

During the beginning of our most recent *Reimagining Church* meeting, we were asked to identify a difficult experience as well as an experience that was a light in our life. The latter example was easy. Putting the annual report together is always a labor of insight, energy, and love. (If you have not seen the annual report yet, check it out [here](#).) Given the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, the divisions within our society, and the small size of the St. Francis parish, the annual report offers hope and encouragement, as well as underscoring Margaret Mead's observation: a few committed individuals can change the world.

Of course, there is a great deal more that needs to be changed in the world before we approximate the beloved community that is the heart and hope of Jesus, let alone the fullness of God that is central to the longing of many traditions. Yet, there are glimpses of the divine breaking into our lives in, of all things, reports from the parish. Outreach, Music, *Miles for a Mission*, Landscaping, Sacred Ground, Wardens' report, Vicar's report, Prayer Shawl, Flowers, Book Club, Sabbatical, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, and other committees express a bit of the holy embodied in the work of these groups. To some, it may seem like the ordinary actions of a human community. However, the whole of these various parts offer a window into the extraordinary activities of the St. Francis community. These types of things do not *just* happen.

There are people that move them and shape them. There is planning--hours and hours of planning for somethings--that makes it possible. There are individuals who volunteer time and talent. There is coordination and communication. And, with so many moving pieces, it is easy for misunderstanding or miscommunication to occur at various points, thus confession and forgiveness are not only a part of our worship life but very much the lifeblood of our communal life. A reality that I witness and participate in every day. Which is why I am continually impressed by the work and witness of St. Francis. We certainly are not perfect, but there is a spirit alive and at work in and among us that cannot be pinned down but, like the spirit, you see the effects of it at work in the world.

I hope that you will be able to join us on Sunday, January 30, at 11:00 AM for our annual meeting. Along with confirming the work and recommendations of the Finance (budget) and Nominating (leadership slate) Committees as well as the vestry, the meeting is a chance to hear a word about how the Word of God is enfleshed in the activities and people of St. Francis. While we can't name everyone, we certainly recognize that the richness of our life together does depend on each person. We are, as Luther noted, a priesthood of all believers. Or, as St. Paul recognized, the necessary and diverse members of the body of Christ. Eye, foot, ear, mouth, hand, arm, leg, and . . . rump (?) are all necessary for us to be the embodiment of Christ and to do Christ's work in the world.

We will, of course, highlight the work of a few individuals who have gone above and beyond any calling as *Unsung Hero/Heroines*. Also, we will thank David Woods for his faithful and vital

leadership as he steps aside as warden after two years. (It is fairly sobering to think that David had one month as a warden that was absent COVID-19. Otherwise, he has been on the front lines throughout.) We are surely blessed by David's gifts and generous leadership. Finally, we will rightly honor and remember those who have died in the past year. This part is always a poignant moment as we remember loved ones and are reminded of our own mortality. Yet, we also draw strength and inspiration from the example of those who have gone before us. They, too, live on in the work that we do together, and we are blessed to continue to labor on in this part of God's vineyard.