



SAINTS *Alive!*

a quarterly journal telling the story of All Saints Brookline

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Summer 2019

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The Mission of All Saints Parish

is to be a Community — searching to know and accept God's purpose for us, uplifted by worship together, sustained by a sense of Christ being in our midst, and inspired by the Holy Spirit to become more than we are, here and in the world.

Statement of Policy

The policy of All Saints Parish is to welcome all people who seek the love of God, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or age. We welcome all people on the basis of our Baptismal Covenant in which we promise to “seek and serve Christ in all persons” and “respect the dignity of every human being.”

Reflection

I am delighted to join All Saints as Interim Rector and to travel the scriptural pathways set before us in the gospels of John and Luke. While summer can offer a slower pace with fewer deadlines and pressing responsibilities, I look forward to spending this season in discovery mode. I am excited to get to know this community, to worship together discovering new insights and deepening our relationship with God and one another.

I will be in the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and at church for the Celtic Service on Saturdays and for church on Sundays. In between, Anoma and I will share responsibilities for pastoral care, and the Wardens and members of the Vestry will be taking on some additional responsibilities to fill in schedule and program gaps during Richard's sabbatical. I am grateful for all of the planning and preparation for this time of transition and know that the time we share this summer will include adventures not yet imagined.

This evening as I write my inaugural Saints Alive reflection, I am holding on to the joy of attending Reach Beyond, the graduation program celebrating the extraordinary seniors at the St. Stephen's Youth Programs (SSYP). All Saints is a valued parish partner for SSYP, and I was proud to represent both All Saints and the SSYP Advisory Board at this wonderful event. Tonight we celebrated our 49 graduating seniors by highlighting their accomplishments and marking this important moment of transition for each of them. Among the highlights of the graduation ceremony are the individualized awards and testimonials for each graduate.

While SSYP attracts students from several of Boston's large high schools, at St. Stephen's each young person is known and celebrated for their individual gifts and talents. The program leaders faithfully embody Jesus' commandment to love one another, repeatedly demonstrating that each young person is known, valued and makes a difference in their community, at SSYP and eventually in the world. Our prayer as we send each graduate out into the world is that they continue the SSYP traditions wherever they go.

So it is for us at All Saints, where we gather weekly to learn, be nourished and known, and where we are encouraged to take our refreshed selves into the world. We are challenged to know and love our neighbors, to welcome strangers and generally behave in ways that may be counter-cultural but are deeply rooted as expressions of our faith. Current studies are rife with findings about the surprising isolation of our digital age. While many connect or comment quickly on-line, fewer make phone calls or neighborly visits. Schedules preclude once familiar acts of kindness and connection. Yet at church, we are called to be vulnerable and available to experience God's love and to meet each other in worship and as faith-filled and curious community members. I love that All Saints affirms our identity as “Analog for Your Soul”.

This summer we will bring our analog selves to church, welcome strangers, encounter God in new ways, celebrate births, mark deaths and transitions, and we will share our sacramental life in Christ. We will pray for Richard's successful and nourishing sabbatical and generally make ourselves available for new joys and new possibilities. I am excited to be on this journey with you, and I look forward to getting to know you and to finding new ways to experience God and express our faith.

Amy+

Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Esq., Interim Rector

From the Editor

Marianne Evett

As we were putting this issue of *Saints Alive!* together, I realized that – quite without planning it – we had a theme. That theme is connection. Perhaps that is always our theme – or should be – since we try to connect the many voices that ring through our congregation and make them more widely heard. But this is a deeper connection: a connection that embodies the spirit of Christian love. It involves openness, trust, humility, and a willingness to listen – really listen – to others, who may sometimes be very unlike ourselves.

Please start with the young people on the facing page, who spent most of a day and a night with the not-housed (notice: not the “homeless”) through the CityReach program of Common Cathedral. They worshiped with them, brought them food and clothing, heard their stories, met them as friends. And then they bring those stories back to us. Meanwhile, the younger children bake bread and learn the truth of the Eucharist – that the bread is both as real as today’s loaf and as sacred as the body of Christ (a body which is also all of us). Mystical, but I know kids understand that somehow.

Then there is the Listening Project, led by Janelle Mills and others in the parish. It has many facets, two of which are illuminated by Sarah Leinbach’s shared experiences on page 5. What comes through is her willingness to overcome fears and potential embarrassment, and meet people on their own terms. Whether it is listening to someone and talking about the dilemmas of faith (and finding it surprisingly rewarding), or standing outside a prison where immigrants are being held and holding up signs of encouragement and love, Sarah is connecting with others at a deep level.

Most important, perhaps, is Emily Smith-Sturr’s compelling and honest account of her response to the workshop on racism. During Lent, you remember, this workshop, titled “Liberating Ourselves From Racism,” took place on four Wednesday evenings and involved about 30 people (see Jonas Barciauskas’ article on page 6). These “courageous conversations” were sometimes personal and involved creating a safe space, where people could freely offer their own experience – often mixed and previously unexamined – knowing it would be kept private and not judged. Emily’s reflection is indeed courageous; her willingness to share her complicated feelings with *Saints Alive!* readers is especially inspiring.

As we move toward celebrating the 125th anniversary of All Saints in the fall (see note below), we not only acknowledge the generous and loving people who have made this parish the blessed place that it is, but think about the future. Judging by the articles in this summer issue, we are growing in unexpected ways in our understanding of God’s love.

Looking Ahead to Our 125th Anniversary

Marianne Evett

All Saints will commemorate its 125th anniversary as a parish this coming fall. We will celebrate our heritage at Evensong on Sunday, October 27, and, of course, on All Saints Sunday, November 3.

The staff of *Saints Alive!* is working with the wardens to plan a special commemorative edition of the newsletter, with extra pages, scheduled to appear in early October. We hope not just to celebrate but to encapsulate our 125-year history and honor some of the people who made it possible for us to be here today. We are digging into scrapbooks and publications, especially those that cover the early years, as well as Rick Montross’s invaluable online tour of the sanctuary and windows.

But we also need your ideas and contributions! If you have stories of special moments here, please let me know. If you have photos that you’d like to share, please let me know. And we don’t want to neglect recent history. We are thinking of perhaps a page of photographs of couples who were married at All Saints and are still connected – from as far back as we can get to this past year. And a page of people who have discerned their call to ministry here and are now active priests. We would like to include some fun times as well – auctions, picnics, parties.

We have a wonderfully rich heritage, which sustains us and which we build upon. I look forward to hearing from you as we plan to honor it.

Contact me at mbevett@gmail.com or 617-645-9457

Editor – *Marianne Evett*; Assistant Editors – *Nathaniel and Margaret Harrison*; Designer – *Page Elmore Evett*
Deadline for the fall issue is September 16. Please send articles and correspondence to
office@allsaintsbrookline.org or mbevett@gmail.com.

First to be Fed, Then to Feed

Kathleen O'Donoghue

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to be part of All Saints Parish's Communion Class, where we offered our youngest Church Schoolers the chance to come to church with their parents and learn about how and why we share the Eucharist each week. We studied the church, checked out the different features little ones always love – the pulpit, lectern, high altar and the “tabernacle” or “ambry” where the reserved sacrament is kept. We also talked about why we “set the table” on the altar, which in many ways is similar to setting our finest table on special occasions at home. Like our families who invite special guests and family members over to eat, we do the same in church each time the Eucharist is shared. After we talked about this we got to the business of making altar bread for the next day's service. They were proud to be making the bread we would share with our special church family members and also looked forward to standing with Richard at the communion table as we prepared for our meal on Sunday.



Young bakers have bread ready for Communion under the rector's watchful eye.

At the same time as this class was happening, our oldest Church Schoolers were participating in CityReach at the Cathedral of St. Paul. After an evening of fellowship and learning from not-housed members of our larger church family, they participated in a session of making 'Fluffernutters' and serving them to their guests along with fruit and granola bars. The guests gratefully

accepted these gifts, to be fed physically and spiritually by these teens, who sat and listened to their sacred stories, to their hopes and dreams and their place in this church family. Collected clothing was distributed; prayers were shared; plans were made by each group to see each other and serve each other again.

What a beautiful mystery. We teach children why we share this meal together with both the youngest and the oldest. After the lesson, they know just what to do. Both fully understand the sacred aspect of these very different meals and the honor they both had in participating in this blessed act of feeding.

Thank you to parishioners who donated goods and food to our CityReach program and to all those who smiled and chewed the altar bread a bit more than usual last week. You have all blessed young hearts and inspired souls!



All Saints teens ready for CityReach.

Listening to Each Other

Janelle Mills

The Living Stones Listening Project emerged out of a program developed by the Episcopal City Mission (ECM) which Richard brought to me last fall. Initially, the program goals were to have conversations with members of the parish and find out what inspires us to do God's work in the world. The program then had the team moving out beyond the walls of the church and asking community organizations what needs they have. The third step would be to align our inspirations with the community needs. While the ultimate goal was to find meaningful ways to connect our parish community to the community at large, the Living Stones Listening Project team soon realized that we needed to figure out ways to get to know our All Saints community more deeply. We also came to understand that in order for us to foster deep and meaningful conversations we needed to develop practices. This doesn't come naturally to me, and I think many people struggle with how to start deep conversations and make them meaningful.

With the help of Libby Gatti, a MDiv student and lead pastor at MANNA, and Paul Kozal, a candidate for the priesthood, the Living Stones Listening Project team is developing practices to share about building capacity for compassion, taking risks, and being deeply present. We are looking at ways to be in right relationship with each other so that we can function as a body. Lastly, we are looking to find practices to help us transform individual faith into collective, focused action. All of this we strive to do with a sense of delight and curiosity, and with the use of storytelling. We are creating a list of guiding questions which will lead to rich conversations with each other. We hope to create a culture where everyone feels comfortable sharing their stories and asking questions. We hope to build meaningful connections across the congregation and across our differences. We are learning how to be great listeners and hope that through these conversations we will be able to identify what our parishioners really care about. Then we can take that energy and concern out into the world and continue to grow the blessed community we nurtured at All Saints.

Our initial steps are having conversations with you. Come find us! We'd love to engage in a conversation. We are also hosting outings to plays that we expect will generate a lot of conversation. We are planning outings to music events and walks as well. We would be happy to meet one-on-one or in small groups. Let's get to know each other better!

Members of the Living Stones Listening Project team are Richard Burden, Nathaniel Harrison, Sarah Leinbach, Janelle Mills, Roberta Schnoor, and Malarie Warren.

Bible Study: Luke's Gospel

Jonas Barciauskas

Did you know that Luke's Gospel gives details of Jesus' infancy found in no other Gospel? Luke is where you learn about the census of Caesar Augustus, necessitating the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, and the adoration of the shepherds. Among the notable parables found only in Luke's Gospel are those of the good Samaritan and the prodigal son. Was Luke just including these details and stories to fill out the narrative or did they have a purpose?

Beginning in Advent 2018, the gospel readings for Saturday and Sunday services during this liturgical year have mostly been from Luke's Gospel. Each of the readings is rich in meaning, but how do they fit in with the Gospel as a whole? Beginning on April 23, AnneMarie Ellis, Doug Skillins, Henry Kettell and I have been meeting on Tuesday evenings to read and discuss that week's section of the Gospel. We use study guides and videos produced by the Yale Divinity Bible Study Project, as well as several annotated Bibles, to help us interpret the text. Reading assignments and links to the study guides and videos are posted on a website I've created to serve as a resource - aspadultforum.wordpress.com. If someone can't make a session, they can keep up via the website. The discussions have helped make the text come alive as we share our thoughts and insights.

Please feel free to contact me (jvb924@gmail.com) if you have any questions about the current Bible study or would like to participate in the future.



Image credit jimmyaken.com.

Listening to Others...

Sarah Leinbach

When Janelle asked me early in March if I might like to take part in the Living Stones Listening Project, it was the word “listening” that captured me. Feeling as I do, that to listen with attention is so important, I accepted the kind invitation thinking I could improve as a listener.

No, my attention does not just drift around in my head while another person is speaking. I’m pretty good at being present (going towards “deeply present” I hope), but I find myself sometimes kind of waiting for MY turn to speak, and even going over what my response might be when it IS my turn. This is something I think is quite common; I’ve heard others describe the same thing. Trying a daily practice of more focused listening to a speaker (an article I’m reading has suggestions) I hope will make a difference.

A nice touch is my having come across just yesterday this quote of theologian Paul Tillich: “The first duty of love is to listen.”

I’ve had a few Living Stones conversations—a little nervous beforehand about how they might go—that were a delight. The faith questions remained the topics, the interest, from start to finish. I learned things about individuals I’d never known, and I could see how it can strengthen our community

And “Hearing” Others Through Action

One Sunday afternoon in March, I took part in a monthly vigil to support detained immigrants as they wait in a Boston jail for their court dates. The vigils are under the overall organization of MCAN (Massachusetts Community Network) but are actually led by local churches, synagogues, and other faith-based entities. Such a group first gathered that day in an area close to the Boston Medical Center, where prayers were said before we made our way quietly to a nearby overpass.

From there close to 100 of us faced the South Bay House of Corrections across the way, and for the next hour waved and waved, holding up signs many people had brought, with off and on singing of the old songs. It felt frustrating to be as far away from the prison as we were. All we were able to see for that hour were hands waving to us from behind the barred windows, and several cut-out hearts taped to the windows sending greetings.

If you want to attend a vigil, contact Nathaniel Harrison at harrysson@aol.com.



The ICE detention facility in South Bay Boston.



Members of the vigil on March 18th. Photo credit progressivemass.com.

Liberating Ourselves from Racism – A Lenten Series

Jonas Barciauskas

During the course of four Wednesday evenings this past Lent, thirty members of All Saints Parish together with our Rector, The Rev. Dr. Richard Burden, and our Priest Associate, The Rev. Anoma Abeyaratne, engaged in activities designed to explore our thoughts and feelings about race and racism. The group was led by Katie Omberg and Donna Bivens, two facilitators provided by the Mission Institute. The Institute defines itself as “an organization rooted in the Episcopal tradition and committed in a unique way to accompany churches and communities with white majorities . . . in liberating themselves from racial inequities and building communities with the courage to confront the effects of racism within and around us.”

Each evening’s three-hour session began with a soup supper prepared by the members of the Courageous Conversations Committee, Mary Urban Keary, Honor McClellan, Colin Stokes, and Jonas Barciauskas. After supper, we sat in a circle; Richard offered a prayer, and the facilitators distributed the evening’s Goals and Agenda. At the bottom of each week’s Agenda would appear the following guidelines:

Creating Courageous Space:

When you start to feel uncomfortable, unsure, or frustrated:

- >>Turn judgment into curiosity
- >>Turn disagreement into shared exploration
- >>Turn defensiveness into self-reflection
- >>Turn assumptions into questions

Activities involved small group discussions, viewing short videos, drawing, writing, and round-the-circle feedback and sharing. The seriousness and complexity of the workshop’s focus on racism required that we agree to create a safe space of a shared trust so that we could feel free to share our thoughts and reactions, which ranged from anxiety and doubt to hopefulness and feeling encouraged. The sessions ended with us standing in a circle, holding hands, and saying the Lord’s Prayer. After each session, the facilitators sent out a brief online survey asking us for our feedback. And every week, each of us connected with a conversation partner to share what we were thinking and feeling about the past week’s workshop.

The Courageous Conversations Committee has since met with Katie Omberg to process the workshop series and talk about next steps. Possible future events and activities will be discussed at a coming meeting of the Committee.

Margaret Harrison said of the workshop series: “Part of what was hard about the series was the obligation to talk about it all repeatedly! But that embarrassment was balanced by the pleasure of so many people turning out and speaking from the heart. You felt you were getting to know them.” Emily Smith-Sturr has generously shared her experience in a reflection on page 7.

Summer Reading – Continuing to Think About Racism

This list isn’t the usual summer “beach books” list, but a guide for those of you who want to continue to learn about the stain of racism in the US, its history and possible ways to deal with it both as an individual and in society. The list was compiled by The Rev. Dr. Richard Burden and annotated by Marianne Evett. It is chronological (and alphabetical by author within the chronology), beginning with the newest books.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy and the Rise of Jim Crow*. Penguin Press, 2019. A profound new rendering of the struggle by African-Americans for equality after the Civil War and the violent counter-revolution that resubjugated them, as seen through the prism of the war of images and ideas that have left an enduring racist stain on the American mind.

DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press, Boston, 2018. Groundbreaking book exploring the counterproductive reactions white people have when discussing racism that serve to protect their positions and maintain racial inequality.

Oluo, Ijeoma. *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Seal Press (Basic Books), 2018. Oluo gives us – both white people and people of color – the language to engage in clear, constructive, and confident dialogue with each other about how to deal with racial prejudices and biases.”

Dyson, Michael Eric. *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*. St. Martin’s Press, 2017. A provocative and deeply personal call for change. Dyson argues that if we are to make real racial progress we must face difficult truths, including being honest about how black grievance has been ignored, dismissed, or discounted.

Eddo-Lodge, Reni. *Why I Am No Longer Talking to White People About Race*. Bloomsbury Circus, 2017. A British journal-ist explores what it means to be a person of color in Britain today.

Reflection: Liberating Ourselves from Racism

Emily Smith-Sturr

When I signed up for the Lenten Adult Formation series, **Liberating Ourselves from Racism**, led by facilitators from the Mission Institute, I didn't know what to expect. It's true that I have been troubled by an increasing awareness of the racial tensions that exist in our country, our state, and our cities, particularly as my son Isaac has revealed the racism that he has experienced as he has stepped into the world on his own as a young black man. It's also true that after reading *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving, I felt the need to explore the topic of racism more. But I wasn't so sure what I needed to be liberated from—sure my friends, colleagues, and family members of color might need to be liberated from racism, but I didn't really feel that I did.

In the first session our facilitators Donna and Katie led us through several exercises, each time asking us to share our feelings, not our thoughts, about what we were experiencing. They invited us to continue to reflect on the feelings that arose in the coming week and warned us that it might not be easy. In the following days, I found myself coming back to the discussions with an overwhelming sense of grief and shame. I remembered some past experiences with people of color (Isaac included), especially times where I had diminished their reports of racism and had expressed disbelief at the pervasiveness of the overt and covert racism that they shared with me. "It's so much better than it used to be," I recall saying, "We really have come a long way." I was beginning to realize that by responding in this way, I had closed down the discussion because I couldn't bear to think about what I might have done, knowingly or unknowingly, as a member of the white majority, to perpetuate racism in our society. Remembering things that I had done (or not done) and said (or not said) that hurt people I care deeply about, was very painful. It was hard to admit all this to myself, and I was more than a little anxious about what would happen at the next session.

When we came together for the second session, we were asked to speak about the feelings that had come up for us in the past week. As my turn to speak was approaching, I was worried about revealing all the negative emotions and memories that had been on my mind and in my heart. What would people think about me if I told the truth? I wasn't sure I could do it. When my turn came, I made a decision to trust the group and the journey we were taking together. I took a deep breath and I told them what had been weighing on my heart and how sorry I was that I had hurt people who had already been hurt so much. To my surprise, people listened to me with compassion and empathy in their eyes, nodding their heads and smiling sadly but encouragingly. They thanked me for my openness, vulnerability, and courage for sharing such honest emotions. I breathed a sigh of relief.

And then it happened. I realized that I had been liberated from my reluctance to speak about racism and my role in it. By allowing myself to experience these painful memories and the associated negative emotions, and then sharing them with the group, I felt like I had let my defenses down and opened myself to something new. I was able to listen to and understand the experiences of my brothers and sisters of color more openly, without letting my feelings of shame get in the way. What actually happened in those four sessions was so much more than I could have expected, and I am so grateful to have had this opportunity.

Flynn, Andrew et al. *The Hidden Rules of Race: Barriers to an Inclusive Economy*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. This book reveals the hidden rules of race that create barriers to inclusion today. While many Americans know the histories of slavery and Jim Crow, we often don't understand how the rules of those eras undergird today's economy,

Helsel, Carolyn B. *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism*. Chalice Press, 2017. Written by a white woman from a Christian point of view to whites who want to work for racial justice.

Hill, Daniel. *White Awake: An Honest Look at What It Means to Be White*. IVP Books, 2017. An exploration of the author's journey toward greater recognition of white privilege, white culture, and how to seek to reconcile among various racial groups.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race*, Basic Books (Hachette), 2017. The classic, bestselling book on the psychology of racism now fully revised and updated.

Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Bloomsbury USA, 2016 (National Book Critics award winner, NY Times Notable Book of the Year). From the Civil War to our combustible present, historian Anderson reframes our continuing conversation about race, chronicling the powerful forces opposed to black progress in America.

Brown Douglas, Kelly. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*. Orbis Books, 2015. An attempt to take seriously social and theological questions raised by Stand Your Ground laws and the shooting of Trayvon Martin, and to answer black church people's questions of justice and faith in response to the call of God.

Cone, James. *The Cross and the Lynching-Tree*. Orbis Books, 2013. The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. In this powerful new work, theologian James H. Cone explores these symbols and their interconnection in the history and souls of black folk.

Nightwatch

Sam Burfeind, Miles Burden & Margaret Harrison

A curious adult, who has never attended Nightwatch, asked youthful parishioners Sam Burfeind and Miles Burden some questions to find out what happens each year.

What is Nightwatch? Why does it happen on the night of Maundy Thursday to Good Friday?

Nightwatch is an overnight vigil that is held every year to keep watch over the church during the holy night of Maundy Thursday, beginning right after the evening service. It follows the Passion of Christ (the path he took from the Last Supper to the time he was prosecuted, and to when he was crucified and laid in the tomb).

Who attends?

Most kids 9-18 attend, as well as some chaperones and organizers. Kathy O'Donoghue, Family Ministries Director, organizes it.

Have you, Sam and Miles, attended it in past years? How often do students attend it? Do you look forward to it?

We have attended it for the last four years, since we were old enough, because it is a very fun church activity. If people enjoy it, they come back every year, even though some people who didn't enjoy the whole sleeping over aspect never return. Every regular attendee I have met says that they love Nightwatch and look forward to it every year.

Do the students prepare for it in advance?

There is some preparation at Sunday school and youth group beforehand so we can know what to do and how the whole thing is going to work.

What do you do during the evening?

We start by going around to each of the 14 Stations of the Cross, doing a small activity that pertains to each. The Stations of the Cross are intended to be walked in mostly silence so we can reflect on Jesus' journey. One of the stations is always the meditative labyrinth. We go down to the dining room, remove our shoes and walk the labyrinth in silence while meditating personally to ourselves. We also have group reflection time with our partners for the Nightwatch vigil sometimes.

What do you do about dinner?

Dinner is served at church for the choir people, since they sing in the Maundy Thursday service. Before the service they go down to the undercroft for pizza to tide them over until the service ends.

Where do you sleep? Is it hard to go to sleep? Uncomfortable?

When it is time to go to bed, everyone runs around and grabs the red cushions off of the pews and makes their own beds and forts with them where they sleep. These 'mattresses' are pretty uncomfortable because there isn't really a way from keeping them from spreading apart, so it is sometimes hard to go to sleep and stay asleep.

What happens in the morning?

In the morning, we wake up, get ready for the day, clean the church and replace all the pew cushions. Then breakfast is served by a team of parent volunteers who come in early in the morning to make food for us. In the past, we have had pancakes, donuts, fruit, bagels and cereal before doing a small service in the sanctuary. Anyone is welcome to come to this service. We walk around the Stations of the Cross with a small song verse between each one. At each there is a reading and a small prayer. At the end of the service, we put a veil over the large cross above the altar.

Do you talk about the experience afterwards? Is there any follow-up session?

Over the next few weeks we discuss the Passion and its aftermath in church school, and we discuss what happened at Nightwatch.



Finding Biblical Stories That Spark Teen Curiosity

Jessica Stokes

Last summer, my family and I were on vacation in Paris, and we were gaping at the stained glass windows inside the ornate Saint Chappelle. I was playing tour guide and teacher.

“Kids! Every panel of these windows is a story from the Bible!” I said, kicking off what I figured to be at least ten minutes of educational fun.

They got excited when they spotted Adam and Eve, Jesus in the manger, and the Last Supper. But they didn’t recognize almost anything in between.

My children can vividly retell Norse myths; they could pick out Hercules and Juno from paintings at the Louvre; they can rattle off the B-List pantheon of ancient Egypt. Not to mention every character from 22 Marvel movies. But somehow they haven’t connected with the foundational stories of Judeo-Christian culture.

I didn’t blame All Saints. The experiences Becky Taylor and Kathleen O’Donaghue have led for them Sunday after Sunday were fostering reflection, prayer, and moral curiosity. But there seemed to be a curriculum my children had missed: the basic anthology pieces of the Bible. As a literature major in college and former Shakespearean actor, I knew how integral these iconic parables are to the art and ideas all around us. I want my kids to catch these references along with the Greek gods and Grimm fairy tales.

But I also had a hunch these stories would help make church fun. My teenager especially had been raising her expectations for intellectual stimulation. If All



The Nativity, Connor Memorial Window, All Saints Parish



Photo credit: openchurch.com

Saints could provide something as juicy as Lord of the Flies, dark matter, and Broadway musicals, maybe she would find it worth waking up early on a weekend.

So I’ve invited her and the other young adults of All Saints to try out a special class on the Bible’s greatest hits. We call it “How the Bible Shows Up.” Our first session dove into Cain and Abel. I learned, right alongside the teens, that Cain is often considered part of the origin story for vampires, since some later retellings have him drinking Abel’s blood. By request, week two was on angels and demons: how Lucifer’s fall has been reborn in Darth Vader, and how angels are never actually described as winged (Ezekiel describes angels as a pair of interlocking circles covered in eyes and on fire).

Sure enough, we’ve been fascinated by these strange and rich stories. They are as full of violence and passion as any Greek myth or comic book, and as mysterious and resonant as a meaningful dream. We’ve also been surprised at the many ways writers and artists have applied and interpreted the characters, from Shakespeare to Steinbeck to Neil Gaiman.

We also plan to look at how people have used Bible stories to argue for beliefs and policies over the centuries. How do powerful people justify sacrifice – or intolerance – with scripture? Can more Biblical literacy help us judge the motives of our leaders?

The class was offered as a pilot in the month of May, to see if our teenagers liked it. I think they did. At the end of last week’s class, my daughter was still discussing Dante’s *Inferno* as we made our way to the sanctuary.

We’re putting together plans to offer this class during the full church school year, starting next fall. (And if any adults want to volunteer to help teach during Sunday services next year, please let me know! We are always back upstairs by communion.)

Meanwhile, I’m eager to research Moses for the next lesson, even though I’ll have to wake up early on a Sunday to do it. And I can’t wait to spot more stories of the Bible with my children in stained glass windows, museum masterpieces, and current events for years to come.

Saint of the Month – Cornelius Hill

Nathaniel Harrison

Though he was a proud and passionate Native American, a much-loved and widely revered chief of the Oneida Nation, Cornelius Hill was also a cradle Episcopalian. Born in 1834 on Oneida tribal lands in Wisconsin to parents active in the Oneida Episcopal Mission, Hill was baptized, educated and nurtured in the church. He was ordained a deacon in 1895 and an Episcopal priest in 1903. He nonetheless remained an outspoken political advocate for his people and their traditions and was notably a vigorous opponent of an insidious campaign by the US government to get the Oneida to abandon their ancestral lands and communal life in Wisconsin and move west of the Mississippi River.

Fluent in English, Hill was hailed as a bridge between his Oneida heritage and the white, European culture that threatened it. An accomplished organist, he combined his political engagement with duties as a church organist, as well as a delegate to church councils and an interpreter of Episcopal liturgy. He is today celebrated every year on June 27, the anniversary of this first ordination, as a holy man of the Episcopal Church.

Recognition of his precocity and promise came early in life. At age 10, he was chosen to attend an Episcopal school near Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where he mastered English. When he was 13, he was named a chief of the Oneida Nation, the last of the hereditary Oneida chiefs, and took the name Onangwatgo (Big Medicine). In 1874 he drafted a petition to the New York state legislature calling on the state to respect claims that were enshrined in treaties signed with New York-based Oneidas and traveled regularly to New York and Washington to represent his people.

In the latter half of the 19th century Hill emerged as an ardent opponent of an effort by the federal government to uproot Native Americans from their lands in the east by allotting them individual plots west of the Mississippi River, thereby opening up eastern territory to settlement by European Americans. The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, signed by President Grover Cleveland, was in effect a bid to dismantle Native American tribes as a coherent and distinct social unit. Granting the Oneida privately held parcels of land on reservations west of the Mississippi, the theory held, would encourage them to forsake “backward” tribal practices in favor of more productive land use.

Hill denounced the scheme. “The whites are not willing to give us time to become civilized, but we must remove to some barbarous country as soon as civilization reaches us,” he wrote. “The whites claim to be civilized and from them we must learn the arts and customs of civilized life. The civilization at which I and the greater part of my people aim is one of truth and honor; one that will raise us to a higher state of existence here on earth and fit us for a blessed one in the next world. For this civilization, we intend to strive – right here where we are, being sure that we shall find it no sooner in the wilds beyond the Mississippi. We will not sign your treaty; no amount of money can tempt us to sell our people.”

In his opposition Hill had an ally in Senator Henry Teller of Colorado, who charged that the government’s intention was “to get at the Indian lands and open them up to settlement. The provisions for the apparent benefit of the Native American are but the pretext to get his lands and occupy them... If this were done in the name of greed it would be bad enough; but to do it in the name of humanity ... is infinitely worse.”

Cornelius Hill’s commitment to his Christian faith and to the Episcopal Church survived his failure to prevent the land allotment policy from becoming law. His ordinations as deacon and priest came late in life, the latter just four years before his death in 1907. Today, the Episcopal Church in its tribute to Hill takes particular notice of his forthright defiance of the US government, in the Collect for the celebration of his feast day.

Everliving Lord of the universe, who raised up your priest Cornelius Hill to shepherd and defend his people against attempts to scatter them in the wilderness: Help us, like him, to be dedicated to truth and honor, that we may come to that blessed state you have prepared for us; through Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

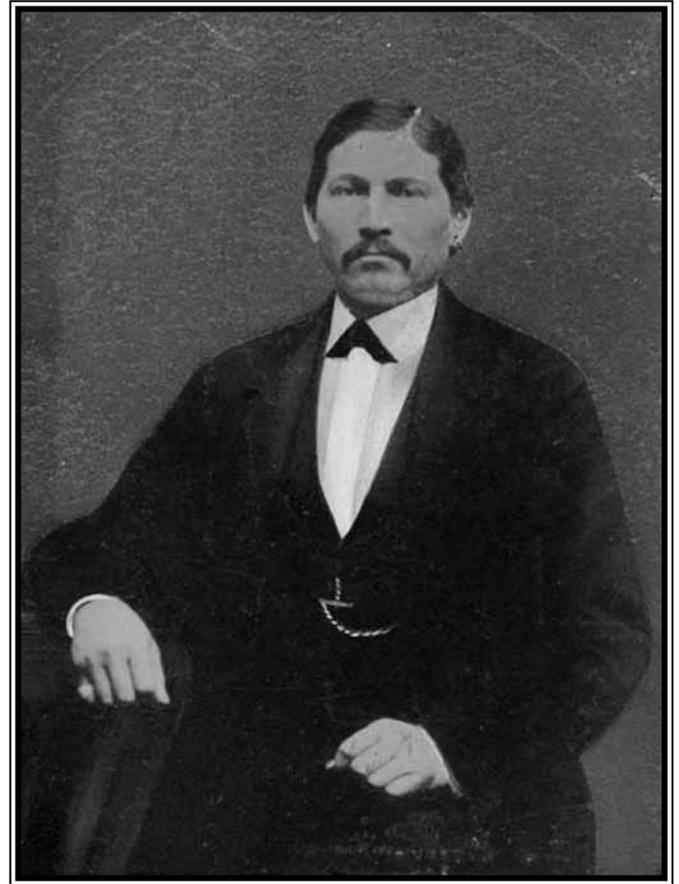


Photo credit: nevillepublicmuseum.org

Around the Parish

Gabriel Serrano Harrison, grandson of Nathaniel and Margaret Harrison, will be baptized at All Saints on June 23. Gabriel's parent are Jimena Serrano Pardo and David Amos Harrison; they live in Washington DC.

Jaden Alexander Denton, son of Jennifer Denton, was baptized on April 20, at his own request (see photo).

Toby Evett graduates on June 7th from Acton Boxborough High School and will attend Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL.

Maurice Parent, Executive Director of the Front Porch Arts Collective and co-producer of the recent production of *Black Odyssey*, a play which a group of parishioners attended through the Living Stones Listening Project, will talk about that show at 12 noon on June 16 at All Saints. Everyone is invited, even if you didn't see *Black Odyssey*.



The Rector baptizing Jaden Alexander Denton. Photo credit: Jennifer Denton.



Promotional photo for *Black Odyssey* from the Central Square website.

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Worship Schedule

We join together in Prayers for Peace and Healing for all of God's people throughout the world:

Saturday 5:00 pm Celtic Holy Eucharist

Sunday 10:30 am Holy Eucharist, with Prayers for Healing

Please note: The Nursery is open every Sunday from
9:00 am - Noon

Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Richard Burden, Rector

The Rev. Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Esq., Interim Rector

The Rev. Anoma Abeyaratne, Priest Associate

Pastoral Associates

Kathleen O'Donoghue, Family Minister

Stephan Griffin, Music Minister

Parish Administration

David Bliss, Parish Administrator

Sue Poon, Evening Office Manager

John Plonowski, Bookkeeper

Renato Dantas, Sexton

Alexandra Geoly and Eddie Brantley, Security Receptionists

Dates to Remember...

June 9 – Pentecost, Strawberry Festival

June 28 - Glenn Memorial UMC Choir (Atlanta) 6:30 pm

July 10 - Maryland State Boychoir 7:30 pm

July 22 - MANNA meal

September 1 – Compline 7 pm

September 8 – Welcome Back & Parish Picnic

September 14 – Deanery Confirmation

**September 15 – Church School starts;
Blessing of the Backpacks, Newcomer Coffee**

September 30 – MANNA Meal



All Saints Parish