

St. John's Good News



From Rev. John...

It is a strange thing to begin a ministry in a parish when we are not able to meet as a community. I have been working through the parish list trying to get to know some of you (at least by voice), and I am looking forward to the time when we can all meet face to face.

As T.J. Martin mentioned in an earlier announcement, I have been invited to serve as your bridge priest during this time of physical isolation from one another. The journey which has brought me to this wonderful place has been a rather circuitous one.

At the end of 2015 my wife Denise and I returned to the U.S. to be closer to our mother's who live in New England. I grew up in Western Massachusetts where my father served as the priest in Lenox 50 years ago. As I consider my return to the Bay State, I am reminded of the words of the poet T.S. Eliot from his poem *Little Gidding*:

“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

Though my family continued to live in the Northeast U.S. I moved to Montreal to attend college and made that city my home. In 1983, I was ordained in the Anglican Church of Canada. I served in that Diocese for 13 years as the rector of an urban parish and, later, as the Chaplain at McGill University. During an exceptionally cold Canadian winter, I accepted the invitation to serve as the Episcopal chaplain at Florida State University where, with our two children, we spent 6 happy years. In 2001 we returned to Canada where I served as the chaplain at Trinity College, University of Toronto. In 2005, by a very strange set of circumstances (which I may share sometime in a later newsletter) I was offered the opportunity to serve as the rector of the Episcopal Church in Geneva, Switzerland. The U.S. Episcopal Church established a congregation in Geneva in 1873 for the Americans who lived in the region at the time. The congregation is now composed of persons working for the United Nations and the other humanitarian organizations headquartered in that city. There were also a number of parishioners working for private banks and American companies.

My wife grew up in Milan, Italy which was a 4 hour train ride from Geneva. It was a blessing to be able to visit the places where she had spent her childhood during our 10 years in Europe.

May 2020

Worship Schedule

10am

Online and dial-in
(currently via Zoom)

Phone: 781-233-1242

Twitter:
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In 2015 we decided to return to New England where both of our mothers live so that we could spend more time with them. In the past few years I have served at St. Paul's Church, Nantucket and as the interim at St. Thomas, Taunton.

It has been a joy to return to the part of the world in which I grew up. As I have mentioned to some of you, most of my life I have lived in a different country than my mother, and now I am able to have dinner with her several times a week. We are grateful for the chance to visit her in Providence and Denise's mother in New Hampshire.

In my conversations with parishioners at St. John's, I have been touched by your love for each other and this community. Your desire to proclaim the love of Christ to the people of Saugus is a source of inspiration. We are looking forward to getting to know you better and to learn about how God is working in this community in the months to come.

Peace,
John+

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### **From Bishop Gates ~ 'Out of Sync'**

April 25, 2020

My Holy Week journey was out of sync. In order to prepare our videotaped Easter Day celebration at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, my Easter sermon had to be written and delivered fully 10 days ahead. I centered my mind and heart in the astonishing revelation of the Empty Tomb. Then, with that taping accomplished, I re-entered the narrative of our communal journey, just heading into Palm Sunday. Easter gladness was suddenly a memory, as the sorrows of the Passion once more took center stage. It was a strangely disjointed experience – from Lenten solemnity to Easter exaltation to Passiontide sorrow to Good Friday desolation and back to Easter gladness. There was nothing linear about this journey.

Our calendar this year is out of sync. With the pandemic crisis surrounding us, we are in a continuing state of anxiety and sadness. Though the liturgical calendar says we have made the transition from Lent into Easter season, the reality around us suggests otherwise. Living in the northern hemisphere, we are accustomed to an alignment between the message of resurrection and the bursting forth of spring. But this year neither the world's vernal renewal from grey to green, nor the church's liturgical transition from purple to white, is aligned with the continued global struggle with isolation and fear. There is nothing linear about this journey.

Our lives are perpetually out of sync. In fact, this year's powerful experience of disjunction between season and sensibility is always present to some degree. Things never really progress neatly from challenge to resolution, from pain to pleasure, from sorrow to celebration. A man's sister dies on the day his daughter gives birth. A priest moves from a celebratory confirmation in the morning to a graveside funeral in the afternoon. A son celebrates college commencement in one state while his grandfather undergoes bypass surgery in another. A marriage is joyfully but quietly solemnized in the midst of pandemic isolation. Neat, predictable cycles are not the way of things. There is nothing linear about this journey.

*Cont'd.*

The apostle Thomas was out of sync. Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them, huddled behind locked doors. Jesus had renewed their spirits with his spirit and brought them peace. Thomas wanted to see for himself. And so it happened, a week later. *“Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”* [John 20:26-29] Of course, even this happy ending is still not the end. Still the disciples will recognize the Risen Christ at some moments, and fail to recognize him at other moments. Still the disciples will endure Jesus' second departure. Still they will have trials and martyrdom to face. There was nothing linear about their journey.

But having once known the Resurrection, the victorious power of love would now be the object of the apostles' faith, and the bedrock of their life. Life was still, often enough, full of hardship and sorrow. But now they knew: it was not yet the end. In fact, in so many ways, it was just the beginning – the start of a journey which would never be linear, but which would always be traversed in the knowledge of Christ's risen presence and with the promise of renewed life and joy.

In Christianity it is called "inaugurated eschatology." That is Jesus' message that resurrection is available to us not just in an afterlife, but even now. The grief-stricken find comfort and begin again. The addicted find sobriety. The rejected find love. The frightened find courage. The dispirited find hope. This resurrection we see with our own eyes. And another resurrection is yet to come. This we see only with the eyes of faith – “through a glass, darkly” – entrusting the victims of this dreadful pandemic, and our own loved ones, and ourselves, and this whole sad, broken world of ours – entrusting all of these to the eternal love of God. The resurrection already; the resurrection yet to come. Christ is risen!

Easter is not Easter because the calendar says it is. Easter is not Easter because our springtime world displays it. Easter is not Easter because our lives consistently manifest it. Easter is not holiday good cheer; it is not the stuff of championship parades. Easter is Easter precisely because in the midst of lives which are not linear and experiences which are out of sync, we – like the apostles – journey in the knowledge of Christ's risen presence and with the promise of renewed life and joy. Our Easter season may feel like an extended Lent this year – but that is precisely when we need it most.

Hear again last Sunday's word from Saint Paul: *“God has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ... In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials. ... Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.”* [I Peter 1:3, 6, 8]

Blessings of these Great Fifty Days to you.

Faithfully and fondly,

+*Alan*

The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates

**From the Senior Warden...**

Dear Friends,

Happy May!

While we all still follow the social distancing restrictions in the effort to contain Covid-19, we can still rejoice at the arrival of spring and take pleasure in the daffodils, tulips, and many other flowers popping up in gardens.

It is wonderful to have Rev. John Beach with us as our Bridge Priest, and to see so many people joining his Sunday services on Facebook Live. This coming Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, we will use Zoom for Sunday service. While Zoom is a web-based platform, it provides an option not available with Facebook Live for those without computers, to call in via a dedicated phone number.

For those that may not have received the email after Easter, Rev. John has joined us from The Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Taunton where he had been an interim priest for the last two years. For the lifelong parishioners of St. John's you may find this as a wonderful connection to our past, since Rev Nelson was called to St. John's after being a curate at St. Thomas.

As to when we will return to our beloved St. John's, the diocese has not issued any updates on when churches can resume in-person services, but I expect we will have an update from the Bishop later in May.

Until we see each other again, stay healthy and safe!

T.J. Martin  
Senior Warden

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Contact Information & Preferences

Please call or email the office to let us know how you prefer to be contacted; email, regular mail, phone, social media, etc. Any changes to worship times or other pertinent information will be shared as soon as possible. Please also visit our website (www.StJohnsSaugus.org) and social media sites for updates.

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**Youth Group!**

Please check the High School & Middle School Facebook page. The group is building a safe platform for everyone to keep in contact and share meaningful readings.



## Every Child Deserves to Smile



**February 16-March 22 ~ Book and Snacks Collection.** Thank you to everyone who contributed snacks, and story books for the fruit and snack basket. The books, basket and chocolate bunnies were delivered to the motel in time for Easter and accepted with an abundant expression of appreciation for the thoughtful gifts.

In May we are collecting activities for the children. Coloring books, activity pads, crayons, pens/pencils/markers, paper, puzzles, play-doh, cars, and board games are among the favorite items. Please, no balls, toys or projectiles that may wind up in the busy street.



We continue to accept non-perishable food items and everyday necessities such as toiletries, baggies, paper plates and cups, plastic utensils, paper towels which are gratefully accepted by this most vulnerable population in these unprecedented times. Contact Jeanne for more information.

Please continue to pray for the children and their families.

*Merciful Heavenly Father, make your compassion known to those who are suffering from lack. Remember especially the young, aged, and otherwise vulnerable among them. We pray most of all that they would experience your love toward them and secondly that you be their protection and provision in time of need. Fill their hearts with the warmth of your hope and the light of your love. Move on us, Lord, to be agents of your provision. Stir the hearts of the more fortunate among us with the knowledge that when we feed and clothe those in need, we are clothing and feeding Jesus (Mt 25:34-46). Amen.*

~ Bill Woodruff, Youth Pastor, Bethalto Church of God

The next quarterly meeting scheduled for June 5, is being rescheduled. Call or email Jeanne at 781-662-4342 or jmseaboyer(at)gmail(dot)com if you would like to be contacted with the new date.

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Coming Soon! Knit/Craft Group



Once the Governor gives the OK to socializing again, the group will meet **Thursdays at 1PM** in the Hurl Room. All are welcome! So get your knitting, crocheting, and craft projects ready and put your smiles on for that much anticipated Thursday!

For questions or further information, please contact Jeanne Seaboyer (see above).

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We invite you to visit these Episcopal Church sources for regional and national updates, news, and feature stories:

Diocese of Massachusetts: [www.Diomass.org](http://www.Diomass.org)

The National Church: [www.EpiscopalChurch.org](http://www.EpiscopalChurch.org)

Word Search

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]Ascension ~ Beehive ~ Budding ~ Chirping ~ Memorial ~ Mothers ~ Outdoors ~ Pentecost  
 Planting ~ Pollinate ~ Rainy ~ Reflection ~ Sunlit ~ Tadpoles ~ Tulips ~ Umbrella ~ Veterans  
 Vibrant ~ Whitsunday



**Officers:** The Rev. John T. Beach, Bridge Priest ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Daniel Casey,  
 Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Paul Felci, Asst. Treasurer ~ Brenda Caggiano,  
 Clerk of the Vestry

**Vestry:** Dale Coogan (2021) ~ Rose Holt (2022) ~ Samantha Martin (2023) ~ Kristina Palazzo  
 (2023) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2022) ~ William St. Clair (2021) ~ Kenneth Webber (2023) ~ Diana  
 White (2021)