

SENIOR WARDEN

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How can we reach out and welcome back All Saints' parishioners? How can we open our doors and show hospitality to all? What worship activities, what fellowship opportunities and what new ministries should we offer? And how can we operationalize all activities keeping in mind the continuing pandemic and charge to care for parishioners and guests? What a challenging and exciting time to serve as a member of the All Saints' Vestry and its Senior Warden!

As I reviewed Vestry minutes and my memories of 2021, I was amazed by what, our parish (staff, Vestry, and parishioners) accomplished in this admittedly roller coaster year! There are a multitude of reasons that I love All Saints,' but its staff's and parishioners' resilience, love for each other and our community writ large, and tenacity of spirit are several of those reasons. So, pardon me if I take a stroll through 2021 and point out highlights along the way.

We know all too well the challenges of 2021 (and 2020), but let's remember highlights of the times we gathered together in faith during 2021.

- For starters, thanks to newly purchased technology and staff's and volunteers' dedication, All Saints' live streamed on Facebook its 10:45 a.m. services during all of 2021 to enable parishioners and visitors to enjoy Sunday liturgies! And, until the adult Lectionary class began to meet again in-person, leaders hosted a weekly podcast covering the lectionary readings assigned for that week. In-person Sunday liturgies reconvened in the spring during Lent. Parishioners (socially distanced) greeted each other and visitors. New name tags helped long timers and newcomers to call each other by their first names!
- As a Lenten observance, a small group of parishioners read and discussed a challenging book – "Caste."
- Our Easter celebrations at the Vigil and Easter Sunday morning were joyous and forward looking to a more normal church year. The well attended Taize service during the Easter season allowed us to pause in silence and thanksgiving.
- In May, Fr. Phillip and the parish congratulated 2020 and 2021 graduates from high school, college, and graduate school during the Sunday morning liturgy!
- As the original COVID strain waned in late spring, we celebrated Pentecost in true All Saints' fashion – dressed in red and enjoying the Annual Shrimp Boil.
- In June, All Saints' began a summer offering of Christian Formation for children and Coffee Alley (on the porch) welcomed all parishioners.
- Headlining parish-wide activities, All Saints' Vacation Bible School for all in June was an enormous success. All ages enjoyed the great dinners provided by All Saints' Vestry, ECW, Neighborhood Life, and the Men's Club; the singing; children's activities; and adult discussion and inspirational presentations. I cannot wait for VBS to roll around again!
- All Saints' fall activities are always parish pleasers, and the fall of 2021 was no different. The Parish Picnic brought together the entire parish on a crisp Sunday, beginning with an outdoor liturgy followed by games, football kicking and passing and lots of fun.
- The parish hosted many Wednesday night "Potlucks with a Program" during the fall. The food was unusually tasty, and Phillip and others offered interesting and challenging programs.
- The fall of 2021 found All Saints' music programs (children's and adult choirs) rehearsing with new vigor and the offering of opportunity for interested bellringers to join in the fun!
- EYCers (Juniors and Seniors) and their new Youth Director Emily Jackson worshipped and enjoyed each other's company throughout the last quarter of 2021.
- Always an enjoyable event, the annual "Beer and Bratwurst" feast supplied by Christ the King was again a rousing success. I am looking forward to the 2022 Lutheran bingo that challenged us in past years.

- Fall at All Saints' would not be complete without the Bishop's attendance on All Saints' Sunday, also this year the kickoff of the Stewardship Campaign. We enjoyed reconnecting with Bishop Seage and carrying on good conversations over the delicious meal.
- Speaking of Stewardship Campaign, what eye-catching signs and banners the co-chairs provided! And, the heart-felt videos featuring All Saints' parishioners of all ages revealing why pledging to All Saints' was important to them and their families challenged us all.
- Closing out the liturgical year, Fr. Phillip introduced the opportunity for us to pause and reflect during the Advent season as we participated in the ongoing offering of Centering Prayer. What better way to start each new week than to rest in Centering Prayer on Mondays at noon?
- Our time of reflection and waiting made traditional Christmas activities even more meaningful. The Neighborhood Life Committee again offered the traditional Christmas dinner to Saints' Brew guests, giving us an opportunity to share our joy and gifts with them. Christmas Eve celebrations were even more meaningful! And what beautiful music we enjoyed on Christmas Eve.
- Now, here we are in the season of Epiphany. The end of the year. We are again dealing with the pandemic but have learned that it does not define us.

This report would be lacking if it failed to mention three programs whose home base is All Saints' and that support its mission to welcome and serve all. All Saints' is blessed to support Saints' Brew through providing its kitchen and meeting space to feed breakfast to thousands during a calendar year. In addition, MUTEH, the organization that provides tangible hope for the homeless by enabling individuals to find homes, has its home at All Saints' as does Pathway Montessori School for preschoolers of all nationalities and faiths.

Of course, I have just mentioned all the year's joyous gatherings and the opportunities for spiritual growth. 2021 also brought challenges and loss. Fr. Phillip, Tommie Moore, the Vestry, our Treasurer and Bookkeeper, the Wardens and other All Saints' staff ably dealt with staff replacements, facility issues, parish safety and financial matters along with normal business issues. Not an All Saints' liturgy or musical offering or parish celebration occurred that we did not miss and give thanks for those parishioners who have passed on to their reward.

Personally, I am thankful for all the All Saints' staff, parishioners and volunteers from other Tupelo churches and neighboring communities whose services made possible the liturgies, potlucks, parish activities and outreach activities. Please review the reports of the numerous All Saints' committees and thank those parishioners for conducting God's work in our parish and community. I consider it an honor to have served along with them as All Saints' Sr. Warden during 2021 and am looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that 2022 may bring. Peace and joy to you all.