



St. David's  
Episcopal Church  
Southfield

*Staying in Touch*

# Connections

October 2020

## Calming the Storm

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Ever see the painting called *'The Storm on the Sea of Galilee'* by Rembrandt van Rijn?

The painting is notable in several ways. It's Rembrandt's only seascape. It contains 13 disciples, not 12. And the one wearing the cap toward the bottom is widely believed to be Rembrandt himself.

While the debate's still on regarding the religious devotion of the famous Dutch painter, he certainly displays theological acumen here, by placing himself right

where the storyteller wants us to be—in the boat with Jesus.

Perhaps you feel like you're riding out a storm these days? Or at least a marathon of a pandemic...

Then this is a fitting image—a voyage across the sea in which Jesus falls asleep while the great storm breaks out around Him, sending his disciples into a panic. This is when the 12 came asking, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"—which is a derivation of the questions we often ask God when the world around us is crashing in. We, too, mistake God's lack of action with God's lack of affection.

However, this story isn't about the need to wake Jesus up as much as it is about the deep trust that we are to put in him. It's a peace so profound it allowed Jesus to doze off. So the moral of the story isn't 'run to Christ when we're in trouble and He'll make it go away,' but, 'run to Christ so we might learn the source of His calm.'

How is God using this pandemic to wake us up to Jesus?

Where do you find this calm?

What does it feel like?

How might we seek it, more diligently, in the week ahead?

†Fr. Chris

## Notes from our Junior Warden



Ray Litwinowicz  
Junior Warden

Pardon our dust! That will be the watchword around St. David's over the next 4 months. After much careful planning, we have started construction on Phase 3 of our capital campaign.

The scope of this project includes many substantial improvements to our building.

- New men's, women's and family restrooms will be built in the areas now occupied by the current family and men's restrooms and Chapel. This is the most economical location for the new restrooms because it avoids relocating the main water lines that enter the building there. When completed, we will have all the restrooms located in the same part of the building. The new restrooms will be barrier-free and finished with durable low maintenance ceramic floor and wall tile. The old women's restroom by the kitchen will be turned into a much-needed storage room.
- Both boilers (our building has one in the Fellowship Hall and one in the Sanctuary) will be replaced with modern energy-efficient models.
- New windows will be installed all around the building. The window units will come with larger openable sections to meet the egress requirements of current building codes and will also help to lower our energy costs.
- The small wall by the southeast vestibule in the Fellowship Hall will be removed to provide a larger egress opening to the exterior doors as required by the current building code. The old handbell closet will be re-configured to provide a slightly larger storage room. We are hoping to

move the sound equipment into this room, as well as the cabinets used by AA.

- New no-wax vinyl flooring will be installed in the long corridor and fellowship hall. The heavy duty "walk-on" carpet squares left over from the atrium project will be installed in the north and south-east vestibules of the fellowship hall. We will no longer need door-mats in those areas.
- New LED light fixtures will be installed in the Fellowship Hall, long corridor and classrooms. Not only will these use less electricity, they will be more reliable than our fluorescent fixtures which seem to be always going out. They will be controlled by occupancy sensors meaning an end to forgetting to turn off the lights.

The first step in the process was the removal of asbestos containing materials like the floor tiles and pipe insulation. Then work will start on the restrooms. That entire area must be gutted in order to create the new bathroom layouts. The new boilers will probably come next and then work will move to the corridor and Fellowship Hall. The last part will probably be the windows since there is a long lead time to manufacture those. Of course, the timing could change as the project progresses.

So, expect a little disruption, noise and dust. From time to time, there may be limited access to various parts of the building. But in the end, look forward to some wonderful and much needed updates to our building!

## A Transforming Visit *by Mary Bensmiller*



It has been almost a year since my journey to the Holy Land, and in some respects it feels like it was yesterday. The trip was through the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, under the direction of a EDOMI priest and guided by a local Canon who has led hundreds of these journeys.

It was a pilgrimage that resulted in a new and deeper understanding of faith and personal transformation. We were immersed in experiences that engaged all of our senses that are triggered now

every time I hear the Gospels. You hear people describe how their visit to the Holy Land was life changing and I always thought that was a cliché created by travel agents, but I am here to tell you that it is true.

We spent our days visiting different sites, some near and some far, but all very meaningful and soul shaking. We walked in the neighborhood of Jesus as a toddler, and ended our pilgrimage walking in his footsteps to Golgotha. Our evenings were spent in lecture and discussion with modern day Israelis and Palestinians of different faiths, gaining a deeper understanding of the Middle East today.

Our group often made the decision to avoid the ‘touristy’ areas in favor of experiencing the sites more as Jesus and his disciples may have. Our guide seemed to have a sixth sense of timing, and we often saw huge crowds arriving as we were leaving. The food was phenomenal, and the accommodations clean, quiet and comfortable. The level of physical activity in my opinion was easy to moderate, and our guide always offered alternative ways to experience



the sites based on individual abilities. From wandering in the wilderness to celebrate the Eucharist before daybreak, to the crowded streets of old Jerusalem, one cannot help but be transformed. I cannot stress enough how this pilgrimage made the bible come alive for me and deepened my faith and commitment to live as Jesus has taught us. I’m happy to share my experiences in detail and show my photos to anyone who is interested and thinking of joining the pilgrimage that St. David is planning.

## Technology Update *by Steve Ernst*

We added a new phone line: a VOIP line managed by Comcast, not AT&T; in addition, a new internet line, also managed by Comcast, was installed because AT&T could not provide an internet line fast enough to handle Live Streaming; rather than have two vendors, one for the internet and another for phones lines, I

chose to have Comcast to manage the phones lines as well. The new phones lines and new internet connection have been operating now for about three weeks.

Monitors were installed in the Sanctuary to display the service bulletin since it is unknown when we will be ‘allowed’ to have printed service bulletins. There are

four monitors for the congregation and two monitors for the altar area. The monitors for the congregation are 55+” monitors. There is an input station for the monitors located next to the pulpit; all monitors are connected to the input station and this station is also connected to the Sanctuary sound system.

## Meet Father Steve *by John Hawkes*

Father Steve Bancroft has only been attending St. David's since mid-February, but for those who have been worshiping either in person or online, he should be a familiar face that you would recognize from our weekly services. At St. David's, Father Steve has been acting as our Food Pantry coordinator and he is presently leading a discussion-centered class entitled "Learning from Covid" that has been meeting at 7 pm Monday evenings in our online Zoom room.

Father Steve came to the diocese in 1995 when he became Dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul in Detroit. He also became Chairman of the Board of Herlong Cathedral School as well. Prior to retirement in 2007, he took a 10-month sabbatical, and then began to do supply work including two stints at Advent Episcopal in West Bloomfield. Recently, he had a desire to do pastoral work and after considering a couple of other parishes decided to visit St. David's.

"I've known Father Chris and was aware of St. David's," Father Steve said. "The minute I walked in I knew this was the place. What attracted me is the diversity...the racial diversity here is prominent. I like that." He added, "I value good sermons that are theologically orthodox and those are not easy to find. Father Chris provides that. In addition, I like to teach and be liturgically involved and he has allowed me to do that."

Father Steve is a fifth-generation cradle Episcopalian and a native of Houston, Texas. He has always been very active in the church. He went to seminary right out of college (Texas A&M) and was a military officer as well. After graduating from Virginia Theological Seminary, he went back to Texas and served for 24 years in that diocese. He was a college chaplain at Steven F. Austin University and then returned to his home parish in Houston, St. John the Divine, to be a youth minister and chaplain in their school.

Afterwards, he became Rector and Headmaster of the school at St. Cyprian's Episcopal in Lumpkin, Texas. In 1986, he became Rector at Trinity Church in Houston and Headmaster of their school.

In 2008, Father Steve went into business for himself in land development. His background in this field was one of the reasons he was chosen to serve at the Cathedral.

"It was a rare commodity and it was hard to find experienced people with a developmental background," Father Bancroft explained. "The Cathedral became the leading developer in the city of Detroit. We brought in the

first national retailer in 40 years into the city (Rite-Aid drug stores)."

After doing work for the Ford and Kresge Foundations and being assigned to work in the Mayor's cabinet, he set up a land development business consulting firm and it is what he does today.

Steve and Margaret Bancroft have been happily married for 49 years and live in Franklin. They are both native Houstonians who met in New York City and although they went to different high schools, had only lived four miles apart from one another. They have three children. Sons Nathan and Aaron are both married, living in Houston and run their businesses. Daughter Jessica is married with three children and lives in Pleasant Ridge. The Bancrofts have a total of nine grandchildren.

When asked about what he finds most rewarding in his spiritual ministry, Father Steve admitted the work he has done with the homeless, although not simply to hand out food and necessities. "I am interested in helping those who want to be helped," he began. "To address the issues that contributed to someone being put out on the street—at Trinity and at the Cathedral, we had good success with that. We found that it was necessary for people to find God and discover for themselves that God loved them."

In his spare time, Father Steve likes to play golf. He is also a writer and has a book entitled *Eden 2.0* that is available on Amazon. Margaret is a Master Gardener and as Steve admits, is responsible for their "spectacular yard." She attends Christ Church Cranbrook where she sings in the choir and has served on the vestry.

We welcome Father Steve Bancroft to St. David's.



## Outreach Activity *by Janet Ernst*

Yes, we are in the midst of a pandemic, worried about our health, our loved ones, finances, the political posturing, fires in the west, and upheaval in the world but Outreach at St. David's continues! We have been busy this summer!

We partnered with the Salvation Army to assist those in our community who need assistance with some of the necessities of daily living. We named the project "Handbags of Hope"

During June and July, the Newcomer's Outreach Committee from St. David's collected new and gently used purses. They also purchased toiletries and personal care items to fill the handbags. On July 15, the group gathered outdoors for a Packing Party, creating an "assembly line" with volunteers distanced, wearing masks and gloves. Purses were packed with a variety of items, including hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo and

first aid kits. Salvation Army representative Barbara Pilat was on hand to participate and receive the handbags for distribution. Purses will be distributed by Salvation Army volunteers to women in local area shelters.

Submitted by Judy Walsh

The Salvation Army asked us if we could help with their Back to School Backpacks by providing 240 face masks that were to be included in the backpacks. St. David's Quilters: Megan Clous, Mary Connelly, Janet Ernst, Kathy Graham, Kitty Kenning and Joanne Sackett took to their sewing machines and delivered the masks on time.

Learning about our successful Handbags of Hope project, Lighthouse (South Oakland Shelter) asked us if we could provide the same

assistance for their clients in the temporary and emergency shelter programs. Because they serve both men and women we have named this project "Bags of Hope". On November 1, we will fill 60 handbags and 40 backpacks with toiletries and deliver them to Lighthouse.



Our quilters have been very busy making face masks for distribution to nursing homes, medical offices, hospital clinics friends and family. Additionally, they have provided 1,025 facemasks to St. David's Food Pantry!

If you would like to help out or have questions regarding these outreach projects contact our church office administrator, ([lynne@stdavids.org](mailto:lynne@stdavids.org)) and she can put you in touch with our outreach committee.



## News from Mirebalais Haiti

**Pere Alphonse, St. Pierre's Episcopal Church sends his love from Mirebalais to the people of St. David's**

Two years of civil unrest and the Covid 19 pandemic have made life even more difficult for our brothers and sisters in Mirebalais. He and Pere Romel from St. Louis Catholic Church have partnered to start a feeding program and to offer assistance with housing and other humanitarian efforts. They have asked the Haiti Outreach Mission Executive Committee for assistance in funding these efforts. In response the Executive Committee has sent each priest \$6,000 The priests have told us that they have

fee over 500 people and will be able to continue with the money we sent.

St. David's Haiti Outreach team has transferred \$7,500 to HOM to be used for these humanitarian efforts and to replenish medications and supplies at our medical clinic. Since we are not able to travel to Haiti at this time, we are investigating the possibility of having medications shipped directly from our supplier, Blessings, International to Port-au-Prince where they would be picked up by Pere Ambrose and Dr. Cadet from the clinic.

St. David's contribution comes from the profits of our Help for Haiti Fundraisers at the Comedy Castle of Royal Oak.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 restrictions we cannot have our annual Comedy Castle Fundraiser this fall. However, your St. David's Haiti team is working with the HOM Executive Committee to plan an on-line fundraiser in early 2021! If you would like to become involved please contact Janet Ernst at 248 981-8851 or at [jernst1998@gmail.com](mailto:jernst1998@gmail.com).

## Celeste Headlee: Ten Ways to Have a Better Conversation

by Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz

So I was scrolling the Internet on my cell phone earlier this month and received one of those suggested items that someone-out-there thought I might be interested in. Would I bite at this tempting tidbit? When I saw the headline, I couldn't resist: *Ten Ways to Have a Better Conversation*. It was an 11-minute video, a TEDx talk presented five years ago in Savannah, Georgia. The presenter: Celeste Headlee, a veteran radio host.

In the journalism business a piece like this is called an "evergreen" because it's always timely. But with all the angst in the air in 2020 (as well as Covid-19 germs) that make us hesitant to talk with others, I thought this evergreen video from 2015 would be particularly useful today. It did not disappoint me! I enjoyed the content and presentation so much that I watched it again and took notes. Perhaps you'll also find Headlee's advice helpful in your daily life.

Before diving into her ten-point list, Headlee reminded us that we all need "conversational competence." In her opinion, we shouldn't need to use techniques to show that we're paying attention if we are, in fact, paying attention! Now, for the list of suggestions she uses when she interviews guests on her show:

### 1-DON'T MULTITASK.

Be present in the moment.

### 2-DON'T PONTIFICATE.

If you want to state your opinion without any opportunity for the other person to respond, argue, pushback, or grow, then write a blog! Enter every conversation assuming that you have something to learn. Remember: Everybody is an expert in something!

### 3-USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.

Use a technique of journalists: Start a question with a one of these words: Who, What, When, Where, Why, or How. Keep your question simple—if you ask a complicated question you'll get a simple answer. Instead, let others describe their ideas or feelings. Ask: "What was that like?" or "How did that feel?"

### 4-GO WITH THE FLOW.

As others talk, thoughts will come into your mind—but let them go. Don't hold on to the stories, questions, and ideas that pop into your head. If you

don't let them go, then you'll stop listening to others while you wait for a chance to tell your story, share your idea, or ask your question.

### 5-IF YOU DON'T KNOW, SAY THAT YOU DON'T KNOW.

Err on the side of caution. Assume that whatever you say will go "on the record" no matter what. Your talk shouldn't be cheap.

### 6-DON'T EQUATE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THEIRS.

If others talk about losing a family member, don't talk about the time you lost a family member. If they talk about losing a job, don't talk about the time you lost a job. People experience these things differently. Remember, this is NOT about you! You don't need to take from their moment in order to direct attention to yourself.

### 7-TRY NOT TO REPEAT YOURSELF.

It's condescending and boring. Repeating ourselves often happens at work or in conversations with our kids. Don't keep rephrasing your point over and over.

### 8-STAY OUT OF THE WEEDS.

People don't care about all the super-specific points of your story. They care about you.

### 9-LISTEN.

Listen to understand. This is the most important skill you can develop. If your mouth is open, you're not learning. Calvin Coolidge said: "No man ever listened his way out of a job." Talking equals control. Instead of talking so much, pay attention to the other person. Steven Covey said: "Most people don't listen with the intent to understand. They listen with the intent to reply."

### 10-BE BRIEF.

A good conversation is short enough to retain interest but long enough to cover the subject. Be interested in other people. Keep your mouth shut as often as you possibly can, keep your mind open, and be prepared to let others amaze you!

**A Photo Story** by Joanne and Len Sackett



**Our small group meets in the backyard.**



**Donations for the 'Handbags of Hope' outreach project**



**Packing 'Handbags of Hope' for the Salvation Army.**



**Outdoor Service.**



**Outdoor Communion.**

## St. David's Episcopal Church

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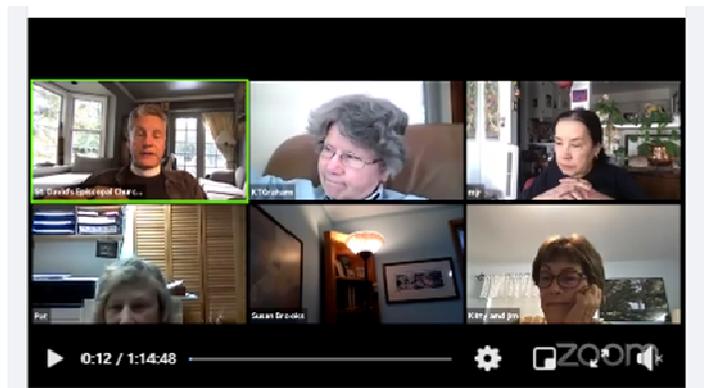
Blessing our pets



Some parishioners sat in the shade of the apple tree.



A little rain didn't stop these parishioners from attending service.



Worshipping and learning through Zoom.



Back to indoor worship.

## In Prayer *by Karen Henry Robertson*

Pre March of this year, I took great joy in saying this prayer. Now, not so much. Definitely not with the same fervor I did pre-COVID. Now I have been humbled, now I am less sure, now I am more introspective. It remains however a great prayer, especially during this time, to exercise one's faith—to sink deep into believing that God has us; that God cares, that God sees and knows what we can't; that there are good things out there, if only we look

with open hearts. So, let's join together in faith—even if we waver a bit, to pray these very simple, but powerful words.

“For all that has been,  
Thank you.

For all that is to come,  
Yes!”

~ Dag Hammarskjöld