

Reverendly Speaking

In him you also...were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Dear People of St. Andrew's,

As we begin 2020, remember that God has a purpose or plan for each of us, which, if we sign off on, is accomplished in Christ, and God is already ushering us into a wonderful future. Or, as someone else has put it, the difference between Christianity and religion is in how they are spelled. Religion is spelled "do" — do this, do that, do, do, do. Christianity is spelled "done." Christ has already done everything needed.

When one believes in Christ, one is "marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit" which "is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people." The experience of faith we have now, given by the presence of the Holy Spirit, Paul says, is the earnest money, the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us.

Have you ever thought of your life in Christ now as a "first installment"? The highest experience of peace and joy in Christ that can be known in this world is only a small taste of what we will experience someday. It's like getting a sample of Moose Tracks ice cream which you eat with a teeny plastic spoon. If you love it, you can get three scoops in a bowl and eat it with a big spoon.

Paul is saying that someday we're going to be eating with big spoons, and that the bill for this has already been paid. Faith, he argues, is often about believing beyond what logic tells us. Sometimes we run into someone who was jolted awake with a taste of eternal life. But it was a short stay, and the individual returned to tell about it.

One such person is Dr. Eben Alexander, a Harvard-trained neurobiologist with credentials as a scientist and researcher. Until he fell into a coma from which his colleagues thought he'd never return, he was also a religious skeptic. What happened to Alexander during that coma changed everything for him, however, turning him into a believer about heaven.

On November 10, 2008, Alexander woke up with a splitting headache that quickly devolved into seizures. He was rushed to the hospital where he worked, and his medical colleagues soon concluded that E. coli had attacked his brain in a rare form of bacterial meningitis. He soon fell into a coma, and his colleagues gave him a near-zero chance of survival. They further said that even if he did survive, he'd be a brain-damaged shell of his former self. For seven days, Alexander remained comatose. Then, while his doctors considered discontinuing treatment, he woke up. He went on to make a full recovery, something his colleagues said was an impossible medical miracle.

In his near-brain-dead state, Alexander found himself in a place of beauty, peace and unconditional love. As he later explained, as a medical doctor, he was well aware of patients who'd had near-death experiences (NDE), but he said that the real difference between their experiences and his own was that his brain was, "essentially, deader than theirs."

"Most near-death experiences," wrote Alexander in *Newsweek*, "are the result of momentary cardiac arrest. The heart stops pumping blood to the brain, and the brain, deprived of oxygen, ceases being able to support consciousness." But that — as Alexander said he'd have been the first to point out before his own experience — doesn't mean the brain is truly dead. He went on to say that many doctors feel that the term "neardeath experience" is "essentially a misnomer. Most people who had them were in bad shape, but they weren't really near death."

Alexander, however, was really near death. "My synapses — the spaces between the neurons of the brain that support the electrochemical activity that makes the brain function — were not simply compromised during my experience. They were stopped," he said. "Only isolated pockets of deep cortical neurons were still sputtering, but no broad networks capable of generating anything like what we call 'consciousness."

The doctors caring for Alexander have told him that according to all the brain tests they performed during his coma, "there was no way that any of the functions including vision, hearing, emotion, memory, language or logic could possibly have been intact," Alexander said. "That's why, just as I now no longer doubt the existence of the world of expanded consciousness that NDE subjects, mystics, meditators and countless other people have described for centuries, I also feel that my experience adds something new to those stories. It supplies a definitive new form of evidence that consciousness can exist beyond the body."

Eventually, Alexander wrote about all of this in his 2012 book, *Proof of Heaven*, which quickly rose to the top of *The New York Times* Best Sellers list for nonfiction after only four weeks of publication, and remained there for 97 weeks. It's his story not only of his medical miracle, but of his experience of heaven.

Alexander believes that his vision of heaven could not have happened within his physical brain. In his book, he covers the nine leading scientific explanations that he and numerous colleagues put forth after his coma to account for his afterlife vision — and he scientifically dismisses each one. He remains convinced of the existence of heaven and of a loving, personal God.

But, of course, it's not *proof* in the sense that anyone else can, if they choose, have the same experience. His experience cannot be clinically replicated. And there are critics who maintain that there is — or must be — some scientific explanation for his experience. But Alexander's report of what happened to him remains a piece of evidence that can be considered when talking about eternal life.

And in Ephesians, we have Paul's statement that our life with God in the here and now is a guarantee of a better life to come. That's super exciting. With that in mind, have a very Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ,

John+

The Rev. John Reese

Adult Christian Education

Sunday mornings at 9:30

The New Testament You Never Knew

Do you know the real story behind the New Testament?

We all share a fascination for discovering 'the rest of the story.' We enjoy learning the behind-the-scenes facts about seemingly familiar events. In this eight-session video Bible study, well-known Bible scholars N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird team up to take you on a tour of the story behind the explosive story of the New Testament.

You will discover things you never knew about Jesus' baptism and journey into the wilderness, the meaning behind his parables and miracles, the significance of his death and resurrection, the incredible expansion of the early church into the Greco-Roman world, and how the transforming mission of Jesus can still turn the world upside down today.

Through reading the New Testament we continually discover that God indeed keeps his promises, but those promises don't always look like what people expected. Especially when it comes to Jesus. So, come join the journey with N.T. Wright and Michael Bird and they will help you understand the New Testament you never knew.

Here is the rest of the lineup:

- 1/12 The World of Jesus and the Apostles
- 1/19 The Life and Death of Jesus
- 1/26 The Resurrection of Jesus
- 2/2 The Ministry of the Apostle Paul
- 2/9 The Early Christians and the Church
- 2/16 The Mission of the Church
- 2/23 The Creation of the New Testament

This class, facilitated by the Rector, meets in Room 302 (the Library) on the third floor of the Parish Building.

Thursday morning Bible Study is on hiatus until mid-January when we begin a study of the Book of Daniel. History, prophecy, apocryphal writings, and miracles! All in 12 chapters! Watch this space for details!

This class, facilitated by Alice Prucha, meets in Room 302 (the Library) on the third floor of the Parish Building.

Welcome to Our Youngest Parishioner!

John Campbell Besselieu was born on December 30, 2019.

Jack weighed in at 9 lb, 3 oz, and is 21 inches long. He is at home with his parents, Bill & Allison Besselieu.

All are healthy and doing well.

Congratulations to the Besselieus!





From the Parish Register

<u>Deaths</u> Nell Keen

Thanks to those who have pledged for 2020!

Chris & April Adams Thomas & Elise Akins Patrick & Alison Allman Irene & Peter Baker Mrs. A. Lacy Baldy Mr. & Mrs. Alston Barrow Siegfried & Linda Barry George Bedell Dianna Benjamin **Besselieu Family** Benjamin & Jeannie Borsch Victoria Boswell Edwin & Judith Bourdeau Thomas & Juanita Boyd William & Kathryn Boyd Mr. & Mrs. John H. Boyet Barbara Brotherton Derrick & Beverley Brown Donreece H. Brown Norton & Linda Busby Mr. & Mrs. Julian H. Byrd C. Jane Cantler Steve & Debbie Cantler Dr. & Mrs. Christopher Capsambelis Charles Caro J. Frazier Carraway & Claire B. Carraway Betsy & Steve Chambers Charlotte Churchill Dennis Clarke & Sandra Robinson James E. Key Holly Clemmons & Katie Pastorius Chris & Martha Cobb Jane Collins Jeff Coleman Sharon Colucci Gary Cotter Christopher J. Cowell Donald & Summer Crawford Mark Crofoot William & Ann Crowder Piers & Pamela Curry William P. Curtis Wayne A. Daley Robin DeLavernge Michael & Mary Beth Dickinson A.G. Divers Wallace A. Dixon Ed & Lynn Dormann Dennis & Melinda Dundore Doug Dusini & Rachel May

Dr. James & Sunny Endicott David Epp, Esq. Roderick & Lucinda Evans Susanna Fenhagen & Tony Morrison Richard Ferlita & James Carmichael Carole R. Fields Pat Frank Allen O. Getz Mr. & Mrs. William A. Gillen Jr. Bradley & Alicia Hall Laurence & Nekeshia Hammond Catherine Hammer Wynnette & Hiram Hampton Eric & Loueita Hargens Mary Beth Harris Mary & Carlton N. Hart, III Vernon & Charlotte Henderson Paul Henley & Joanne Byars Staige & Tricia Hoffman **Bill Hudson** Christopher J. Hunt Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hursey Brucie H. Johnston T. Michael & Jana D. Kaney Margo & Larry Kemm Larry & Judy Kent Fran Kerr Helen T. Kerr Carole T. King Mr. & Mrs. Charles Klug Katherine Lawless **Richard Lawson** George Levy Deloris E. Lewis Adrienne Love Leslie Lowe Mallory Lykes Sue MacIsaac Sheridan & Guy Marr Analee & Matthew Mayes Rosemary S. McAteer Barbara & Robert McGhee Michael & Linda McGhee Donald & Laura McGinnis Martin S. McKinney Luis & Martha Medel Catherine Michelsen Warren L. Miller James M. Moore

James K. Morgan John & Susan Mueller Ingrid Muellerleile Michael & Janet Norona Marsha Otte Anne T. Paige Robert E. Parr **Bill Peterson** Sally Phethean Michael & Tania Phillips Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Putney Anita E. Ramirez Tom & Kay Rankin The Rev. and Mrs. John Reese Barbara Reeves Jennifer & Charlie Richardson Kristi Roberts Nell Rorebeck **Douglas Rubottom** Catherine & L. Gray Sanders Paul & Betsy Scheuer **Phyllis Sheaffer** Jane & Nathan Simpson Donald & Virginia Sink Earl & Jan Smith Gregg & CJ Smith Jennifer Smith Ian Snider Maxwell & Teri Sobel Carol Jean Spoto The Rev. Jerold & Anne Stadel Linda K. Stevens Paula Stewart Kathleen Stoy Catharyn Szuba Matt & Carolyn Tapie Doug & Lori Taplow Keri Thatcher Thomas & Susan Torge Jean N. Turner Georgia & Milton Vahue Russell Versaggi Maureen & Christopher Watson George Western Jack Wheat Erich & Chelsea Wieloszynski John & Pat Wolfe Betty Wood

Make a Pledge for 2020

Please return your pledge card for 2020 as soon as possible. If you did not receive a pledge card in the mail, cards are available at the back of the church, in the Parish Hall, or through the parish office (813-221-2035). Make a commitment and support St. Andrew's in the coming year!

We have currently received 148 pledges for \$402,281.

2020 Pledge Report					
<u>Pledges received</u>	Total Amount Pledged for 2020	Total Amount Pledged for 2019			
148	\$402,281.00	\$406,571.08			
12 New pledges for 2020					
	41 Increased their pledge for 2020				
	18 Decreased their pledge for 2020				
77 Made the same pledge in 2020 as in 2019					
148 Total number of pledges received for 2020					

Annual Parish Meeting Sunday, February 2, 11:45 am

following the 10:30am service to hear Annual Reports and elect 5 new Vestry members



Two Kinds of Virtues

It occurred to me that there were two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral — whether you were kind, brave, honest or faithful. Were you capable of deep love?

We all know that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones. But our culture and our educational systems spend more time teaching the skills and strategies you need for career success than the qualities you need to radiate that sort of inner light. Many of us are clearer on how to build an external career than on how to build inner character.

But if you live for external achievement, years pass and the deepest parts of you go unexplored and unstructured. You lack a moral vocabulary. It is easy to slip into a self-satisfied moral mediocrity. You grade yourself on a forgiving curve. You figure as long as you are not obviously hurting anybody and people seem to like you, you must be O.K. But you live with an unconscious boredom, separated from the deepest meaning of life and the highest moral joys.

-David Brooks, "The moral bucket list," The New York Times, April 11, 2015. nytimes.com.

VESTRY CLASS OF 2023 NOMINEES

Five new vestry members to be elected at Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 2nd

Gary Cotter



Gary was raised in a small town outside New York City and was Presbyterian. He was confirmed in The Episcopal Church at St. John's Tampa in 1997 and has attended St. Andrew's since 2015. He previously served on the vestry as treasurer, but had to resign due to an extended absence from the Tampa Bay area.

He is interested in stewardship and increasing opportunities for spiritual growth at St. Andrew's.

Gary worked as a Certified Financial Planner from 1978 to 2016, when he sold his firm in Sun City Center and retired from practice. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi and earned a master's degree at the State University of New York at Albany.

Gary lives in Fishhawk Ranch with his life partner and best friend Sharon Colucci. He enjoys gourmet cooking, travel and fine wines.

Lynn Dorman



The two most important things that I want to share with you is that I experience joy at having been a lifelong Episcopalian. It is a blessing that I have been ministered to by some of the most wonderful clergy members in our church. The second is that I have and continue to find the most meaning in life from serving others.

I was christened and confirmed in St James Episcopal Church in Baltimore MD and remained a member until I left to join the US Army. Though the military does not offer

Episcopal services regularly at any installation, I made lasting friendships and embarked upon various experiences by finding and attending and serving at our churches within local communities. For example, while teaching at West Point, I served the homeless at the Sunday lunch mission at Church of the Good Shepherd. While living in Atlanta GA, I served as an usher at St Paul's Episcopal Church; and, in Petersburg, VA. I was an active member of the ECW at St Stephen's Episcopal church working with Rev Willis Foster. In Honolulu, HI, I had the joy of being a part of a diverse and multiethnic community at the Cathedral of St. Andrew where I ushered and worked with Rev. Walter Brownridge on the church's strategic plan.

In 1988 I joined the US Army and served for 27 years, retiring as a Colonel. Professionally, I have held key positions, including: Executive Officer to the Director for Human Relations Policy for the US Army; Director of Personnel; Director of Diversity; and Director of Compliance. In my role as Assistant Chief of Staff for US Army Pacific Command, I was responsible for integrating and approving all administrative systems and processes for a strategic level headquarters. Currently, I am working as a Licensed Mental Health Therapist in Tampa, FL.

Additionally, I have enjoyed the mission of women's service and charitable organizations over the years—currently serving as the President of a national women's club's foundation which raises and donates money to underserved minority children who demonstrate talent and interest in the arts.

My educational credentials include a Master of Counseling Psychology degree from Chaminade University of Honolulu, a Master of Education degree with a concentration in Higher Education Leadership and Supervision from Loyola University, and a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Notre Dame University of Maryland.

I would be honored to serve St Andrew's and the greater community.

VESTRY CLASS OF 2023 NOMINEES

Sue MacIsaac



I am Sue Bentschner MacIsaac and I am running for the Vestry. I am a 3rd generation St. Andrew's member, and I am a mother of 2 adult children, Savannah and Michael.

For the past 19 years, I have been the office manager for Left Coast Construction, Inc. Left Coast is a construction company specializing in multi-family housing. It is owned by my brother, Paul Bentschner. My duties vary from handling the general insurance to certificates of insurance, payroll, OSHA, Worker's Comp and Lien Waivers....Very Multi-Tasking.

Growing up in St. Andrew's, I watched my parents serve in almost every aspect. I have A LOT of wonderful memories from Youth Group to singing in the Children's Choir. Now, as an empty nester, my time is now. I have become a member of the Daughters of the King and have started helping with the children. I have a great passion and love for St. Andrew's and I want to see us continue to grow, in all aspects. I will be honored to serve you as a member of the Vestry.

Jim Morgan



Jim was born and raised in Connecticut. After 40 years of wandering the frozen tundra he found his way back to the Episcopal Church during the excitement over Gene Robinson becoming the Bishop of New Hampshire. He attended St. John's in the down and out city of Waterbury.

To escape the dreary winters he moved to Tampa in 2008 to take a teaching job at Carrollwood Day School. He joined St. Andrew's in August of 2008.

He has served on the Vestry twice before. He has chaired the Outreach and Education Committees. He has taught Confirmation classes several times.

Recently retired from over 40 years of teaching social studies and exceptional kids, Jim looks forward to helping St. Andrew's celebrate 150 years of serving an increasingly vibrant downtown Tampa.



Jennifer Richardson

Jennifer is a Florida native and graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Education and a Master's degree in Business Management.

She met her husband, Charlie, during graduate school and they have two sons, Marcus and Logan. Their family began attending St. Andrew's when they moved to Tam-

pa in 2016. Jennifer is a homeschool teacher and serves as a committee member and Leave No Trace/ Outdoor Ethics Trainer for their sons' Boy Scout Troop. She has previously served on PTA boards as the Art Enrichment director and as a board member and volunteer coordinator for a nonprofit that helped foster families.

Jennifer immediately fell in love with St. Andrew's and was confirmed on Pentecost Sunday in 2017. She felt called to serve on the Altar Guild and as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and is blessed to be part of such a beautiful family of God here at St. Andrew's.

Christmas Pageant



















Christmas Pageant







Greening of the Church







November 2019 Vestry Meeting Highlights

RECTOR'S REPORT – Fr. Reese

As of 11/12/19, there was \$120,424 in ops account and \$105,824 in the parish reserve account.

As of 11/4/19, there was \$25,814 in the Foundation's checking account – monies available to the vestry. (There is still \$6,650 to be paid from this account for the new roof we are having done on south side of church. Foundation already paid a 3K first installment on this.)

We have another \$13,324 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 2.5% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2016 at their meeting on 2/8/16. (\$30,000 has already been transferred to the Foundation checking account from the 2016 allocation, which totaled \$43,324).

We have another \$53,473 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 3% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2017 at their meeting on 2/21/17.

We have another \$75,659 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 4% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2018 at their meeting on 2/21/18.

We have another \$63,718 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 3% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2019 at their meeting on 2/27/19.

And there was 2,718,333 in the Foundation principal as of 11/4/19 (as compared to 2,421,641 at end of 2018, a 296,692 increase for the year).

There is also \$98,539 in the Dan Curtis fund fbo St. Andrew's within the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay, with about \$700 in grant money currently available. We spent 6.5K from this fund earlier in the year to pay for church roof repairs of tiles broken during January termite tenting.

717 Parking Contract – has been finalized. Some of the new signage has been erected in the parking lot.

Church Roof – work on south side roof is close to completion. There was additional work required on the roof around the bell tower, as well as some broken tiles that needed to be replaced on the steeple.

Fire Pump repairs - have been completed by CINTAS. Cost is \$5,460, which we are paying from the reserve fund.

Annual Stewardship Campaign – is in full swing. The second round of pledge cards went out the first week of November. Piers has agreed to write the letter that will accompany the mailing in early December. Postcard reminders will go out first week of January and again the first week of February. As of 11/13, we have 79 pledges for 256K (compared to 88 pledges for 232K as of this time last year).

Choral Evensong for All Saints – was Sunday, 11/3 at 5PM. Great music and a solid turnout (90 souls). Parish Life hosted a nice reception in the parish hall following the service.

Newcomers' Dinner – was Sunday, 11/10 at 6PM at the Rectory. Lots of new folks attended (about 18), plus over a dozen vestry members and their significant others.

This year's Rectory Party is scheduled for Friday, December 20th, at 6:00pm.

This coming March 29th, Earl & Jan Smith will once again host the Parish Picnic.

November 2019 Operating Summary					
	MTD Actual	MTD Budgeted	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted	
Revenues	\$39,502	\$47,095	\$453,404	\$518,051	
Expenses	\$41,717	\$44,095	\$509,028	\$518,051	
Net	(\$2,215)	\$0	(\$55,623)	\$0	

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT – Richard Ferlita

We have several vestry nominees.

Our Presiding Bishop is not available for our Sesquicentennial celebration. Richard is going to give it another try.

Richard will be meeting with Ryan to get suggestions for additional Sesquicentennial events.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT – George Levy

Fire pump has been repaired.

The south side church roof repair has now been completed after delays. New work is being authorized for some additional work in an awkward location. The membrane in the catwalk up in the bell tower is worn and needs to be repaired. Once dimensioned and approved, the funds for the bell tower repairs will come from reserve funds.

A flood occurred in the first floor men's room. The floor drains that were capped to eliminate sewer gases prevented the overflow from draining. This precipitated the suggestion of adding new fixtures to the drains that allows the water to drain and prevents the sewer gases from escaping. A great fix for a reasonable price.

Estimate for painting church interior is \$8,631. This includes repairing cracks in the plaster and touching up the ceilings a bit as well as painting the doors. Estimate for painting the exterior of the rectory is \$4,482. This is a 2020 project. The total for both painting projects is \$13,113.

Peter Baker made a motion to begin the painting projects in 2020 in the amount of \$13,113 to be paid out of Foundation Funds. Richard Ferlita seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Fr. Reese for Piers Curry

Everything is looking good. If you compare this to the same time last year, we are performing very well.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Brad Hall

The lock-in was a success with 8 children, pizza and a movie.

Sunday begins rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant which will be held on December 15th.

The youth will assist Outreach with the Turkey Pack project.

OUTREACH – Ingrid Muellerleile

The Turkey Pack is scheduled for Saturday at 10:00am.

The Fish Fry is being held on December 8th. Tickets are being sold now.

The Gabriel Tree is up in the Parish Hall.

Ornaments with the likeness of St. Andrew's are selling well at \$10 each.

HELPING HANDS – Paula Stewart for Barbara Brotherton

70 people are now being served daily in our lunch program.

OLD BUSINESS

Peter Baker explained the 2 new changes being proposed to the parish by-laws. "Vestrymen" will be changed to "Vestry members". References to the Rector as "he" will be changed to "Rector."

Peter Baker made a motion to submit these changes to the diocese in accordance with the protocol. This will be followed by a vestry vote. Richard Ferlita seconded the motion and it was approved.

The Foundation by-laws were also reviewed by Peter Baker. "St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Tampa, Inc." should read "St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Tampa, Florida." If we choose to make this change, it will only have to be approved at the Annual Meeting and not by the diocese.

NEW BUSINESS

Ingrid Muellerleile provided information on Love, Inc., a full-service, outreach assistance organization that many local churches have subscribed to. The Executive Directors for Love, Inc. will speak to the vestry.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church 509 East Twiggs Street Tampa, Florida 33602

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, February 2th following the 10:30 am service

PARISHIONERS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS ...



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

The Rev. John Reese, Rector **Sunday Services** 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. Children's Church 9:30 a.m. Christian Education for all ages **Church Location:** Marion & Madison Streets Mailing Address: 509 E. Twiggs St. Tampa, FL 33602 Phone: (813) 221-2035 Fax: 224-0945 Web: saintandrewstampa.org E-mail: secretary@ saintandrewstampa.org

Deadline for articles for The Call: 15th of each month for the following month's newsletter. Submit articles to Lauri in the church office.