

*Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church*  
**CANTERBURY TALES**

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∞ MAY 2021 ∞

The Rev. Julie D. Bryant, DMin., Priest-in-Charge

*Dear Saint Thomas Family,*

**Our Bishop's Warden is Confirmed**



Russell Higgins, who served Saint Thomas as Junior Warden last year, has graciously accepted the Bishop's appointment as her Warden for the congregation.

This issue of "Canterbury Tales" carries a self-introduction from Russell, who moved fairly recently from Connecticut. Russell and Karen share three children, (Thomas, Michael, and Sarah). Russell has made a job change this year, and Sarah has spent her first year at university in a combination of virtual and in-person settings she couldn't have imagined. Like everybody else, they are adapting.

Russell has written:

"While I know St. Thomas is in a transitional period, I look at it as a great time to help define who we are and what we want to be." Coming out of the Covid-19 closure era, this will be a rebuilding year, a time to be deliberate about the new foundation that is laid, a time for a few risks to be taken to raise up new life.

St. Thomas has used the terms Bishop's Committee and Vestry interchangeably through its history and titled the appointed/elected Wardens variously as Bishop's Warden or Senior Warden, and Junior or People's Warden. The Diocese is resetting the template for By-Laws for Mission congregations using the Bishop's Warden title, which aligns with the practice in other parts of the Church.

I am grateful for Russell's willingness to serve, and to take on things that need doing, even when that means venturing into unfamiliar territory. Julie+

**Eagle Scout Projects Underway**

Troop 148 is preparing a few Scouts to soar! Saint Thomas is blessed with offers from two Scouts who are Eagle Candidates and interested in completing their requirements with projects that will benefit our facility and ministries.

A French drain was installed along a portion of the office wing several years ago, to allay flooding in strong rains. 2020 saw the necessity of remediating mold along that side of the building as multiple floods had left damage behind. Now, in addition to the repairs we've completed, this Eagle Candidate will extend the French Drain in hopes of preventing further pooling of water alongside the building. He'll also take care of removing some half-buried tree rings that formed a sitting area on one playground and will replace them with a more appropriate protective guard for the fast-growing tree.

Our second Eagle Candidate is building raised planter beds and a garden bench for the smaller playground, thereby adding a science and nutrition component to our curriculum and utilizing space that has not been a focal point of the yard.

There may be opportunities to pitch in with labor on these projects, or funding, but the Boy Scouts have a very thorough protocol to continue Covid-19 precautions that will define the working conditions. We will DEFINITELY get to celebrate and thank these Scouts when the work is complete in a few weeks!

And, we look forward to having Troop 148 back on our campus for regular Tuesday night meetings as soon as they've been cleared to regather.

### **Join the Love in Action Team!**

A friend of mine is a Breast Cancer researcher, and I'll be joining the Twelfth Annual Fundraiser for her Foundation on May 15. I'd love to have you join me!

Susan Love left Boston thirty years ago to join UCLA in developing treatment for breast cancer in women and men. She has been focusing for a long while on the anatomy of the milk duct system in which many cancers develop and through which cells pass throughout the breast. In simplest terms, understanding the structure and chemistry that make the ductal system an attractive habitat for cancerous cells to collect and develop, then finding ways to reduce the appeal of the environment so that tumors will not form allows treatment to move from cure to prevention. The curative steps themselves being layered with surgery and application of poisons from which the body must recover.

Susan's family name, Love, lends itself to many puns and the happy reality that every family gathering is a Love-fest.

As Bishop Curry has taken up the theme of love as the fulcrum of teaching and discipleship, of renewal and expression of Christian faith in action, many congregations have adapted their mottos to include "love." The Diocese of San Diego has recently replaced its "Fearless Love" motto with "Courageous Love" encouraging sacrificial and bold action, even in the face of fear.

Part of the work of the Bishop's Committee has been to promote deeper engagement and to get the congregation moving outward in our concerns, and more effective in carrying out our mission as, is often said, the hands and feet of Jesus. The Gospels tell us that Jesus did seek rest from time to time, but that it was often interrupted, so that he was always on the move.

There are many ways to be "on the move" for Jesus. There are many ways to support a host of good causes. There are many good ways to describe the work we do in the name of Jesus. There are many good options for mottos around which to rally in works of compassion and advocacy.

I suggested to Allan O'Neil, who continues to coordinate events and partnerships across the community helping those in need, that we might try "Love in Action" as a motto for what we've called "Outreach," so that we remember the dynamism of engaging this work and keep loving intent always at the forefront.

I've registered for Dr. Love's Foundation Fundraiser under the team name "Love in Action" and would welcome any of you to join me as participants or supporters. If you choose to get yourself moving that day, thirty minutes of your favorite physical activity meets the requirement. You can practice Yoga, take a hike, shoot arrows at a target, even throw axes at a bullseye while training for the Renaissance!

You are welcome to register at [drsusanlovefoundation.org](http://drsusanlovefoundation.org) or be in touch with me to join the team, to make a donation, or to join a few of us who are hiking that day (May 15).

## **Expanding In-Person Worship - Reintroducing Sunday 8:00 a.m. Worship**

Sunday, May 2, we'll test-drive having an 8:00 a.m. service in the Sanctuary, followed by 9:00 a.m. on Zoom, and 10:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We have gained so much by being one congregation on Sundays, and lost portions of our weekly routines with the change of times.

God willing, the number of Covid-19 infections will continue to fall, and we will find the vaccines increasingly available and effective so that we can restore more and more of the things we set aside in March 2020.

We're going to gradually reset our schedule, offering 8:00 a.m. Worship on the second Sunday of the month for a bit, which lines up with Mother's Day (May 9), June 13, the Sunday after the Independence Day holiday (July 11), August 8, and then the Sunday after Labor Day weekend (September 12). We hope by September to have the equipment needed and persons trained to facilitate streaming services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. each week.

You're welcome to attend the 8 o'clock test-drive on the 2nd, and then put the early service on your calendar for the Second Sunday of the month through the summer. 9:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services will continue weekly for a while yet.

## **Graduation Sunday: May 30**

Graduating Students and their families are invited for In-Person or Virtual Worship Sunday, May 30, and to enjoy a reception and "Wave" after the 10:15 a.m. service.

The end of the school year is approaching, and with it, the chance to congratulate students on their accomplishments, while blessing their new adventures and the years ahead. Students in the Classes of 2020 and 2021 have been particularly challenged by interrupted schedules, limited in-person opportunities, and the absence of athletic, fine art, and social gatherings. Let's offer them hearty congratulations for steadfastness, creativity, and resilience! Circumstances prevented us from celebrating our 2020 grads in person, so we're asking them to indulge our honoring them as well.

As we continue to be in the early days of Covid-19 recovery, we'll welcome folks in person and online. The reception will be on the front entrance patio, allowing us to make a joyful sound of celebration with honking horns and fluttering signs, too. Folks who continue to be safer away from crowds are encouraged to drive by with horns beeping and streamers, balloons, whatever signs of celebration they wish, all to congratulate these young people in their accomplishments.

Please forward names of your family members who are completing their studies or moving from one school up to another. We'd like to know who's making the jump from Preschool to elementary, and each step through their great leap into professional life.

Please provide the Student's Name, School from which they are graduating, Degree or Diploma awarded, and a word or two about their plan for the year(s) ahead. And, we'd like to include pictures for the online announcements, too, so please find a few of your favorite pictures. Send information to: [adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org](mailto:adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org).

## STEP Teacher Appreciation Day: Monday, May 3

The first week of May is our chance to say “Thank You” to our teachers, and to offer them small treats they might not otherwise enjoy. STEP has six teaching staff, serving children from ages two to ten, given the emergency waiver allowing us to supplement virtual learning. Our staff includes: Laura, Clara, Carolann, Vanessa, Cindy, Maggie, and the Director, Chantel. **Notes or small remembrances may be dropped off at the Preschool Monday or brought to Worship Sunday.**

*Yours in Christ,  
Julie+*

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### SERVICE SCHEDULE

**Reminder: The Sanctuary has been reopened for In-person Worship!**

**8:00 a.m. Sunday Services In-person, May 2, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12.**

**9:00 a.m. Sunday Services on Zoom.**

**10:15 a.m. Sunday Services In-person.**

**\*Communion\***: if you wish to have it delivered to your home, please email: [adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org](mailto:adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org) with: your name, the number of persons receiving, and your telephone number. Also, please let us know if you need Gluten-free Hosts. Please **Do Not Hesitate** to ask for Communion to be brought to you. We are eager to share the blessing of the Sacrament!

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### Interested in Serving as Altar Guild Members?

With the resumption of in-person services and the possibility of two inside services again each Sunday, the Altar Guild needs your help. We are looking for individuals who can help with either the 8:00 am or the 10:15 am services or both. Training is provided and the time commitment is reasonable and fulfilling. It’s interesting to learn about the various items used, their function and names, and how it all comes together! Contact Elena Gimpel: [lonelena@msn.com](mailto:lonelena@msn.com) for more information.\*\*\*\*\*



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## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Help Wanted:

**Volunteers** to transport recyclables monthly to the recycling center next to Ralph's on 79S and Butterfield Stage Rd., Temecula.

**Volunteer** for 8 hours per month to help with photocopying, folding, and mailing newsletters.

\*Please contact Mother Julie if interested in volunteering for either of these positions:  
310-625-9377.\*

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### Prayer Meetings/Bible Studies



\*With changing CoVid restrictions, watch for notices regarding hybrid In-person/Zoom meetings. For Zoom access, use the same Sunday worship link and passcode.

Meeting ID: 809 865 440, or participate by Phone +1 669 900 9128. Password: 469008.

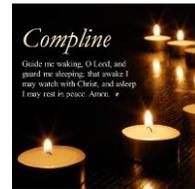
**\*\*“Hear the Word of God” Bible Study Group with Lani-Karyn Jones:**

**Tuesdays, from 2:00-2:30 p.m.**

Lani introduces, then reads passages of the Bible. This is a time to immerse yourself in the beloved Word to let it wash over you and carry you into a deeper relationship with God and the human family. We are moving through the Epistles of the New Testament.

**\*Bible Study: Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m.** We are looking at the upcoming Service Lessons.

**\*Compline is at 8:00, Nightly.** Compline is a wonderful way to end the day with time in God's word, with wonderful friends.



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**Pledge Payments** can be made through the mail or electronically via the “Give/Pledge Online” button on the Saint Thomas website: [www.episcopalchurchtemecula.org](http://www.episcopalchurchtemecula.org). Thank you so much for keeping your pledge current.



### **Flower and Candle Dedications for Spring**



To make a dedication, please send a note to the church or email [adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org](mailto:adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org) with the dedication details and your name. The suggested donation for Sunday Flowers, \$35; for a Sanctuary Candle, \$5. Donations can be sent to the church, with “Flowers” or “Candle” written in the “Memo/Subject” line.

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### **Notice About Locks and Keys for Church Building:**

The old locks in the building have been rekeyed, so if you need new keys, please send an email to: [adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org](mailto:adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org) letting us know which key(s) you have and the kind of access you need, and we'll switch out the keys for you.

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**MoST (Men of Saint Thomas)** will meet Saturday, May 8, at 8:00 a.m. at the Church. Protocols will be in place; more details about our agenda will be sent out via email.

## April/May Preschool Events



**During April** we were very busy! The Pre-K class won Coin Wars and had an Ice Cream Party to celebrate!!! We took care of our caterpillars and at the end we released 13 butterflies!!! From the money earned during our book fair we purchased some new outside toys! Lots of construction and imagination going on!!!



**In May:** We will be celebrating Teacher Appreciation Day on Monday, May 3, and on Friday, May 7, we will have Muffins, Coffee, and Juice set up in the morning for families to enjoy together.





**“Love in Action” Outreach Events & Projects**

Thank you to our **Weed Whackers** group for coming to the rescue!  
(John L., Kathy W., John F., Virginia P., Joel P., Allan O.  
Not pictured: Tess C. and Tom R.).

**Join us for Dr. Love’s Foundation Fundraiser for Breast Cancer Research**

As Mother Julie explained, she is getting a team together (“Love in Action”) to support and participate in this fundraiser, which will take place on Saturday, May 15. You may make a monetary donation, register and exercise on your own for thirty minutes, or join the team to go hiking for this cause. Please register at [drsusanlovefoundation.org](http://drsusanlovefoundation.org) or contact Rev. Julie Bryant to join her and to receive more information: 310-625-9377.

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**Looking Back on the Last Year of the Pandemic  
by Dr. Deb Mitchell, Stephen Ministry Leader\***

Scientists are using huge datasets to track the impact that the pandemic has had on people’s mental health. Although they don’t have a clear picture as yet, the overall impressions seem to be rather bleak. According to a December 2020 survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, 42% of people in our country reported symptoms of anxiety or depression that month, a huge increase from the 11% recorded in 2019.

Interestingly, the pandemic seems to have affected older adults’ mental health less severely than that of younger adults, and white older adults fared better than historically marginalized groups. However, many adults acknowledged an increasing lack of concentration and energy, difficulty sleeping and less restorative sleep, and unhealthy eating habits. (I can certainly relate to the latter...a hot fudge Sunday with bananas for dinner? It was delicious.) Researchers have expressed concerns that these effects may linger after we come out of the pandemic. “I don’t think we are going back to baseline anytime soon,” stated Harvard clinical psychologist Luana Marques in *Nature*, a highly respected research journal. (February 3, 2021).

A number of reasons were cited for an increase in anxiety and depression: fear for one’s health, health of a loved one, loss of income, loss of a loved one, being alone, having too many parental responsibilities and concern about encountering those who resisted PPEs and stay-at-home orders. Those who live alone and did not have access to support from family and friends found themselves becoming increasingly isolated. Some people stated they retreated into themselves reaching out less and less to friends and becoming used to living alone. Some who began the pandemic planning to complete projects, read books and use the time wisely became less motivated as time went on.

Those working at home found unique challenges: while one can become “empowered,” it is easy to extend the work day blurring the boundaries between home life and work life. Parents with children on virtual school became overwhelmed with work assignments, domestic tasks and helping with schoolwork.

Many said the changes to their mental health came in “waves” or “cycles.” Therefore, the emerging, overall narrative is likely to be multifaceted. Research has also documented what is called “post-traumatic growth.” Some 88% of people believe certain positives emerged during the pandemic. The requirement of PPEs, social distancing and staying home was a positive change allowing families to have more quality time. Daily worries like getting places on time and rushed meals turned to relaxing walks around the neighborhood and playing games with family after dinner. Around 48% of people found a renewed appreciation for family. Additionally, 22% said having their lives “forcibly” slowed down made them reconsider what is important in life and reflect on their personal values.

However, the pandemic reality is much like the stages of grief that rarely occur in a neat order. A clear upward or downward trend in mental wellness throughout this past year is difficult to trace. We now wonder what the re-opening of California on June 15 will bring: a fourth surge, tourists from states who still have an uptick in cases, or will all be well?

I do not have a degree in psychology, but as I always say, I have taken just enough post-doctoral courses in psychology to be dangerous. Some suggestions for traversing the pandemic landscape follow. In general, divide domestic tasks among family members. Provide each family member with their own work space when possible. Set boundaries with family, i.e. as parents, establish convenient times to assist your children with homework. Prioritize your mind-set and well-being at the beginning of the day. Take scheduled breaks during the day and be kind and patient with yourself and those around you. Eat regularly and stick to a healthy diet (My sundae touched on at least two food groups!). Divide domestic duties among family members. Exercise. Walk. At the end of the day, get out of your “work mindset” by setting an alarm on your phone/computer to mark the end of the work day. **Read your Bible and pray!**

To cope with loneliness, engage in some type of physical activity, establish daily routines and stick to them, engage in activities that provide a sense of achievement (work in your yard, paint that room you’ve been wanting to redecorate, learn something new: knitting, sewing, quilting, enroll in an online class offered by groups such as “Road Scholars” or “The Great Courses;” many universities have free courses for adults.) Museums provide virtual tours. **Read your Bible. Pray!** Lani Jones has a weekly Bible reading on Tuesday via Zoom. Check our church website for service schedules and Compline. Most important, keep in touch with your friends and family through regular Zoom or Facetime calls...or just on your cell. And practice empathy! Now is the time to explore the full potential of digital technologies.

I’m sure all of us have experienced one or more of these mental states; I certainly have. Our anxieties and fears should be acknowledged and validated by those we love. They often are experiencing the same feelings! This is not the time to be stoic. Practice simple relaxation techniques, listen to music, do breathing exercises and meditation. **Read your Bible! Pray!**

You will still have days when you want to stay in your jammies...I know I do and I feel guilty! Why? Because I suddenly have all this time to do something worthwhile and I believe I am wasting it! Not true, unless this behavior continues for more than two weeks and then you should contact your doctor. We will continue to live this roller coaster life for a while. Let’s PRAY that when California opens on June 15, we won’t see a surge again in Covid cases. While Dr. Fauci supports getting kids back to school, he recently announced on national T.V. that we are currently experiencing an uptick in school children contracting Covid-19 possibly because so many adults have now been vaccinated. Kids 10-19 years old can spread the virus as well as adults; however, classrooms do not appear to be the culprit. Apparently, students engaged in sports are. Take it slow, continue to be cautious and look forward to the day church will be open to 100% of our members. Worshipping again with our entire church family can’t come too soon! God Bless everyone! Stay healthy and safe!

\*Remember your Stephen Ministry Team is available to you anytime as well as Mother Julie and Father David. You can contact me via email if you would like to speak with a Stephen Minister: [dhmitchell17@verizon.net](mailto:dhmitchell17@verizon.net) (Jo Ann Dreyfus, Suzie Grindle, Lani Jones, Elena Gimpel).

## Health Update by Dr. Ed Rather

Welcome to the merry month of May. This month, just a few tidbits for us all:

1) We have all most likely heard of **GERD** (Gastro Esophageal Reflux Disorder). Other than the classic PPI (proton pump inhibitors, which stop acid production in the stomach), medications which should be taken thirty minutes before breakfast or dinner, there are several sensible lifestyle things we can do to avoid this nasty reflux problem. These include **eating a diet** rich

in fiber—whole grains, vegetables, and fruit, **maintaining** a healthy body weight, **not** smoking, **exercising** at least five days per week, and **drinking no more** than two cups total of coffee, tea or soda...and of course, drinking alcohol in moderation.

2) **Nitrate rich vegetables** have long been known to benefit your body in general due to vitamins and other nutrients. Also, it has been proven over the years that these nitrate rich veggies such as lettuce, spinach, kale (ugh for me), beets and the like help us in other ways which assist in developing muscle strength... and this is in addition to physical activity!

3) **Sun Protection** is vital to all of us so as not to overdo exposure to UVA or UVB, which can lead to skin cancer. I hope we all know this by now, and I can't help but reemphasize it each year. A protective factor of SPF 30 is about right for lighter skin types and an SPF 15 is good for darker skin. As our natural skin color increases, we still need protection, so do not think you are immune to sun damage just because you don't burn. Always apply before going out. Do Not wait until you are by the pool or at the beach before applying.

4) The **other side of the sun exposure coin** is also important as we all do need some sunlight exposure to help generate Vitamin D production. Vitamin D is a fat- soluble substance and is actually a hormone necessary for calcium regulation and general bone health. This keeps us from developing osteoporosis (thinning of the bones) and osteomalacia (softening of the bones, caused by severe vitamin D deficiency). A total of approximately 20 to 30 minutes of sun per week is enough to do the job. Foods such as salmon, tuna, cod liver oil and eggs have natural Vitamin D. Also, milk and cereals are often fortified with Vitamin D. We do need this.

5) As we in the U.S. are now approaching **600,000 deaths from Covid-19**, please believe that the Science is right and get your vaccination as soon as you can. The side effects are truly minimal, so get the vaccine and just be ready to report anything odd if you are the one in a million. Once we get eighty percent of the country vaccinated at least, we should be approaching that level which can give us "herd" immunity. Do your part to protect everyone else. One other noteworthy sad fact is that almost **four thousand** of our health care workers have died while taking care of those sickened by this awful disease. Bless them all.

Once again, take care and see you next month... and maybe physically in church as well!

Your friendly but retired Dermatologist, Ed

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### Congratulations to Russell Higgins, New Bishop's Warden!

Dear St. Thomas of Canterbury,

I have been asked to share some information about myself to the congregation. Below is a little about my family, work experience and religious background.

I am happily married to Karen, who I met while in high school in Connecticut 34 years ago. We have three kids: Thomas (28 and lives in CT), Michael (26 and attends CBU) and Sarah (19 and attends NAU).

I have a unique professional background where I have worked for a Fortune 500 company and very small family owned companies. Currently, I am a Chief Financial Officer for a publicly traded company. I have an MBA from RPI (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) and an MSAT (Master of Science in Accounting & Taxation) from the University of Hartford.



I have joined a motorcycle ministry called Black Sheep Harley Davidson for Christ, which focuses on ministering to the Harley Davidson Owners Group out of the Temecula HD dealership.

My parents are very religious and the Episcopal Church has been a part of my life since I was born. I have always believed that your life has to have peace, balance, GOD and family. I realized last year I needed more balance in my life and decided to run for the Bishop's Committee in 2019. Once I joined the Bishop's Committee and the Junior Warden's position was open and had a finance focus, I realized I need to step up and use my experience to help the Church. I believe all things happen for a reason and I am where I need to be.

St. Thomas of Canterbury has become home to me. This church and the congregation has a lot to offer and is extremely friendly. I am proud to say that I am a member and look forward to being a part of it for a long time.

While I know St. Thomas is in a transitional period, I look at it as a great time to help define who we are and what we want to be. Having served on a vestry in the past, I understand that serving on the Bishop's Committee is a privilege and am honored to commit myself to serving.

I look forward to working with the Bishop's Committee, Finance Committee, and the rest of the Congregation.

GOD Bless,  
Russell Higgins

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### HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

On [this] Mother's Day, we give thanks to God for the divine gift of motherhood  
in all its diverse forms.

Let us pray for all the mothers among us today;  
for our own mothers, those living and those who have passed away;  
for the mothers who loved us and for those who fell short of loving us fully;  
for all who hope to be mothers someday  
and for those whose hope to have children has been frustrated;  
for all mothers who have lost children;  
for all women and men who have been our substitute mothers  
and we who have done so for those in need;  
and for the earth that bore us and provides us sustenance.

We pray this all in the name of God, our great and loving Mother. Amen.

(by the Rev. Leslie Nipps from the Episcopal prayer book, *Women's Uncommon Prayers*  
[Morehouse Publishing, 2000], p. 364)



