



# THE VOICE

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## The Warden's Corner

Life lessons can occur at any time, but I find that I learn things easier and faster while traveling.

My kids have heard the stories of these lessons and the guiding principles gained many times. There's the story of my 20th birthday, experienced while I was in Paris for the first time as a wide-eyed, hopeful student. That's when I learned that if you are carrying a heavy duffel bag for hours as you walk across the city to your hostel, and it is raining and cold, and your friends don't remember that it's your birthday...you can be cold, tired and miserable...even in Paris! So, the lesson is—wherever you go, there YOU are. You're still you and the rules of biology and personality and everything else still apply, even in the most romantic, magical city in the world.

There's the story about getting on the wrong train and ending up in Naples instead of Brindisi, Italy. I mistakenly guided my friends to the wrong train and we arrived on the wrong side of Italy. I messed up our entire, carefully planned travel schedule. I was mortified and upset, ready to hitchhike across Italy to get us back on track. My friends said "no!" to that idea and we stayed for a couple of amazing days in Naples and Pompeii exploring pizza and ancient ruins. That's where I learned that you can change your plans. Flexibility and revising are really awesome!

The story about saying "yes" to opportunities comes from our time in Singapore. Rich and I went to a touristy circus-sort of show in Bintan, Indonesia. We were part of a sparse crowd, sitting in bleachers, watching the show when the Master of Ceremonies brought out an elephant and asked for a volunteer. We were all hot, tired, and not sure what the volunteer might do. No one raised their hands and the Master looked a little nervous and disappointed. I cautiously raised my hand. He motioned me to the sandy stage and I became part of the elephant show. I was so nervous, but it was magical and fun—an elephant's trunk gracefully placed a lei around my neck and then walked over me as I lay like a log on the ground! Lesson learned: Say yes!

The recent pilgrimage to France was no different—there were many important lessons to be learned. I'm sure I will someday tell this story to my grandchildren. While we were in Nantes, staying with the people who came to visit St E's in 2018, there were so many times when I was struggling to understand all the words, struggling to respond with something meaningful using the correct conjugations and tenses, worrying about how the kids were doing...just struggling. My French is rusty and my attention was scattered between the words, the kids, translating--it was a lot! In the swirl of the struggle, I thought about our Pride Sunday service and I was able to "hear what the Spirit" was saying to me. I thought about awe and wonder, about letting God love me as Bishop Gene Robinson recommended, and about hearing differently—listening to the tones, the meaning underneath the words, the intentions. There was so much kindness, so much caring and thoughtfulness and lots of efforts to explain. I relaxed, I felt so peaceful and supported. We were all in really good hands, no need to struggle. Lesson learned: Relax and let God love you.

While travel seems to offer opportunities to learn important lessons, the real value is in living those lessons and using them to enhance my life back at home. Here at home, the lesson about “wherever you go, there you are” helps me remember the importance of attending to concrete needs—people need to eat every day, we need coats and umbrellas, we need rest breaks, we need community and friendship and celebrations. It helps me pay attention to those things and offer friendship, hospitality, nourishment and support.

The lesson about changing plans helps me to remember to be open and flexible, and focus on what really matters. The goal on the trip was to visit Italy, to explore and travel with my friends. It wasn't about dates and schedules. When I'm flexible and aware of the true goal, I can shift and revise and change the plans so they work for our benefit.

“Say yes” helps me to do just that—say yes to opportunities, yes to showing up, yes to engaging and participating. That's one of my favorite lessons and it helps motivate me to participate even when I feel tired, or uncertain, or nervous.

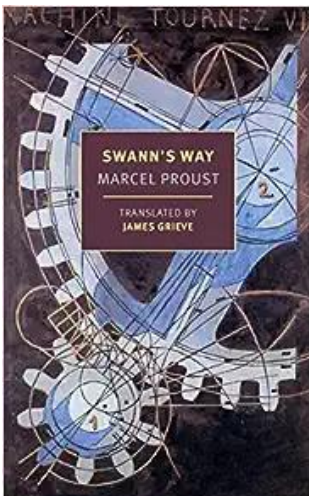
The lesson from Nantes, relax and let God love you, is so special to me. Living this lesson in my life back home reminds me of the eucharist and the consistent message that there are “gifts of God for the people of God.” There are gifts that are freely given and available to all. That we are warmly invited to come, to partake, to be renewed. To seek out opportunities to appreciate the gifts, to appreciate each other.

The lesson of relax and feel loved, let God love you is a little harder to live. It's hard to relax into the swirl of life, the uncertainty, my limitations, all the imperfections. It's easy to focus on doing, and of course we all are called to serve. St E's is a beautiful example of shiny spirits who serve. But we are also called to receive, to enjoy each other's company, and trees, rivers, books, sermons, raspberries, hugs, music, dance, poetry...all of life, all the gifts. When I notice the swirl, the struggle and I remember that I'm not alone...when I tell myself, “relax and let God love you,” I can breathe deeply. I can respond and connect with the people around me, I can feel the gratitude bubbling up, I am peaceful, I am loved. I'm so grateful for this community of adventurous spirits, seekers and friends who join me in remembering to receive and celebrate God's gifts!

Robin Lake, *Warden*

## St. E's Book Group

What Role Does Memory Play in Defining Ourselves?



The St. E's Book Group will reconvene in the parish Guild Room at **noon on Tuesday, September 12** to discuss Marcel Proust's novel *Swan's Way*. In this book, one of seven in his series *In Search of Lost Time*. Proust explores what he considers to be important sources of identity and pursues themes of romantic love, integrity, truth and knowledge. Bring a brown bag lunch and join the conversation. The discussion follows the Great Books' Foundation's method of shared inquiry and focuses on your interpretation of the text. There are no right or wrong answers just lively discussion. Questions? Email Joyce Newcomb at [JoyceRNewcomb@gmail.com](mailto:JoyceRNewcomb@gmail.com)

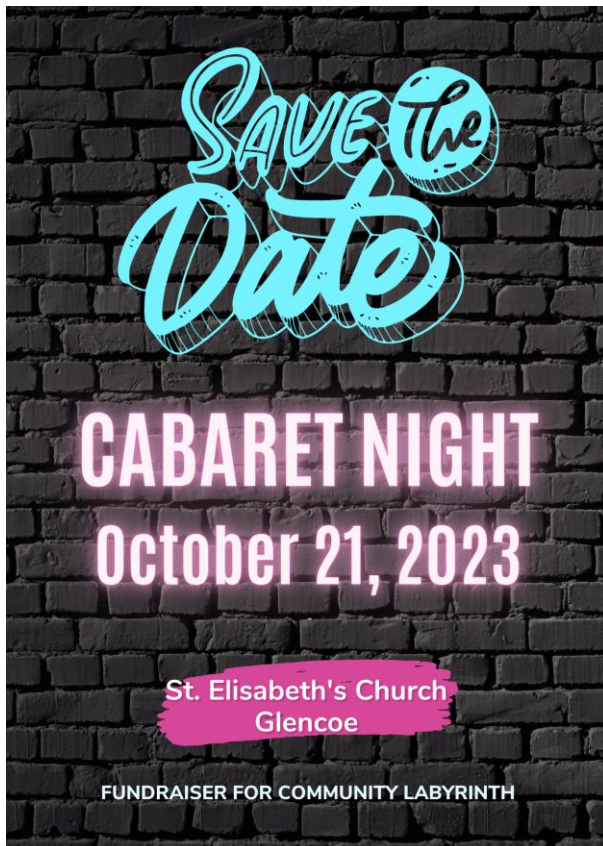
## Bible Study at St. Elisabeth's

For most of the past year I have been crashing Trinity Highland Park's Thursday morning Bible study. Each week we prepare by reading the Bible verses from the lectionary for the upcoming Sunday service. Father Bryan Cones, Trinity's rector, has participated in the discussions every week I've attended, but different participants lead the discussion each week. I have loved talking about the week's readings with the Trinity parishioners and have learned a lot from their insights and our exchanges.

Along the way, Bryan commented that, of course, it's also great to go through the Bible a book at a time too, in order to understand the broader meaning and structure of the Bible. I thought to myself that I would like to do that sort of Bible study and that I would love to do it with my fellow St. Elisabeth's parishioners. Bible study and discussion is a wonderful way of getting to know people. I've enjoyed that process with my Trinity friends, and I'd love to share it with my friends at St. Elisabeth's. I asked Father Adam if he would be willing to participate in such a group, and he agreed.

The plan is that we will start with the books of Genesis and Exodus, and then see where we go from there. Adam suggests a study Bible would be useful as a reference and personally recommends either the Harper Collins Study Bible or the New Oxford Annotated Bible - though any Bible will work. **We will meet weekly in person, Fridays at 11 am**, with our first meeting on **Friday, September 15**. I encourage you to join us if you can, and perhaps others from our Better Together partner parishes will crash *our* sessions as well.

-Mark Tilton



### Save the Dates:

Chili Cook-Off and Trivia Night - **Saturday, September 23** at 6:00 PM at St. Lawrence, Libertyville

Forum: "Symbolism in Our Church Architecture", **Sunday October 8** after the 10:00 AM service

## Music to Build Community

In 1999, Daniel Barenboim (formerly of the Chicago Symphony) set out to prove the power of music by forming the West-Eastern Divan orchestra. The project united musicians from both Israel and Palestine in an effort to demonstrate music's ability to build community in a place where all diplomacy and politics had failed. The orchestra was an unprecedented success, and over twenty years later still stands as a testament to the power of music to create connections and build community.

This community-building power is founded on a deep tie between music and humanity. Music is deeply engrained in our biology--seemingly programmed into our DNA--and it has a profound effect on how we experience the world around us. It is an intrinsic and universal language that allows us to communicate more effectively and to understand each other more deeply, and so to develop deeper connections with our community.

Through group music, we enter a community built on comradery and collaboration that helps us to learn trust, empathy, patience, and understanding for ourselves and our neighbors. Studies show again and again that, through this work, individuals develop a deep sense of connection with their peers and a feeling of belonging within the community--and the positive effects ripple out! Regular participation in communal singing has been shown to extend average life expectancies by up to ten years. Participants are shown to be less susceptible to respiratory illness and neurological conditions. They demonstrate healthier heart rates and blood pressure. They build better posture and body usage habits. They find greater confidence and develop better coping skills for stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. The benefits are endless!

Music further helps develop community and belonging through its ability to define a sense of group culture and identity--perhaps nowhere more than in faith traditions. Since the start of recorded history, music has had a central place in religious life as a unifying act of prayer and praise and worship. From the Israelites' song praising God's victory at the Red Sea, to David composing and chanting the psalms, to Paul and Silas comforting the imprisoned believers with prayer songs, to the chanting and singing of the mass, to the congregational singing of hymns; music has been a constant pillar in our expression of faith and community. Music has also served an important function in defining, maintaining, and passing on our faith and traditions: it has been used throughout history to assist in the memorization and preservation of scripture and sacred texts, to pass forward traditions and values, and it was Martin Luther who introduced hymns as a means of teaching theology to his congregations.

We continue to draw on these traditions of community building every week in our own church music. We unite as a community whenever we join to sing our hymns, psalms, and service music. Through the exploration of diverse hymns and anthems, we learn more about the history, traditions, and theology of our faith. Through the choir, we build community through weekly gatherings and collaborative efforts towards a common purpose of elevating our worship. Music continues to draw us together in communal expressions of faith, while helping to define and celebrate our identity as a community.

I always like to end with a call to action, so I'll close with this invitation: look for the ways music gathers us into community and common purpose, and fully step into it. Silently meditate through the prelude and the postlude and allow the music to draw you into a spirit of reverent reflection. Sing strongly and confidently through the congregational music, feeling the voices of the congregation joining in unison with yours. Attend a choir rehearsal and begin developing your own musical skills while connecting with others who find community through music. Participate however you feel comfortable, and when you do I guarantee you will find an even more meaningful worship experience that will draw you into deeper connection with your

church community. And as always, if you have any questions or thoughts, or are looking for ways to deepen your participation in the community through music – feel free to find me on Sunday or send me a note; I'd love to chat with you!

Sincerely,  
Walter Aldrich

## Pet Blessing



On the first weekend of October each year, we celebrate the life of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. We invite you to bring your pet companions with you to our 10:00 AM Outdoor Choral Eucharist Rite II on **October 1** to be blessed during the service. We hope you'll join in this special service of blessing with your pet companions.

## Blessing of the Backpacks and Back to School Picnic

Bring your backpacks and briefcases to the 10:00 AM service to be blessed for the new school year. Following the service, we will have a picnic on the lawn. You are invited to bring a dish to share. Please call Carrie Miller Mygatt [202-714-7741] for more information.



## A radical welcome: Nine St. Elisabeth's pilgrims in Nantes, France

When we, nine pilgrims from St. Elisabeth's, arrived at church in Nantes, France, on Sunday, July 9, the first thing Father Jean-Yves did was to ask two of our youths to do the day's Bible readings, in French, of course. Abigail and Claire were perhaps caught off guard by the request but acquitted themselves just fine. By grabbing our kids and pushing them to the center of the service, Father Jean-Yves communicated that we were part of his faith community. It was as though he had handed us the keys to the church the minute we showed up. The following week Claire and Robin were again given a central place in the service.

Our group traveled to Nantes, France to visit the parishioners of Trinité de l'Éraudière. Twelve people from that parish had visited us in 2018, and we felt privileged to take our Nantes friends up on their invitation to visit them in return. We were a young group: three parents and six youths, ages 12 to 18. We stayed with families in Nantes for nine days, some of us splitting the time half and half between two families. Our hosts showered us with care and affection, organized lovely receptions, picnics, and dinners, and took us all around their beautiful city and the nearby region of eastern (or "upper") Brittany.

One part of our pilgrimage was to attend church with our friends and to visit the ancient monastery of Mont St. Michel. But perhaps the more important aspect of our pilgrimage was being embraced in a “radical welcome” by a wonderful Christian community. My daughters were both sick at different times while we were in Nantes. Thérèse, Anne, Maggie, and Marisol contributed lots of love, advice, comfort food and a doctor’s visit to help me take good care of them.

We learned something of what it is to live in France among a community that lives out Christian caring for each other and their community. Abigail, Nina, and I stayed with Maggie and Daniel Chauvet for several days and learned about Maggie’s work with Roma people (previously called Gypsies). Maggie and Daniel were driving us toward Dinan, a gorgeous town in northeastern Brittany, and we passed a large number of RVs. I commented that people seemed to really like to go camping in that area, and Maggie gently corrected me and said that it was a community of Roma people, and that she had enjoyed getting to know the Roma people she worked with and appreciated their culture. Maggie and Daniel introduced us to an elegant restaurant in Nantes called Reflet, where most of the staff have Down syndrome. We had a wonderful meal there, and it was moving to see how committed people had created a restaurant where people with a disability had the support to be able to do meaningful and valued work.

We experienced the pride our hosts had in their city and their region. Nantes is the historic capital of Brittany, the traditionally Celtic-speaking northwestern region of France. When Abigail, Nina and I stayed with Thérèse and Gérard Soulard, we were charmed to learn that Gérard insists on always having crêpes for breakfast, crêpes being traditional for Brittany. We savored some of the flair that makes life in France enjoyable. For instance, in many ways, their church picnics, lunches and receptions were recognizably like ours, but place settings were more formal. Church lunches included wine and a cheese course. I am a new convert to cheese courses. What a pleasantly indulgent way to dress up a meal.

We were able to worship with two different congregations during our stay. I was impressed that both services were well attended and included lots of children. The service music was accessible, and people sang out. I was interested to learn from Father Jean-Yves about the tensions and conflicts within the Roman Catholic church in France. Large parts of the French Catholic church are more liberal than I expected, but as in the US there are differences between left and right.

A wonderful part of the trip was the opportunity to get better acquainted with our fellow pilgrims, Carrie, Brody, Robin, Claire, Anna, and Nate. If you ever want to organize a pilgrimage, I recommend setting it up to be two-thirds teenagers. You are guaranteed to inject life and fun into your group. Father Jean-Yves thanked us for bringing our “jeunesse,” our “youth and youthfulness,” with us. For my daughters, Nina and Abigail, there was much that was new for them being in France and staying with our wonderful host families. When we had to say goodbye, there were tears on both sides. At our farewell dinner, Robin presented our hosts with a beautiful Pride flag and gave a heartfelt tribute to their generosity and devotion to us. Abigail and Nina talk frequently about how much they learned (“almost everything we ate was something we’d never had before”) and how kind and loving our hosts were. I’m sure none of us will ever forget the radical welcome by our friends in Nantes.

Mark Tilton

## Christianity 101: Exploring Faith for Grownups

On one Saturday a month beginning in October 2023 our Better Together partner churches will gather from 4:30 to 6:00 PM for "Christianity 101," a conversation covering the broad topics of Christian faith and the particular Episcopal "slant" on that tradition. All are welcome to join and bring your questions. Our conversation lasts until 5:30 p.m., after which we join our confirmation candidates and their sponsors for dinner supplied by the host church.

**Saturday, October 21:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at St. Lawrence's (125 W Church Street, Libertyville)

*Topic: Spiritual Autobiographies:* What brings you to church? And what has been your journey so far in faith? This first session will be a conversation about what draws to explore faith, and particularly Christian faith.

**Saturday, November 11:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at St. Elisabeth's (556 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe)

*Topic: The Bible:* The Jewish and Christian scriptures are a primary place Christians go looking to encounter God or to learn more about God. And even though it comes in one "book," there is a lot of different kinds of writing in there. This session will provide an overview to this library of faith and suggest some ways to use it.

**Saturday, December 2:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at Trinity (425 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park)

*Topic: Eucharist:* The most common way many Christians pray on Sunday, including Episcopalians, is called Eucharist, the meal that remembers Jesus' hospitality and his death, and transforms those who celebrate it into his presence in the world. This session will explore what we do in this celebration--and how it transforms us.

**Saturday, January 20:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at St. Gregory's

*Topic: Baptism:* "Christians" get that name by being baptized with water, usually surrounded by other Christians. This session will explore the symbols and stories of baptism, and how they shape our understanding of who we are as members of Christ's body.

**Saturday, February 24:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at St. Elisabeth's

*Topic: Church History:* Christianity has been around for a long time, and it has appeared in diverse forms: great cathedrals, desert monasteries, experimental communes, and local parishes. This session will explore Christianity's "back story" and what we might learn from it to live as Christians today.

**Saturday, March 16:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at St. Elisabeth's

*Topic: The Episcopal Church:* The Episcopal Church is the child of a particular moment in Christian history: the creation of the Church of England during the Reformation. The Episcopal Church was shaped also by the American Revolution, and the way we practice Christian faith is shaped by our country's history, for better and for worse. This session will explore the particular take on Christianity of the Episcopal Church and its "middle way" between history and the needs of today.

**Saturday, April 20:** 4:30 to 6:00 PM at Trinity

*Topic: Prayer:* Prayer is a word to describe how we encounter God, both together on Sunday or at other times, with our families, or alone outdoors or in our room. This session will explore different practices that help connect a person to God and deepen that relationship.

## Saint Elisabeth's Calendar

### *Regular Weekly Schedule*

#### **Sundays**

8:00 AM – Spoken Eucharist Rite I

10:00 AM – Choral Eucharist Rite II

#### **Mondays**

7:15 PM – Boy Scout Troop #28

8:00 PM – AA Group

#### **Thursdays**

7:30 AM – Spoken Eucharist Rite II

#### **Saturdays**

5:00 PM – AA Group

### *Special Events*

#### **Tuesday, September 12**

12:00 Noon St. E's Book Group

7:15 PM Vestry Meeting

#### **Wednesday, September 13**

7:30 pm Narcan Training at St. G's

#### **Thursday, September 14**

Soup Kitchen

#### **Sunday, September 17**

10:00 am Outdoor Worship

#### **Friday, September 22**

6:00 pm Chili Cookoff and Trivia Night

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