Ramblings from the Rector on . . .

Time

Time keeps on slippin', slippin', slippin' into the future – “Fly like an eagle,” Steve Miller

The first question I had to answer after accepting the call to become the next rector of St. John’s was, “When can you be here?”

I think my answer was, “When do you want me?”

But I had been thinking about my answer before I accepted the call. That in itself was a difficult thing to do. You see, the process of issuing and accepting a call at a parish can be a stressful time. I jokingly refer to the OTM (Office of Transition Ministries and that great data bank of parishes and clergy in a search process) as the “e-Harmony match system of the Episcopal Church.” And as you get down to the end of the process, there’s a lot of prom-date drama . . . “Will they or won’t they ask? Will they or won’t they accept?”

Without going into details, this has been a long time coming. I have been turned down by, and I have turned down, potential calls. Through it all, I came to accept that it’s bad luck to start making any plans before a call is actually issued. So you don’t think about neighborhoods you’d like to live in, restaurants you’d like to try, or what it will be like to celebrate Eucharist every Sunday with new people. But that is a hard thing to not do when you find yourself falling in love. The conversations Joelene and I had about St. John’s were generic at best in an attempt to minimize potential disappointment.

But one of those conversations revolved around the idea of, if called, when should we start? I knew, through conversations with the Search Team, that St. John’s would want an as-early-as-possible start date. I also knew that moving across the continent with obligatory stops in Eugene, Portland, Olympia, Seattle-ish, Spokane, Sheridan (MT), Bozeman, Chicago-ish, Detroit, and Michigan/Ohio-ish (approximately 3300 miles) was not going to happen over a weekend. Add to that Joelene’s commitment as president of the St. Luke’s D.O.K. to host their Diocesan Assembly in mid-September, and a building project at St. Luke’s scheduled for September 4-17 that moves the altar closer to the congregation while sending the choir behind the altar, and we needed to have a specific plan in place.
It was, of course, only a hypothetical plan because I wasn’t 100 percent sure if I would even need to worry about it. This hypothetical plan called for finishing up our obligations at St. Luke’s by the end of September, taking the month of October for the actual move/unpack phase, and for me to show up at the office on November 1. So back on August 2 when David Davis asked when I thought I might be able to start, I had an answer for him.

I think I remember hearing a tinge of disappointment when he heard the word, “November,” but he was much better after I explained the situation to him. By the time we were ready to announce to both congregations our decision, August was half over. Labor day is almost here, and Joeline will be in Hagerstown looking for a place to live. I just scheduled flooring to be delivered to the church on September 6. Less than two weeks after delivery we are hoping to have the project completed. Our first Sunday with the reconfigured look will be September 18, and one week after that will be my final Sunday at St. Luke’s. And one week after THAT, we hope to be on the road.

To put that in a little perspective, that’s only four or five Sundays from now (depending on when this is published).

November 1 can seem like a long ways away. But when you start ticking off the things that need to happen between now and then, it really isn’t. Time keeps on slipping into the future.

For our part, we have begun collecting boxes from all sorts of places. One of my officiating friends is a mailman who has a bar on his route. He has been collecting boxes that are perfect for books. Joeline told me about another liquor store in town where we can get good boxes, as well as a local shoe store. I am taking a few hours each day to pack up my office. When Joeline gets back from Hagerstown, we will begin the process of packing the house. I’ve had two moving companies give a walk-through and moving estimate. I need to finish an inventory to submit to a couple more. We are tagging several items to donate for yard sales.

For your part, Bill Alexander is working on the details of the Letter of Agreement. Melonie Orr has been great in answering my questions and getting necessary information to me. Mark King and I are already working on the All Saints’ Day liturgy. And how are those new name tags coming along?

We all have a lot to do in a relatively short time. September is right around the corner, and our anticipated departure date is only five weeks out. Time marches on, and if we don’t pay attention, it will roll over us like a driver-less steamroller going downhill.

Time keeps on slipping into the future. But let us never miss the journey due to a singular, tunnel-vision focus on where we want to be; because if that is our only focus, we will miss the journey that makes the end worthwhile. Time will indeed have slipped on by.

Blessings,

Todd+
Mayfest Update

We are happy to report that, through the generosity of many patrons, sponsors and donors, our 2016 Mayfest fundraising event raised $10,655. These funds were donated to the Community Free Clinic, the Family Center of Washington County and St. Etienne, Haiti. Many individuals in our community and abroad will benefit from your generosity!

Our sincere appreciation to the many parishioners who volunteered their time and talent to make Mayfest a success again this year. We will be in need of new chairpersons for next year’s Mayfest. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

-- Kevin and Sareen Hebb,
Mayfest 2016 Co-Chairs

Give While You Shop

If you use Amazon currently to shop, AmazonSmile is a simple, safe, and automatic way to support St. John's. Go to www.smile.amazon.com and log in with your Amazon.com account or sign up. Go to your account > select/change your charity. Search St. Johns Parish Episcopal, and choose us as your charity. Bookmark the page and use it every time you shop!
I was recently asked the question, “What motivates you to give to St. John’s?” I thought about it, and initially seemed to come up with the easy answer that I’m motivated to give because it feels good, and it’s the right thing to do. After all, isn’t that why we all give?

Then I began to think about it deeper. Many of us donate some canned goods or a few boxes of pasta to the food pantry on a weekly basis, and of course, lots of members donate through pledge and plate gifts. Those simple ways to give are very important, but can have a way of becoming routine, I think. Chad and I have opted to have our weekly pledge automatically drafted from our bank account; super convenient, but it almost gets to the point where I don’t even think about it anymore!

That led me to think about how else I could give back to the St. John’s community, in ways that I do think about more. For starters, in the four years that we have attended St. John’s, our family has started to become more active in church. Hardly a Sunday goes by that you won’t see one of the Grosses robed and serving as intercessor, chalice, or acolyte. Then, outside of Sunday worship, I am a member of the Daughters of the King chapter, and recently completed a term on the Rector Search Committee. Chad serves on the Stewardship Commission, and volunteers as a van driver, and we both worked on the Mayfest committee this year. Even our kids are starting to take on a more active role, serving as acolytes, with Matthew occasionally helping with Children’s Chapel and Celie playing the piano for the prelude a few times a year. Chad and I enjoy seeing our kids grow up in the church and start to take on leadership roles appropriate for their ages; this is definitely a reason to give to St. John’s that motivates me!

On the surface, it seems like we are a pretty involved family, but to be honest, I feel that there is more we can do. We’ve worked the REACH shelter week serving in the kitchen, but have never assisted with Community Café. We’ve donated gently worn clothes for the Bester outreach, but have never worked personally with anyone who might benefit from those donations. (Sidenote here: I hope to change that soon by getting involved with the new Learning Parties in which St. John’s will be participating!)

We’ve all heard the expression “You get out of something what you put in it.” I find that to be especially true of our church experience. Becoming more active allows our family to grow closer, feel like a part of our church community, and draw a deeper connection to worship. Oh, and yes…giving back to St. John’s does feel good!
This month I’d ask you all to think of how you participate as active members of St. John’s Episcopal Church. How do you give of your time, talent, and treasure? I challenge you to think of a new way in which you can give back. There are so many ways to become involved here; join the choir, add your name to the lector schedule, attend the fall acolyte training, make a commitment to increase your pledge by a few dollars, sign up to assist at the Community Café, join a Commission, get involved with our new Learning Parties, introduce yourself to a new member and make it a point to cultivate a new friendship with him/her…etc. etc. etc. We are so blessed to have so many opportunities for outreach and service here, so I encourage you to think of the very same question I was asked and allow God to work through you as you consider your answer: What motivates you to give to St. John’s?

Faithfully,
Kristy

Please consider joining us in welcoming the new rector through your donations. Your donations will help in transferring and settling our Rector’s family into their new home with us. In addition to traditional donation methods, you can assist immediately at [http://bit.do/stjohnsgiving](http://bit.do/stjohnsgiving) or use the QR scan below with your smartphone.
Music Notes

New Season for Choirs

Saint Francis Choir (Grades 1-3): Begins Monday, September 19, 5:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Light Dinner for the Choirs: Begins Monday, September 19, 5:30 p.m.-5:45 p.m.
Canterbury Choir: (Grades 4-12)*: Begins Monday, September 19, 5:45 p.m.-6:45 p.m.
Parish Choir (Grades 9-12 and adults)*: Begins Thursday, September 8, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

*Youth in grades 9-12 have the option of either singing in the Canterbury or Parish Choir.

For more information about the choirs, please speak with Mark King, or contact him at the church office, 301.733.2560 x 108, email him at mking.stjohns@myactv.net

South Prospect Street Porchfest

The Historic Heights Neighborhood is sponsoring a celebration of music and architecture of South Prospect Street on Saturday, September 10, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saint John’s will be participating in the celebration, which will include tours of our church nave, and parish musicians performing on the porch of Saint John’s House. Free admission to the Porchfest. To extend our hospitality, volunteers are needed for the following: Greeters on the South Prospect Street sidewalk near the tower entrance, and providers of cookies. If you are able to assist, please contact Mark King.

Haitian Boys Choir Concert

Les Petits Chanteurs and instrumental ensemble from the Holy Trinity Cathedral Music School in Port au Prince will present a concert on Thursday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. in our church nave. A reception will follow the concert. We need to provide plenty of food for these hard working young musicians, who will be on a rigorous concert tour while in the United States. If you are able to provide food for the recep
tion following the concert, please contact Mark King: mking.stjohns@myactv.net, or 301.733.2560 x 108. If you are able to provide lodging for the night of September 22 for the musicians, please contact Charlie Chaney: c.chaney@myactv.net, or 301.964.8079. There is also a sign up sheet for reception food and lodging just outside the church nave in the hallway near the choir room.

A Big Thank You to Summer Musicians

Vocalists: Kristy Gross, David McKinley, Zach Myers, Robin Spickler
Instrumentalists: Heidi Becker (violin), Jim Brinson (organ), Julianna Chitwood (violin), Mark Cook (trumpet), David Davis (organ), Celie Gross (piano), Julie Belle Huff (flute), David McKinley (organ), Kathy McKinley (piano), Nathan Strite (organ), Jason Weibel (bagpipes).

Internationally Acclaimed Pianist to Perform

Efi Hackmey, virtuosic concert pianist from Israel, will perform in Thomas Hall at Wilson College on Friday, September 9 at 7:30 p.m. The program is free and the public is invited to attend.

September Carillon Recitals at Mercersburg Academy

September 11 – John Widmann (Frederick, MD), September 18 – Jim Brinson (Mercersburg, PA), September 25 – Doug Gefvert (Valley Forge, PA). The recitals begin at 3:00 p.m. and are free and open to the public. Feel free to sit in the chapel, or climb the steps to the carillon tower, or sit on the lawn, or stroll the gardens while listening to the music.
Youth Update

Sunday School

Is starting up again this September. Please join us on September 11th at 9:00 for a Sunday School open house, touring the classrooms and discussing what will happen with this year’s classes. You can also meet the teachers: Sarah and Brian Miller are returning once again for the Middle-High School class, Betsy Mum-mert and Nicole Martin will teach the Elementary class, and Pre-school class will be led tag-team by Annie Malloy, Tracy Happel, and Margaret Clinch.

Sunday School classes resume Sunday, September 18th.

Prayer Partners

Last year’s prayer partners were revealed on Sunday, August 21st. If you wish to sign up as a prayer partner, or want your children to be prayed over this year, please contact Karla Davis for a form.

Games Night

Back by popular demand, we will be hosting another family games night at the church on Friday, September 19th. All are invited to attend and share in games, food, and fellowship. Bring a treat, or bring money to buy pizza, bring your favorite board or card games, just come and enjoy the time together.

Youth Group

The Youth Group is always open to any youth in the church in 6th grade and up. Contact Margaret Clinch at youthmin.stjohns@myactv.net for information on what we are up to and when our next event will be.
**Opportunity To Declutter For A Good Cause!**

**What:** St. John’s pre-Christmas holiday shopping event, the proceeds of which will go to help cover costs associated with our transition to a new priest. (This is not the same as the Santa Shop for kids held on St. Nicholas Day.)

**When:** Sunday, November 20th and 27th, before, between and after services

**Where:** Stage, Trimble Hall

**Who:** Anyone who is downsizing or just wants to get rid of accumulated clutter that you don’t know what to do with

**How you can help:** We need items in good condition that you no longer need or use that are both Christmas and non-Christmas themed. Examples are wrapping paper, ribbon, decorations, wreaths, etc., and items that would be suitable to be given as gifts such as collectibles, children’s books and toys in good condition, such as action figures, cars, dolls, games and puzzles; decorative items, pictures, nice jewelry, jewelry boxes, other decorative boxes, pottery, china, CDs, DVDs, unused craft kits, craft supplies, etc. No electronics or clothing please!

**Where to deliver your treasures:** There will be a large box labeled HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENT DONATIONS on the stage (near the stairs), and we will start collecting immediately!!

If you would like to volunteer to help with this project, or for any questions, call Melissa Hutton at 240-625-6550 or e-mail at mmhagnp61@gmail.com

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**Your Unused Paint: St John’s Needs It !!**

Do you have cans of left-over paint just sitting in your garage or basement, and don’t know what to do with it?

We have your answer! Donate it for the refurbishing of an unused closet we want to dedicate to storage of seasonal/holiday supplies. We will accept any size can and any color and finish (except black), including spray cans. Also, any paint brushes and other painting equipment in good condition would be welcome.

**Where to donate:** There will be a large box on the stage near the stairs in Trimble Hall labeled USED PAINT DONATIONS.

If you have the extra time and would like to help with the painting, or if you have questions, contact Melissa Hutton at 240-625-6550 or email mmhagnp61@gmail.com.
Fall Learning Parties—Math

** For parents and their children ages 3-5**

**Make and Take Activities**

**Free Books**

**Learn fun tips to help your child be ready for school**

Parties will be held in Trimble Hall at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 101 S Prospect St, Hagerstown. Please complete the form below and return it to St. John’s or call 301-733-2560 to register. You may also register via email at learningparties@gmail.com

Please respond NO LATER than October 4, 2016.

Learning Parties are 4 sessions
Dates: Oct 11, 18, 25 & Nov 1
5:30 - 7:30 pm

Child care available + activities for siblings (ages 6-11). Must provide own transportation. Register soon - space may be limited!

Number of adults attending: _________ Names of adults attending: ________________________________
(Limit 2 per family)

__________________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________________

Telephone Number:________________________________________ Email:______________________________________

Name and age of Child(ren):________________________________

Please indicate any special needs, including food allergies:

Sponsored by: United Way of Washington County, Ready at Five, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Hagerstown Area Religious Council, Washington County Early Childhood Advisory Council and Lee Downey Foundation
**ST. JOHN’S DAY – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**

Please mark your calendars to celebrate our patron saint on Saint John’s Day after the 10:15 a.m. service on Sunday, September 25! I hope you have tried to identify at least some of the pictures provided in the bulletin since August 7 (and which will continue through September 18). “Poke E John” has had a fun time running around to share a little bit of what we have in our midst. God has been very good to us! May we appreciate our gifts within us and around us, and continue our vision to work together for greater ways to continue His ministry.

On Sunday, September 25, you will experience a bit of the history of our Parish, taste food similar to that which you would have enjoyed around the turn of 19th century when our Parish was formed– we promise not to serve wild game. And “Poke E John” will reveal the nature of all 21 pictures provided these many weeks leading to St. John’s Day (SJD)!

Come, experience and enjoy all that has been planned, and share this special day with the rest of your Parish Family. Please Invite your family, your Neighbors, Parish members you haven’t seen in a while.

*Come Everyone & Enjoy!*

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**Parish Life**

Please consider signing up in Trimble Hall for a Fellowship hour this fall! We can always use help providing a simple snack after the 10:15 service! If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact Tracey Happel at taj5@myactv.net or Jennifer Sealing at jemcc47@yahoo.com. Thank you in advance for your help and support of our ministry!
5th Annual Community Book Drive

Last year more than 17,400 books were collected in the HARC/ Rotary/ United Way / ECAC annual book drive by 63 houses of faith, businesses, services clubs, and organizations. Books were used for children’s literacy programs throughout the year as part of an overall literacy initiative. We need your help again this year! The book drive begins now through September 25. Books can be new or gently used for children ages 0-11. Your book will help a child learn to read. Your book could be the first book a child has ever owned!

Return Engagement - The Haitian Boys Choir

The Haitian Boys Choir from The Holy Trinity Music School in Port-Au-Prince will return again for a concert at St. John’s on Thursday, September 22, 2016.

Our congregation has enjoyed their angelic voices and enthusiasm in years past and look forward to hosting them again this September. As in the past, members of our congregation will be asked to provide overnight lodging for 30 boys and ten adults. We have learned from previous concerts that the boys are polite, courteous and always hungry!

Please consider hosting a few of these choir members in your home. The Warden will be making calls asking member of the congregation to be hosts once again.

- Junior and Senior Wardens
Make the Adult Forum a part of your Sunday experience!

Make the Adult Forum a part of your Sunday experience! Following the 8 O'clock service in Saint Mary's Chapel, join the Adult Forum for a freewheeling discussion on contemporary issues facing today's church family.

Mark your calendar beginning September 11 for a wide open examination of “How Jesus Became God!” We will begin a series of studies with a brief video lecture by one of the country’s leading Biblical scholars. Dr. Bart Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, and best-selling author, brings his life's study (M.Div from Wheaton College and Ph.D from Princeton Theological Seminary) to broaden our understanding of some of our basic doctrinal beliefs.

This is not your usual Sunday school! Bring your inquiring mind and your curiosity to find out why we believe, what we believe.

Thank you,
Bob Ayrer

Shawl Ministry

Shawl Ministry meets every 2nd Sunday in Trimble Hall after the 10:15 service. Join us even if you don't know how to knit! We have extra needles and yarn and patience to boot, as well as a sense of humor!

All are welcome.
I know you are familiar with the story “The Three Bears.” It speaks about porridge being too hot, porridge being too cold, and then the porridge that was “just right!” It seems to me that “Welcoming” is just the same. It can be too “hot,” such as being too assertive, overbearing, and maybe a little intimidating. It can be too “cold,” such as an insincere hello or a casual nod of the head. And it can be “just right,” where you shake the hand, make eye contact, and say welcome to newer worshipper at St. Johns without scaring them away!

I remember visiting a church for the first time about eight years ago (not St. Johns) and every person in the church turned and stared at me while someone mumbled, “Anyone know who he is?” To say the least, it was the first and last time I went to that church. It was “too hot.” I went to another church a few weeks later and not one person spoke to me. Obviously, I wasn’t happy about it, but it wasn’t as threatening as the church I just spoke about. This church was “too cold.” God led me to St. Johns Episcopal Church and I was approached and welcomed, while not feeling threatened intimidated, or uncomfortable. You know what I’m about to say .. it was “just right.”

Last year I spoke with the kids in children’s chapel regarding the “Welcoming Commission.” To get started I shook hands with them and said good morning. Well almost all of them, as I intentionally skipped over one little girl. I took my seat and asked the little girl, “How did it feel as I welcomed everyone but didn’t welcome you?” She quickly responded, “I didn’t like it.” That led my discussion to the importance of making sure everyone feels welcomed at our church. I apologized to the little girl for having made her feel bad. I added, “That’s what we don’t want to do. We want everyone to feel good about coming to church. We don’t want them going home and feeling bad. If they go home feeling bad what is probably going to happen?” I asked the group. Several responded correctly, “They won’t come back.”

Welcoming seems so simple doesn’t it? Perhaps some in our Church might even question the need for a Welcoming Commission. Trust me, we need it. And though you may not be on the Welcoming Commission, you are a serious participant in how we are perceived by others who come through the St. John’s doors.

I hope you are as excited as I, for the arrival of our new minister. Please be just as excited, and maybe a little bit more, for the arrival of newer worshippers that join us.

Howard Whittington, Welcoming Commission Chair
HATS OFF TO:

• Evvie Williams who was invited by the US Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel to represent the C&O Canal on the National Historical Park Commission. Congratulations, Evvie!

• Karla Davis for her educational endeavors. She successfully completed the fifth unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Meritus Medical Center where she continues to provide spiritual care.

• Sherrie Burkholder, Cathy Bushey, Kristy Gross, Jason Weibel, Bob Rauth, Fred Wright, David Davis, Chris Tischer, Anne Morin, Dorree Brinson, Tammy Martinez, and Steve Adelmeyer for their dedication, prayerful consideration, and successful completion as members of the Rector Search Committee.

• Celie Gross completed the Red Cross babysitting course, complete with certification in infant/child first aid and CPR. I hear she is excited to put her new skills to good use and is available for babysitting!! Great chance for parents to take a “date night”.....

Keep me in the loop by sending information to my email address: uofapsu@verizon.net. Feel free also to pull me aside to share your good news so I may share it with St. Johns.

Kelly Slocum
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Bob Rauth    9/1    Ronald Bachtell    9/16
Helen Stevens  9/1     Mike Mummert    9/17
Brandon Younger  9/1    Chris Tischer    9/17
William Abeles Jr.  9/2     Caitlin Dawson    9/18
Elizabeth Happel  9/2     Ginny Kay Durham    9/18
Meghann Karasic  9/3     Allan Martinez    9/18
Bill Sturtz  9/3     Bunny Waltersdorf    9/18
Michael Callas  9/4     Stephanie Bickford    9/19
Boden Reisinger  9/4     Rylan Cox    9/19
Fred Wright Iii  9/4     Kathy Argueso    9/20
William Forbes  9/5     Paige Kaetzel    9/20
Pieter Bickford  9/6     Elizabeth Anderson    9/21
Johnny Martinez  9/6     John Cozzoli    9/23
Donna Wells  9/7     Heidi Becker    9/25
Judy Potter  9/9     Ivor Knight    9/26
Bill Graham  9/11     William McGovern    9/26
William Maletzky  9/14     Betty Burger    9/27
Ema Myers  9/14     Bill Soulis    9/27

Happy Anniversaries!

Harvey & Rebecca Hogamier  9/1
Bob & Susan Rauth  9/2
Pieter & Stephanie Bickford  9/10
Phil & Julie Barlup  9/12
Charlie & Katherine Foreman  9/18
Bob & Betty Markle  9/20
Spence & Cinda Perry  9/22
Brandon & Haven Younger  9/27
Bill & Beverly Abeles  9/28
Tr & Lou Lamb  9/29