

THE MESSENGER

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church

When Doing the Right Thing Makes you Feel Mad or Left Out

FR. DAVID COX

Many of you are already familiar with the term “Ubuntu” made famous by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others. The term exists in several African languages and refers variously to people, behavior, or values. All of these express in one way or another a principle of mutuality and shared life, not as something we choose, but as a condition for being human at all. Tutu used the English translation of an Nguni proverb: “A person is a person through other persons.” ([Click here for more on Ubuntu](#)) We quite literally make each other’s lives possible—or not, if we so choose. Many people are familiar with such a conception of mutuality and try their best to live it; others seem not to grasp it or not to care.

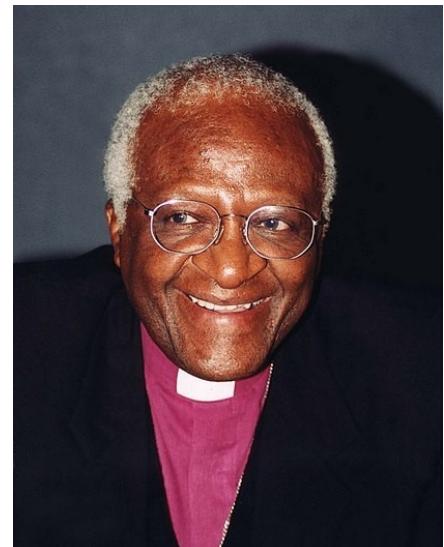
Here’s the thing. We still have to share life with those who do not understand or do not care that their lives and our lives are intertwined and interdependent. If I am honest, sometimes those people make me mad.

For example, we all know that wearing a mask during this pandemic keeps the people around us safer, even if doing so does not protect ourselves. In public places, we cannot protect ourselves as well as we can protect others—Ubuntu! And yet, I frequently leave stores where I have had to interact with people who do not wear masks and do not follow social distancing measures. (For the record, I despise wearing a mask but I do it anyway).

I often leave these places with some mixture of anger and sadness about my community. I ask myself, why can’t people care as much about me as I am trying to care about them? I sometimes feel like I am being ostracized for trying to be responsible. After all, the mask that I am wearing—and that I hate—is not protecting me; and the people around me aren’t protecting me either. Who cares about protecting me? What I experience is a fundamental sense of unfairness, an unfairness that can affect my health and the health of the people closest to me.

In a different circumstance, you might be a kid at home trying to do the right thing by respecting social distancing measures and avoiding crowds of other kids, even though you want nothing more than to go hang out and enjoy life with your friends. It feels pretty crummy when you look out the window and see some of those friends not maintaining social distancing, not doing what you believe everyone *ought* to be doing. Most of all, it feels really crummy that you can’t join them. It can be really hard to do the right thing, especially if we feel alone or left out when doing it.

(“*Doing the Right Thing*” continued on page 5)



Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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Focus on Ministry: Carpenter Ants

CYD ALLOWAY

If one is wandering the halls of St. Michael's on Tuesday mornings, the building may seem a little busier and noisier than other weekdays. There may be ladders or boxes about, painting and the sounds of pounding of electric hand tools mixed with a lot of laughter from the men and women who make up the Carpenter Ants.

Carpenter Ants has existed in various forms over the years at STMAA (and is often confused with Hope Builders, a separate community-wide non-profit entity that meets on another weekday to build access ramps, small construction projects and assist homeowners in financial need. Several of the Carpenter Ants members participate in this work as well.) Carpenter Ants' focus is on St. Michael's building and grounds with their work overseen by building administrator Jerry Kirkwood. Because of its weekday meeting times, members are generally people who are retired or semi-retired. They begin work between 8:30 and 9:00 AM and finish by noon. Afterward, many of the members continue together for lunch and fellowship in various inexpensive restaurants in downtown Mission. On nice days some may even get together for 9 holes of golf.



Their work is sometimes obvious but many times not quickly noticeable. Recent projects have included:

- ◊ Repainting the narthex and polishing the brass plates on the shelves and doors
- ◊ Repainting the various Spencer Hall and Day School hallways



- ◊ Cleaning and repairing the pews and book racks in the nave
- ◊ Cleaning the HVAC covers and vents in the nave
- ◊ Refinishing the tops of the altar rails and the baptistry shelf
- ◊ Replacing the restroom fixtures in the Day School
- ◊ Assisting Gardening Angels with heavier outdoor projects its members cannot do
- ◊ Cleaning and maintaining attics and other storage places
- ◊ Changing out the lighting in the various gardens

This group brings a wide range of talents and skills to Tuesday mornings, which all come together easily and happily. They are always looking for additional men and women to assist in their ministry. If interested, please call Junior Warden Dick LeClaire, 913 488 1306 or "just show up" on Tuesday mornings.

Editor's Note: This writer's husband is a long-time member of Carpenter Ants, for which she is very grateful. He returns home dirty and tired but with a smile on his face!

Focus on Ministry: Our Altar Rail Kneelers

CYD ALLOWAY

Many people, when asked what they enjoy or love about St. Michael's, often answer "the beauty of the sanctuary." There are many components that create that beauty - the building architecture, altar, hangings, stained glass, organ and Christus Rex. One less obvious component that perhaps is taken for granted as we make our weekly journey to the altar to receive communion are the beautiful needlepointed kneeler cushions that not only protect our knees as we kneel but also add a rich and historical beauty to our services.



In May, 1981, the rector of STMAA, the Reverend Richard Grein, had just been elected as Bishop of our Diocese. The women of the church were seeking an appropriate gift to honor his wife Joan upon the Greins' departure. Mrs. Grein suggested needlepoint cushions for around the altar. Some monies were donated toward the project at that time however, due to other construction projects underway at that time, the kneeler project was pushed aside until the parish's 40th anniversary in 1986 when the project was chosen to honor the occasion of Michaelmas that year.

Mrs. Grein assisted in finding a church needlepoint designer, Milli Holmes of New Canaan, CT, who visited St. Michael's to acquaint herself with the space. In February, 1988 the parish approved the designs and yarn samples she presented, with donors quickly subscribing to the project. Needlepoint was very popular at that time and many were interested in working on the project. To ensure that the finished kneelers were consistent in their stitching style, stitchers were asked to "audition" by completing a small sample canvas. During the following months, the needlepointers met to hone their skills then began stitching the canvasses in January 1989.

Led by Arlene Latham, the women met Monday mornings and Wednesday afternoons for over two years working on the canvasses. They also spent many hours stitching at home and while travelling as well. Judy Gerling, one of the stitchers, recalls she was in the hospital as the project was finishing and the team was under a lot of pressure. "I asked the nurse to arrange my IV so that I could continue to stitch from my hospital bed," she commented, laughing. Eventually 26 women worked on the project, stitching over 150,000 stitches requiring approximately 5400 hours. In the spring of 1991, the final assembly was completed by a local upholsterer, Andrews Abbey.

In addition to the kneelers, a separate piece of the project depicting St. Michael stitched by Barbara



Paris, was framed and now hangs on the south wall near the chapel wall. Take note of this piece – it will be becoming more visible in the coming weeks.

These kneelers are true works of art and, like all of our liturgical pieces, are now carefully tended by the Altar Guild each week. Altar Guild has also periodically had needlepoint experts examine the kneelers to ensure they are appropriately cared for and maintained.

The gifts of these women, as they had prayed then, are indeed "a lasting expression of the many loving memorials and thanksgivings which have made this ministry possible."

Connecting With... Very Reverend Dr. Don Compier

Cyd Alloway

Current Role at STMAA: Assisting Priest

Occupation: Since July 2014, Don has been Dean of Bishop Kemper School for Ministry in Topeka. BKSM, a joint venture of the Dioceses of Kansas, Western Kansas, Western Missouri and Nebraska, educates to form priests, deacons and lay ministers. He teaches Anglican Ethics, Anglican History and Anglican Spirituality. Father Don also shepherds the Kansas River Minster, a joint effort of St. Michael's, St. Paul's KCK and St. Luke's Shawnee work together in mission. Until becoming our assisting priest, Don visited different parish every week from within the BKSM dioceses.

Family: Married for 40 years to wife Yola, a native of Mexico City, whom he met while a missionary intern there. They have a daughter, Nancy; she and her husband A.J. were married and confirmed at St. Michael's and have a 3 year old daughter.

How did he come to STMAA? Don's father was a minister and missionary where for six years of Don's childhood they lived in the Netherlands. In 1988, while enrolled at a Nazarene seminary, he attended church at Trinity Episcopal in Independence, MO where "I fell in love with the Book of Common Prayer and the Anglican traditions," and became Episcopalian. He later joined the faculty of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, CA for nine years where he taught History of Christian Thought and Contemporary Christian Thought. While there, one of his students and advisees was Gail Greenwell, former rector of STMAA and now Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati, OH. When she came to STMAA, she invited Don to come visit her. "I walked into St. Michael's and it was love at first sight," Don declares. He became a member of STMAA, who later sponsored him for ordination. He was ordained as a deacon in June 2014, completed his diaconal internship at STMAA and was ordained a priest in 2015.

What made him "fall in love" with STMAA: "Great worship, great music and a wonderful tradition of emphasis on adult education. The people of St. Michael's are genuinely curious. Just great people."



Favorite Liturgical Season: The long, green season of Pentecost. "It is the culmination of a whole year when the torch gets passed to us to tell the sacred story. Everything prior to that is preparing us for that."

Hobbies: Music, anywhere from popular to opera. He enjoys playing his guitar.



GUESS WHAT GAIL FOUN D O U T !



Hey! I'm relatively new to this beautiful church. But through Carpenter Ants, I've learned of so many interesting and unique features to St. Michael's.

For example...

Have you ever stopped and listened to our church's beautiful bell ringing on Sunday morning?

That is made possible through the effort of Bob Bingham. After the choir finishes their practice before our 10:45 Sunday morning service begins, he 'lets her ring'!!

Since a bell tower was never completed at St. Michael's, the bell sits on top of an outdoor structure on the roof with a rope attached. That rope enters the side office upstairs near the choir loft.

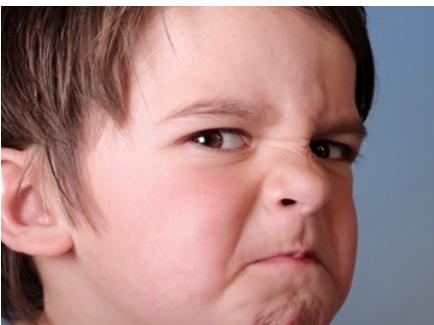
Bob opens the window, pulls the rope and we parishioners have the benefit of hearing the lovely chiming of the bell! Listen for it as it calls us to worship!

"Doing the Right Thing" continued from page 1

It's lonely enough when we have to be separated all the time. It's even lonelier when we feel punished for doing the right thing while others don't. It can feel like we're being punished for caring, that we're being left out because we are trying to do the right thing. Maybe we also feel like our sacrifices (we really want to be with our friends, and remember, I hate that mask) are being taken for granted by others. Don't people realize that we're trying to care for them?

I do not think there is anything wrong with anger or feeling left out because others do not embrace mutual responsibility the way you do. It is how we respond

that is important. We have to remember that as Christians we model our behavior after Jesus Christ and the forgiving, sacrificial love that he taught and lived. We know that the principle of Ubuntu is correct. God created us as thoroughly interconnected and interdependent beings. So we can and must support one another even in the midst of our frustration.



Let me give one final example and perhaps some food for thought. Apparently, there was a woman who was recently angered when she was not allowed to enter Costco without wearing a mask. In her anger, she apparently said something like, "I woke up this morning in a free country." What does freedom mean in this pandemic environment. We must remember Ubuntu. We must remember Jesus' command that we love one another. We must remember the description of the early Christian communities sharing the things of their life to make sure everyone was cared for.

Freedom means one thing if it is rooted in a concern for our individual selves and the illusion that we are independent from one another, that we do not need one another. In such a case, freedom becomes an entitlement. I am entitled to do whatever I want, to take my own chances without caring how my choices affect those around me. But if we start with the truth of our interdependence, our mutual need of caring and love, our shared life, then freedom becomes a responsibility. Freedom becomes a characteristic of relationships such that my personal liberties are the tools through which I help others at least as much as I help myself. And thus we love our neighbors as ourselves. For Christians, freedom is first and foremost freedom from sin, the idea that I do not owe anything to God or to my neighbor. In fact, we owe everything to God and to one another. Ubuntu! God is love!



DEACON'S DEN

Deacon Suzi Drury

Prayer in action is love, and love in action is service. Try to give unconditionally whatever a person needs in the moment. The point is to do something, however small, and show you care through your actions by giving your time. Sometimes this may mean doing something physical, such as we do in our homes for the sick or the dying or the chronically ill or sometimes it may mean offering spiritual support for shut-ins. If an ill person wants or needs comfort and support, give it to him/she.

We are all God's children so it is important to share His gifts. Do not worry about why problems exist in the world, just respond to people's needs.

Faithfully,
Deacon Suzi



MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER

Kate Capps

Kate Capps, a longtime member of the parish, joined the staff as the administrative assistant in mid-February. Before we all started sheltering in place, Kate staffed the front desk, answered phones, and provided general support for all staff. She enjoys using her experience and skills to serve the parish in this capacity and looks forward to returning to the office when it reopens.



Celebrating St. Michael's February 2020



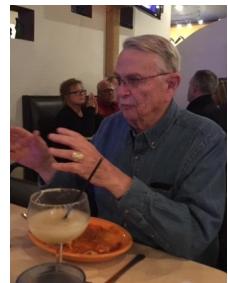
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner 02/25/2020

A special "thank you" to Addrianne Conway and our Youth Group for all their hard work on this year's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner. They were able to raise \$700 for the Australian Wildfire Relief!!!



Super Saturday Suppers, 02/08/2020

Pictured is February's Super Saturday Supper at Dos Reales Mexican Restaurant. This fun group of parishioners breaks bread together monthly following the Saturday 5:30 PM worship service at various local restaurants.



Celebrating St. Michael's

April 2020



**Good Friday
and
Easter 2020**



Pictured are Father David and Archdeacon Monte during our livestreaming Good Friday Service and Father David during our livestreaming Easter Service. Many thanks to all of those who made our Holy Week and Easter services possible. The online services have been a wonderful option during the current COVID-19 restrictions.

The Blessing of Flowing Water

Cyd Alloway

Spring is here and once again we are blessed with the gift of gurgling, flowing water from the beautiful stone and concrete fountain in front of the church. This past winter it appeared that the fountain might not be up to the task again this year. But, thanks to the generosity of the Kirk Family, the fountain has been refurbished and is once again providing a peacefulness to our memorial garden.

The fountain, donated by the Kirk Family in 1988, came as the result of a Lenten practice of Phil Kirk's one year. During those 40 days, Phil chose to spend time each morning in meditation and in prayer while seated in the garden, a discipline which ultimately resulted in some life-altering decisions for him and his family. According to Judy, Phil loved running water; this love comes naturally as his father was a member of the City of Fountains movement in Kansas City. Their donation of the fountain was done in part

to honor his father and his work in that movement.

Since its installation, the Kirks have also assisted in the periodic maintenance of the fountain over subsequent years. The work just completed includes rebuilding the stone work, refinishing the bowl and installing a new pump.

St. Michael's graciously thanks the Kirk Family for its generosity and stewardship for a gift all can enjoy.

