in Baltimore at Kennedy Krieger Institute, which is affiliated with Johns Hopkins Hospital.

A nurse friend who knew Bob's family set the two up a blind date on November 30, 1991; they agreed to meet at that most romantic of DC-adjacent spots, Fort McHenry. Well, it is romantic, if you are history buffs like Bob and Lee Ann (and, presumably, have a soft spot for Francis Scott Key as well!). Bob and Lee Ann were engaged nine months later, married in 1993, and moved to a house outside of Annapolis to start their family. Tyler arrived in August 1995, and Matthew joined the fun in September 1999.

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Letter from the Rector: Connecting the Dots

Last month I experienced an interesting sequence of events—a series of “connecting the dots”, you might say. First, the schedule arrived for the Italian holiday my cousin had invited me to consider. As soon as I saw Assisi on the list of destinations, I thought, “I’d love to go to Assisi, but with a church group.” And I left it at that.

I remembered that we would be having the Blessing of the Animals this month and that we are striving to help the children of St. Andrew’s understand that St. Francis was more than simply an animal-lover, but would talking about him being willing to give the coat off his back to someone be the foundation for a parish trip?

The following week, while perusing the bookshelf of a friend during my vacation, a title seemed to jump out at me: *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim’s Tale*. In his memoir-like novel, Ian Cron imagines himself as the founder and lead pastor of a mega-church, chronicling a temporarily loss of faith and separation from that church, as well as an “accidental” pilgrimage to Assisi.

First of all, Cron reminded me that a pilgrimage can be thought of as one praying with one’s feet. The way his mentor, Uncle Kenny, who just happened to be a Franciscan Friar, explained it to him was: “the word pilgrimage comes from the Latin word peregrinus, which means a person wandering the earth in exile, someone in search of a spiritual homeland,” and that visiting sacred sites, combined with ritual, allows God to become known to us in new and important ways.

As I continue reading the book, I have the sense

that God is revealing more to me about why I am being called (and you, too, I hope) to take a pilgrimage to Assisi. Not only did Francis give up a life of luxury in order to live what he considered a life of integrity, he was also a peacemaker.

One of the protagonist’s journal entries really resonated with me: “I realized I’ve confused being a peace lover with being a peacemaker.” He goes on to suggest that, “for St. Francis, peace was to be the result of better relationship with God and neighbor.”

Another dot was connected, when I found a favorite necklace that had been missing since May. The silver chain has two small charms hanging from it. One is a cross and the other is a peace sign. Wearing those two symbols together was never more meaningful to me than while I was on another pilgrimage, which was to the Holy Land.

During this month of the Feast of St. Francis, I encourage you to think about how your life choices contribute to peace in the world. I commend *Chasing Francis* to you, and I invite you to consider whether it might be time for you to make a pilgrimage to Assisi in the fall of 2017. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

In Christ’s peace,



The Rev. Brenda Sol

Help a Family Make a Home

There will be several new refugee families arriving in San Diego this fall, and they will need many things to set up their households. If you’d like to supply any of the items below, it would be greatly appreciated. All items should be new or gently used.

- Plates
- Bowls (especially large rice bowls)
- Cups & Saucers
- Water glasses (please no wine or beer glasses)
- Knives, forks & especially spoons
- Cooking knives
- Cooking spoons
- Pots & pans (especially stock pots)
- Kettles
- Rice cookers
- Teapots
- Toasters (no toaster ovens, please)
- Small microwave ovens
- Sheets & blankets (queen and twin)
- Towels

The Elwell Family *continued from the front page*

When Bob, now working for the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics lab, came out to San Diego for business in May 2000, Lee Ann and the boys joined him. Lee Ann, Matthew, and Tyler visited the usual spots – Legoland, Sea World, Coronado – and had so much fun that Lee Ann told Bob that, if Johns Hopkins ever wanted to send him back, the rest of the Elwells were in. Think God may have listened in on their conversation? In August of that same year, Bob's boss sent him and the family to San Diego for a year assignment, which, fortunately for them and St. Andrew's, has been renewed annually.

The Elwells settled in Carmel Valley, and the pre-Google search for a new church home began with a consultation of the Yellow Pages. Visiting in late 2000, the Elwells loved the "family friendly vibe" and started attending consistently in 2001. Almost immediately, the Elwells were involved with their St. A's church family. Bob became an usher, Tyler attended Sunday School, and Lee Ann taught VBS and Sunday School. And Matthew? Well, here's where I first met the Elwells. Tyler was the same age as my son, and Matthew was just a little guy, barely walking. After a long day of VBS prep, Lee Ann and I were pretty slaphappy and wondered if Matthew would fit in one of the doll cradles in the preschool. We tried it, he did, and I knew we'd made a connection! Fast forward several years later, and that connection served us well as wacky cast members in the Not Ready for Coffee Hour Players production of classic TV skits in which Lee Ann played the perfect Dorothy in our rendition of *The Wizard of Oz*.

The whole family continues to be a crucial part of our community. Lee Ann is a greeter, bread runner, and confirmation mentor, and, in 2008, she started volunteering in the office; Bob coordinates the usher duties and schedule. Matthew and Tyler (when he's home from college) are ready with a smile to help move tables, set up the homeless shelter, take out trash, or whatever else needs doing. Lee Ann says "Like in any family, you pitch in where you're needed." Parish Administrator Gillian Campbell thinks "the Elwells fit the phrase 'if you want something done, ask a busy person.' They are enthusiastic, hard-working and reliable."

With all the activities they participate in at St. Andrew's, you are probably wondering if they have time for anything else. Well, I'm here to tell

you, they have a lot going on! Bob is still enjoying his "annual" gig at Johns Hopkin Applied Physics lab (don't let them move you, Bob!). After several years of "extended maternity leave", Lee Ann went back to work in 2013 at William Sonoma at UTC but still makes time for her weekly volunteer office duties. Tyler, an Eagle Scout from Troop 713, graduated from Torrey Pines and is pursuing an architecture degree the University of Arizona. He is back at school after a summer internship with an architectural firm in Sorrento Valley. Matthew is a junior at CCA, plays the clarinet and sax in the CCA band and in the San Diego Youth Symphony, and plans to study engineering. And in all their free time, the Elwells adopted a kitten from the Helen Woodward Center and, then two years ago, started fostering puppies from the Center.

Since Lee Ann feels that "the key to keeping our church active is to keep kids and youth engaged", she, Bob, and the boys have participated in several youth mission trips over the years, including this year's journey to Cortez, Colorado. She describes the trips as "mountaintop experiences" that everyone should participate in to see how hard the youth work; those trips leave her "feeling closest to God". Understanding that we have a great group of youth members, Lee Ann joined Barbara Chung and Sandy Miner in leading the Parent Connections group that met concurrently to the Youth Group meeting at 9:00 on Sunday.

When asked what keeps the Elwells involved, Lee Ann credits "the connections we've made and the relationships we've developed make St. Andrew's our extended family." Connections... when we miss them, it leaves us frazzled, stressed, and living entirely in the past of regret or future of anxiety. But when, like the Elwells, we make those connections with each other, we catch glimpses of God in the present moment that sustain and comfort us. Elizabeth Newman writes "To sing, to pray, to pass the peace, to listen to God's word, to eat at God's table is to share, through the gift and power of the Spirit, in God's own giving and receiving." May we connect with everyone - family, friends, and strangers alike - the way God loves us as we say to one another "Take it easy, hon. You're OK. We've been waiting for you."

~Gigi Miller

“

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Godly Connections through Godly Play

I didn't think Godly Play would work. Actually, I didn't think Godly Play would work for me. I had been teaching toddler and preschool Sunday School for years in what could politely be described a "freewheeling, animated" style. Mostly, it was a word association, stream of consciousness approach in which I'd sit around the circle with the children to tell a Bible story. The tale of Noah's ark, for example, would be prefaced by discussions of family pets, then, as we progressed into the story, there were many digressions as children talked of TV shows, cartoons, and trips to the zoo. We'd break for craft time with my young charges probably not having the faintest idea of why we were even talking about a flood, a giant boat, or what either had to do with pairs of animals. But we'd had fun together, right?

As I sat in orientation almost five years ago, Godly Play, with its prescribed roles and goals, seemed more structured and well, much quieter, than any of my Sunday School classes. That's because, as I learned, it's not Sunday School. As the orientation materials tell us, "Godly Play is a program that focuses on making a space where children can explore their own relationship with God. It respects the fact that they already have an inner spirituality." Stories are crucial to the Godly Play experience, but they're not designed to be interactive time between teachers and students. The lessons are told through the use of manipulative pieces, not reading from a book. And the stories aren't designed to teach a specific idea or moral concept, but rather provide "a reflective time" for children "to wonder, challenge, and respond" to God and the stories they're hearing.

The Godly Play experience includes three adult roles – the Storyteller, the Greeter, and the Helper – all of whose duties reflect their titles. The Greeter welcomes the children into the Godly Play space, in our case the Preschool building, encouraging them to enter quietly and take a seat around the circle. Greeters explain to newcomers that our Godly Play space is sacred, a place to wonder about and hear stories about God and God's people - all of us. So, we walk more slowly and talk quietly, because someone might be listening to God. During the story, the Greeter sits in a chair by the door, ready to welcome

latecomers and to sit with children who may be a little restless in the circle. The Storyteller uses wooden objects, pieces of felt, sand, rocks, and clay items to relate a Bible passage, trying not to make eye contact, so everyone in the circle is engaged in the story. The Helper is there to ease the transition to circle time, calm fidgety little bodies, and guide children to various activities to help them wonder and respond after the story. The Storyteller dismisses the class with a personal acknowledgement of and blessing for each child

Encouraged by veteran Godly Play participants (Colleen Gritzen, Christie Hamel, Karen Moore, and Barbara Chung), I approached my first class as Greeter with some trepidation. I couldn't imagine how the peaceful circle Christie's mom created in orientation would translate with 10 squirmy preschoolers. To my amazement, the children responded to the safe and calm surroundings of our Godly Play space. We sang "Be Still and Know that God is Near", and everyone was engrossed in Christie's story of how the Church tells time. To be honest, that story is full of rather esoteric ideas – church time is different from regular time in that it never ends, like God's presence. But explaining the concept as, first a linear thread, then a never ending circle drew the children in. Colleen was on hand as Greeter to provide a comforting presence; when we closed with the "Go Now in Peace" song, I knew we'd all felt the presence of God.

So I had to admit that everyone was right; Godly Play worked to validate children's innate spiritual lives. But I still didn't think I'd be able to lead the circle in the slow, reverent manner necessary to give the children room to explore. The first story I taught, Jonah and the Big Fish, was fairly long and had lots of props. Being careful not to make eye contact, I launched into the tale of a prophet as a "person who is so close to God that he knows what God wants to happen in the world". And we were all part of the story as the story became part of each one of us. Given the space and quiet to really listen, the children were prepared to wonder about how why Jonah ran away from God and how it might feel to be in the belly of a really big fish.

When the children and I shared the story of Dorcas' death and resurrection by Peter, I was

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Senior Warden's Corner: Connect Mission to Vision

What is the vestry responsible for? According to Episcopal canons, "*The vestry is the legal representative of the parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property.*" That is a bit unclear. So where does a vestry go from there? How do we determine a direction and priorities to ensure we are being good stewards of our resources? We needed to start by creating focus.

The vestry started the focusing process at the 2015 retreat and ultimately discerned our parish mission statement, **To Reveal God's love by Nourishing the Community through Worship, Acceptance and Service.** That mission was derived from prior work done on our Parish Profile as well as the 2015 CAT survey that many of you participated in. It has been the cornerstone of many vestry discussions intended to create a long term plan. The process of discerning our plan has been challenging, and we have looked to the Holy Spirit for guidance every step of the way. Below is the strategic framework that we have created.

St. Andrew's will accomplish our mission by:

- **Nurturing Spiritual Vitality** (which includes worship, music, education and our parish community) by creating peace and inspiration in our daily lives, not only at church on Sundays, but also virtually and throughout the week. Our efforts will take into account the unique needs of young families, youth, young adults, empty nesters and our XYZ's.
- **Investing in and sustaining outreach** programs that impact our extended community and inspire our parishioners.
- **Providing appropriate, well-maintained campus facilities** which are welcoming and accommodate the shifting needs of our parish, preschool and community.
- **Enabling appropriate management, organization and staff** to meet the needs

of our diverse and changing parish and community.

We have made progress toward many of these strategies already. Over the course of 2015 and 2016 we invested in **Nurturing Spiritual Vitality**



by hiring directors of music and family ministries, promoting the public tagline of "*God loves you. No exceptions,*" and beginning "Supper at Six" dinner program. We have sustained our **Outreach Programs** by replacing pop-up tents for shelter use, reconditioning a walk-in cooler for more Food Pantry storage and energy efficiency, and relocating RefugeeNet storage and purchased movable racks to make sorting easier. Our **Campus Facilities** are becoming more welcoming by repaving the parking lot, re-landscaped parking islands, purchasing new playground equipment and installing a new heating and cooling system for the parish hall offices. We enabled appropriate **Management** by implementing fiscal responsibility measures, expanding our communications program and adopting a new personnel policy and procedures manual. This of course is a partial list of all the great work done recently.

The vestry next will be envisioning specific activities and plans for 2017 and beyond that will continue St. Andrew's momentum in realizing our mission. We are considering the impact of additional clergy, enhancements to our campus facility, substantive programs to help us find peace in our daily lives and collaborative outreach opportunities. As our plans emerge, we will continue to share them to get your thoughts and input.

~Betsy Vaughn

Vestry Spotlight: Glori McStravick

Each month, we will spotlight one of our vestry members. This month, meet Glori McStravick, Vestry Clerk.

First, the basics: family names, ages of kids, pets? Husband Craig McStravick, Stepsons Sean and Keiran, Daughter Sydni. Two dogs, Starr and Redd

What path brought you to St. Andrew's? We wanted a church community to raise Sydni and give her exposure to Christian life. I had visited the church when she was an infant, but had not made a commitment. After 9/11, I returned to St Andrew's and never left.

How do you see your role in our parish community? What most excites you about St. Andrew's & the contribution you can make? I like to be involved in the church community at St. Andrew's. I always like to volunteer. You can find me as an usher, vestry member and verger/intercessor.

What are you known for professionally or personally? What do you have a knack for? I am a Business Consultant/Analyst at Kaiser Permanente. I really enjoy solving problems and coming up with solutions.

How long have you been doing what you do? I have worked for Kaiser Permanente for 21 years, but in my current role for 16.

What are you passionate about personally? I really enjoy sports and crafts and sometimes doing both at the same time.

Where can we find you when you're not working? What's your favorite way to spend a weekend or a Sunday afternoon? I enjoy watching my daughter play soccer and I knit while I watch her play.

Where did you grow up and why aren't you there now? I grew up in Illinois. My mom moved us out here when I was in high school. After college in San Diego, I never left.

Any other volunteer activities you're engaged in? Not currently. I am looking to get involved in more, now that Sydni is off to college, but I am kind of easing myself into it.

What would be impossible for you to give up? Doing some sort of craft project. I like to keep myself busy even while watching TV.

Anything else you'd like to tell people about yourself? I really love St. Andrew's and everything that Mother Brenda has done to make it better. She is such a breath of fresh air.

Godly Connections *continued from page 4*

grieving the imminent passing of a cherished St. Andrew's friend. The narrative of Dorcas' bereaved community gathered outside her house, awaiting the news none wanted to hear was so close to our own that I found it difficult to continue. After I finished, I told the children why I had stumbled a bit and opened our wondering time. I still marvel at how the Holy Spirit entered our circle of love; the children spoke about deaths of pets and relatives. They contemplated the big questions – "Why do folks (and animals) have to die?" "Will we see them again in heaven?" And

"What's God's plan for us?" I told the children that those are the very same questions grownups are asking over in "big church" and paraphrased Catherine Campbell "God must be very happy you're wondering about this, since God thinks about you all the time." When we left our Godly Play space that day, we'd shared a sacramental moment of souls meeting in truth, unbound by age and connected to the Holy One who is within each of us.

~Gigi Miller



Of Knitting, Knots and Invisible Connection

Whether you are a diligent or casual reader of church communications, written or electronic, chances are you have stumbled across the following quote from Julian of Norwich: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well." It generally appears in communications during times of changes, stress or upheaval; a reminder to us that God's loving hand is ever present. I have frequently found myself repeating it, almost like a prayer, in times when I feel most despondent. Of course, "all shall be well" can also sound like the sort of reassurance given to a small child, even though we don't believe it ourselves, that "everything will be alright." How did Julian, who wrote at one of the most turbulent and violent times in western history, reach such a conclusion?

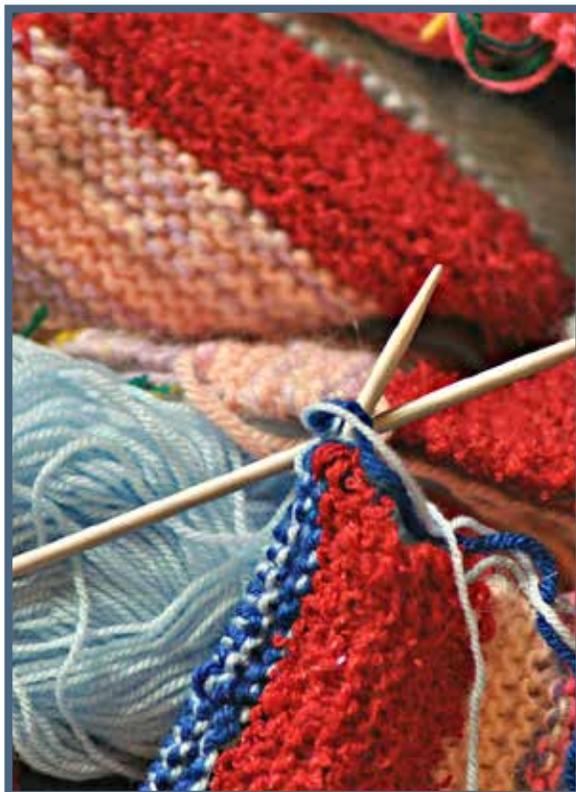
Julian, during a long and severe illness, received several visions on what she believed to be her deathbed. She spent the next twenty years writing about those visions and what they revealed to her about the nature and love of God. She wrote these words with the memory of staring into the abyss of death, yet came away with this a positive, optimistic view of human existence. Taking a look at Julian's encounter with God all those centuries ago still has much to teach us about how we relate to God and to one another.

What was revealed to Julian in those visions is the deep sense of connectedness God feels to Creation. As she expresses it, at our birth, we are knit together with God, knotted to our Creator with invisible threads that can never be broken. Stress and strain and rage against them as we might, those ties remain constant and indissoluble. Likewise, at our birth, we "become kin" with Jesus, as does every other soul born into the world. Think about that: we are all connected to God and made kin with Jesus with cords that can never be broken.

Stop for a moment, and try to imagine a world where you can see these mystic cords – cords that connect each and every one of us to God. What does Sunday morning coffee hour look like? As we move around the campus, doing our work and worshipping together, our cords intersect with those of others. We become knotted and knit to one another in the same way God is knit to us. Some connections are beautiful and symmetrical; others might be gnarled and tangled. Many of them probably look like a skein of yarn that lost a battle with the cat. All of those connections, whether linear and smooth or messy and complex, draw us closer into a communal life with one another. Each time the path of a thread crosses that of another, we have tapped into yet another way to draw closer to and experience God.

Thus, time together in our communal life, whether it is a laughter-filled "Supper at Six" or gathering in prayer and sadness at yet another violent tragedy, is where we share our connection to God with one another. It is an opportunity to construct yet another intersection of cords that will draw us into closer kinship with Christ. All shall be well, indeed.

~Catherine Campbell



Report Misconduct

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a safe haven for everyone, our diocese trains people in the prevention of misconduct and encourages all to report misconduct. All reported incidences are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced misconduct of any kind, please contact Mr. John Seitman, jseitman@pacbell.net or 858-793-4555 or the Rev. Janet Wheelock, jwheelock@edsd.org 952-240-8067.

The Episcopal Church of Saint Andrew the Apostle

890 Balour Dr.

Encinitas, CA 92024

Phone: 760-753-3017

E-mail: contact@standrewsepiscopal.org

Website: www.standrewsepiscopal.org

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Five Loaves. Two Small Fish. Enough for a Multitude.

Connecting Our Youth

I think it's safe to say that my life and the perspectives I hold today would not be the same if I didn't have St. Andrew's. I am so fortunate to have had the church, the youth group, and the St. Andrew's community by my side; it is a blessing in its truest form. What I have learned is that at St. Andrew's, it's not only about coming to worship on Saturday or Sunday, but also engaging as a spiritual community and family. It is something very special and something that not all congregations have. At times, I have allowed the sequences of everyday life to prevent me from being as close as I could be with God and the church community. Still, every time I return, I recall just how special and amazing it all is, and I wish I had never missed any of it to begin with. Through my teenage years, I have called on that feeling time and again. It is so comforting to know that the amazing community that is St. Andrew's will remain there. Beyond attending church on Sundays, my mission trip experiences in Los Angeles and Cortez, Colorado were absolute blessings, necessary in order for me to become the individual I am today. Having meaningful conversations with those who are in most need and learning those individuals' stories was truly humbling. Because of such experiences, I now strive to act with more selflessness, kindness, humility, and awareness than before. The chance to have been a part of music during Sunday worship and to have also served on the search committee for our new Music Director are just two more opportunities for community involvement and I am grateful to have grown closer in those ways. As I enter my senior year of high school, it is with such gratitude and appreciation that I plan to continue to involve myself in so many ways. This congregation is so unique and special. I could not be more grateful.



Connor (left) and friends on the 2015 Mission trip

~Connor Hines