

OUTERMOST VOICE

ST. MARY OF THE HARBOR
WHERE THE LAND, THE SEA, AND THE SACRED MEET

From the Rector:
A Different Kind of Light



Daylight Saving Time ended on November 7, and the days are already becoming shorter. Four pm sunsets will soon be here, and for a season, instead of sunlight, we will have to rely on other means to light our homes and our communities. But as useful as artificial light is during the winter months, it cannot replace natural light.

Light is essential to our wellbeing. The physical and emotional effects of light deprivation on humans are well documented. The same is true when it comes to our spiritual health. To get through the dark seasons in life, you need a different kind of light; the kind of light that offers hope when it is difficult to see through the darkness.

That kind of light does not come from the sky above. It comes from within. And when we share our light, the world around us is illuminated by love. And love, like light, is meant to be shared. As Jesus puts it, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.” —Matthew 5:14-16

Christmas trees and houses strewn with lights cannot match the light that shines from a human heart overflowing with love. What if, instead of Christmas gifts purchased from a retailer, we gave people what they really need? What if, instead of “Merry Christmas,” we told the people around us that we love them?

The Reverend Terry R. Pannell, the longest-serving rector (or vicar!) in the history of St. Mary’s, has announced plans to retire on January 31, 2022.

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Celebrate Christmas at St. Mary’s

Christmas Eve
Friday, December 24
Holy Eucharist at 5 pm

Community Lunches

As we continue to monitor the Outer Cape's COVID situation, our traditional Community Lunches are still scheduled to resume on the Saturday, January 8, and to continue through Saturday, February 26.

Stay tuned for the details!

There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers located in the back of the church. If you can help, please contact [Mary Jo Avellar](#) or [Julia Perry](#) for more information.

An Early Christmas Gift

An enormous and heartfelt "thank you" to Office Manager Art Tupper, whose gift of \$8,000 has funded the purchase of a much-needed new copy machine for the church office.

Thank you, Art!

Directory Access and Updates

Please don't forget to email us at smothoffice@gmail.com or call the church office at 508-487-2622 if there is a change to your address or phone number. Church directories are available only to parishioners and only upon request.



The Senior Warden's Message



Advent is my favorite season of the liturgical year. I look forward to the peace, the quiet, and the anticipation of waiting for light in the midst of darkness. While the world around us moves faster and faster, demanding our attention to matters often insignificant or upsetting, our faith calls us to something entirely different. Advent is a time to slow down and anticipate; to prepare our hearts for the arrival of Christ among us. We know that the true meaning of Advent is to be patient and seek glimmers of light, although we have all had our share of the darkness through these past months.

The pandemic continues to challenge us; we are grieving the loss of beloved parishioners, family members and friends, and the shorter days leave many of us feeling low. Yet the call to look for the light reminds us that we do not face the darkness alone. The Holy Spirit is our constant companion, working in us and through us, showing us that the glimmers of light here at St. Mary of the Harbor are not hard to find.

Several months ago, an enthusiastic and energetic group of parishioners and friends transformed our garden space which we will begin using to full advantage when warmer days return. Our stewardship drive has been phenomenally successful, demonstrating a profound love for and commitment to this parish by people, both near and far, who continue to support our ministries. Most important of all is our continued, steadfast care for one another, for those in need in our community and beyond. In ways both large and small, the Holy Spirit is guiding us forward toward the light, to do God's work in the world.

As we light the candles of Advent, may we feel God's presence keeping watch with us through the darkness, in whatever form it is taking in our lives at this moment. The Advent candles represent hope, love, joy and peace; may you enjoy all of these in abundance throughout this blessed Advent season.

—Pat Penza

Since 1904: Clergy at St. Mary's

According to an anonymous, single-sheet history of the parish, entitled "The Church of St. Mary of the Harbor, 1936-1966," the following clergy—titles, years, and punctuation as given—served us between 1904 and 1966:

"Albert E. George, Mr. Shields, 1904-1906; Albert Crabtree, George Walker, Mr. Winkley, J. J. Cogan, 1907-1911; James Sheerin—1912; Dr. Henry Mottet, A. J. Kennedy, Ambrose Gring—1913-1921; William Love, 1913-1932; Dr. John Atkinson, A. W. H. Eaton, 1914-1918; Charles Williams, 1922; David MacDonald, 1923; Paul Micou, 1924; J. Foster Savidge, 1925; Frank Johnson, 1926-1933; William E. Soule, 1933; Robert Nicholson, 1933-1938; J. DeWolfe Perry, 1938-1941; William L. Bailey, 1941-1949; Carl Lemm-Marug, 1947-1952; Harold Nicholas, 1952-1956; Harold Bronk, 1956-1957; Venerable Lewis B. Sheen, 1957-1958; James Babcock, 1958-1960; Ernest Vanderburg, 1961-[1969]."

After Father Vanderburg's tenure ended, more recent records—and memories—call to mind Stanley Hardy, 1969-1970; Frederick Chapman, 1970-1974; John G. Upton, 1974-1978; John N. McLaughlin, 1979-1987; George H. Welles, Jr., 1988-1997; Andrew Barasda, 1998-2003; Shariya Molegoda, 2003-2006; and, of course, Terry R. Pannell, 2006-2022.

For the Record: Our Rector Retires on January 31

On October 25, the Reverend Terry R. Pannell, our rector for fifteen rewarding years, announced that he would retire on January 31, 2022. Here is the text of his announcement:

As God's people, we are called to be caretakers for a season. That is true whether you are a layperson or a member of the clergy. God entrusts each of us with the nurture and protection of God's people and our fellow creatures, and the conservation of this planet that God has given us to be our home.

When you invited me to serve as your Rector back in 2006, I gratefully accepted the call and committed to a partnership that has lasted fifteen years. Looking back, my tenure at St. Mary of the Harbor has been the happiest and most fulfilling years of my life. I have all of you to thank for that.

There comes a time though when rectors need to step away, or perhaps get out of the way, depending on who you ask. That time has come for me. I will enter retirement upon the conclusion of my tenure at St. Mary of the Harbor on January 31, 2022.

It has been a privilege to serve with you as a caretaker for a season. Our time together has confirmed something a wise priest said to me before I left to attend seminary. He told me that a seminary cannot teach you how to be a priest. Parishioners do that.

You have made me a better priest *and* a better human being. That is no small accomplishment. Thank you for being such incredibly kind, patient, loving, *and* forgiving teachers.

With profound gratitude, your devoted and loving pupil,

Terry+

On Sunday, October 31, Bishop Gayle Harris made her annual visitation to St. Mary of the Harbor. Following the morning service, at which she both preached and celebrated, Bishop Gayle met with the congregation for a reception and a reassuring Q&A in Nicholson Hall. Later in the day, Terry and members of the Vestry met with Bishop Gayle to discuss the steps that will follow Terry's retirement. According to the Bishop, Kelly O'Connell, Canon for the Southern Region of the Diocese of Massachusetts, will be our guide through the process, assuring us of continuity of worship. The Vestry will keep the parish informed as steps are taken following Terry's official retirement date of January 31, 2022.

Key COVID Guidelines from the Diocese

Effective November 28, 2021

REQUIRED

Maintain physical distancing (6 feet or more) between households at all indoor gatherings on church property.

REQUIRED

Mask wearing by everyone at all indoor gatherings.

VIGILANCE

The Diocese requires use of masks and physical distancing between households in order to protect everyone, *especially the most vulnerable*.

HOLY COMMUNION

Restrictions on the sharing of Holy Communion remain in place. *Communion is in one kind only.*

MUSIC

Singing and choral music is permitted, provided that the mask requirement for indoor worship is observed.

RECEPTIONS

Coffee hour and other events with food and drink may take place, but careful plans are necessary. Individually wrapped foods and designated servers, as opposed to potlucks or buffets, are a safer option.

Read the full text of the Diocesan guidelines and recommendations at <http://www.diomass.org/news/diocesan-news/nov-15-covid-19-requirements-and-recommendations>

COVID Comes Close to Home

Two St. Mary's households were affected by COVID in early November. While neither situation exposed the congregation to risk, our Regathering Team recommended suspending coffee hour as of November 14. Sharon Inger, whose household was one of the two affected, commented for *Outermost Voice*:

“No one wants to have to take a step backward in our journey toward normalcy, but as winter comes and the virus stays, it is important that we raise our guard again. Breakthrough cases are real. My husband and I are slowly recovering from a breakthrough case that came despite his three and my two vaccinations. We do not know how we contracted it, as we have been social distancing and masking for months. But somewhere we must have let down our guard. Breakthrough cases are not always mild. Although the vaccines do seem to prevent serious lung problems, for which we are grateful, we are still dealing with side effects two weeks later. And currently, 37% of those in this country who are hospitalized with COVID are breakthrough cases. The disease is particularly dangerous for older people and people with any kind of other issues, which we know is the case with some of our St. Mary's folks.”

In a separate action on November 15, the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts issued renewed COVID-related guidelines that are effective November 28, continuing at least until Ash Wednesday (March 2, 2022). In presenting the diocesan guidelines, Diocesan Bishop Alan M. Gates noted, “The pandemic journey has challenged and strained us in ways previously unimagined. I urge us not to be misled by the practice in other types of gathering places. We have been loathe to organize worship in ways that would exclude vulnerable persons, including families with young children (who until now have not had access to vaccination—and for whom the very youngest still do not). Thus, our worship services have not required proof of vaccination. That means other precautions remain essential.

“The epidemiological realities are only one part of the story. For us as Christians, theological and spiritual realities are equally important. The question framed in our heated national discourse is: ‘Does this mask or this vaccination impinge upon my personal freedom?’ That is not the operative question for a Christian. The operative question for us is: ‘What is the most loving course of action here?’ Individualism is an esteemed value in our country, and individualism is foremost in current political debate. But individualism is not the right framework for decisions about communal Christian gatherings. My favorite restaurant or yours will not expect its patrons to sacrifice personal comfort for the common good. A church expects precisely that.”

Fall Stewardship Campaign Yields Outstanding Results

With St. Mary's fall stewardship campaign still under way, Treasurer Mike Sutila has reported outstanding results.

"We'd set two goals: 70 households, or pledging units, and total pledges of \$140,000. For 2022, I am delighted to say that we have in hand 70 pledges for a total of \$143,580—meeting one goal and exceeding the other."

Mike notes that not all St. Mary's households have made their pledges as yet, and that there's still time to return your pledge sheet.



Church suppers at St. Mary's were important sources of funds in the 1940s.

The Treasurer's Report



This Thanksgiving, St. Mary's has many reasons to be thankful as we move into the final months of 2021. I am pleased to report that the church's year-to-date total operating revenue, ending October 2021, is essentially the same as last year's (\$181,368 vs. \$181,244), with only a \$124 difference. This is due, in part, to parishioners paying stewardship pledges in a timely manner and to a substantial increase in gifts and bequests during 2021.

We continue to contain expenses, which are \$1,473 less than the same period a year ago (\$183,829 vs. \$185,302). Though net operating income ending in October is \$2,461 less in 2021, I am confident, if income and expenses continue as they have throughout the year, that we will end 2021 on a positive note.

In March, St. Mary's \$28,852 federal loan from the COVID-related Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, was forgiven. At the same time, we applied for and received a second PPP loan of \$26,057 to assist in covering operating expenses. I am currently in the process of applying for forgiveness of this second loan, which hopefully will be approved by the end of the calendar year.

Also, during early 2021 we were successful in applying to the Diocese of Massachusetts for relief on this year's annual assessment: we were granted a reduction of \$5,000, which allowed us to forego monthly payments for October through December 2021.

By now you should have received your Thanksgiving appeal letter. By a vote of the Vestry, proceeds from the appeal will be evenly divided between outreach and capital projects. Thank you all for your generosity.

As I have said many times before, we are financially stable and a viable parish because, you our parishioners, have demonstrated your love for this church through your generosity.

Happy Thanksgiving!

—Mike Sutila



Priscilla Jackett and Bobby Taylor share a quiet moment before a recent Sunday service at St. Mary's.

OUTERMOST VOICE
The Church of St. Mary
of the Harbor

517 Commercial Street
 Provincetown, MA 02657
 508-487-2622

www.stmaryoftheharbor.org

smothoffice@gmail.com

Contributors

Beth Chapman, Sharon Inger
 Peter Kosewski, Charlie Nichols,
 Terry Pannell, Patricia Penza,
 Mike Sutila

Photos, Please!

If you have photographs of interest to readers of *Outermost Voice*, please send them to kosewski@gmail.com.

Our next deadline is
 February 15.

Other Church News Sources
Diocese of Massachusetts

<https://www.diomass.org/news-pubs/diocesan-news>

Episcopal Church News Service

<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org>

Deacon Charlie on Promise & Praise

I find it helpful when journeying through the reflective season of Advent to have a daily meditation. Something to gnaw on helps me stay focused on the season.

For Advent, I discovered a book titled *Promise & Praise*. This book offers one word for each day of Advent, beginning with Sunday, November 28. In a world that likes to rush, we are invited to slow down and spend a few moments in reflection each day of Advent. This process offers a spiritual variation on the usual Advent calendar, and a way to countdown to Christmas focusing on God's promise.

These daily reflections are part of a larger initiative called AdventWord, a global community praying and walking together.

AdventWord began in 2012 as a ministry of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist as a way to move through the season one day and one word at a time. The goal was a practice that is both particularly individual and purposefully communal, with people sharing pictures and stories on social media.

As AdventWord grew, Virginia Theological Seminary assumed the initiative and this year, VTS turned over AdventWord to Forward Movement, the publishers of *Forward Day by Day*.

Copies of *Promise & Praise* will soon be available on the table as you enter St. Mary's from the parking lot. In this Advent season, as we wait and watch for the birth of the Bethlehem babe, may we draw nearer to Christ, one word—and one day—at a time.

Advent blessings to you all!
 —*Deacon Charlie Nichols*



Christmas at St. Mary's, circa 1945