

## **SENIOR WARDEN**

### **Dinetia Newman**

In retrospect, the two years I have served as Senior Warden have flown by, memorable with joys and sadness, laughter and tears. Many of the issues our clergy, staff, Jr. Warden and Vestry faced in 2021 continued in 2022. We ask continuously what are our parishioners' needs, how best can we reach out to our neighbors, and what new ministries should we offer? I am honored to have served with caring and dedicated clergy, knowledgeable and congenial Junior Wardens, superb staff, supportive and active Vestries and conscientious Committee chairpersons and to have watched a kind and gentle (but fiercely determined and strong) new curate grow in her ministry.

When I began this journey, I was not certain what was required of me. Vague Diocesan guidance directed that the Senior Warden's responsibility was to support our Rector, Phillip Parker. As I set about doing that, I gradually realized what that meant was to be present to Phillip and Becca – periodically in the office (frequently just to say “hello”, “how are you”, “what’s up”?). It also meant to have frequent conversations with Tommie, Stephen King, our Junior Warden, Vestry members and parishioners - to listen to their thoughts and to offer whatever of my ideas seemed workable and sustainable. For example, a Vestry member proposed early in 2021 that we make name tags for all parishioners and visitors. Helping with name tags gave me the opportunity to call parishioners' by their first names and Coffee Alley allowed me to become friends with long time parishioners and to meet new families and their children. What I concluded was that for me (and not necessarily every Senior Warden) “support for the Rector” and now our Curate meant that I should be present to the Parish. And, what a blessing this has been for me!

As we moved into 2022, issues similar to those in 2021 continued to confront our clergy and Vestry: “How can All Saints' recover from the two years of Covid and isolation?” During the past two years, All Saints' and its parishioners have supported many new and renewed offerings and ministries: Sunday classes (classes for children and youth, 3 years old to eighth grade, Lectionary Class and Theology in the Library class), Coffee Alley, twice monthly potlucks with Children's choir and Catechesis, Daughters of the King, multiple prayer offerings (Centering Prayer, Morning Prayer, Lectio Divina), a broadened Care Team program, an offering about Navigating Loss on Special Days, an expanded Blessing of the Animals, College Care Box ministry, ECW, EFM, Picnic in the Park, Parish work days and Garden Guild activities. In mid-January 2023, All Saints' reinvigorated its Care Team Eucharistic Visitor program to bring Eucharist to our parishioners unable to come in person to church.

I strongly believe that All Saints' is making excellent strides in reaching out to and caring for existing parishioners and in extending welcoming arms to our larger Tupelo area community. One significant sign of All Saints' recovery that I personally witnessed in the fall of 2022 was parishioners' responses to being asked to serve on the Vestry and year end committees (Nominating, Budget and Compensation Review Committees). When called and asked to serve, rarely did a parishioner say “no”!! I am very enthusiastic about 2023 and what lies ahead for our parish!

But, we can and must do more. We need to revive the Acolyte program. We need more parishioners to volunteer as Ushers. We need new choir members. I am sure that the Altar Guild and Flower Guild would love new

volunteers. We need more Garden Guild volunteers (particularly after the devastating blow our campus shrubbery has suffered from the 7 degree temperatures). I believe that all of these offerings are ministries, actions and services that we provide for others. And, I believe that these ministries are not only for parishioners, but also for the entire Body of Christ, to build up the Kingdom. Serving as an usher or flower arranger or choir member also has the secondary benefit of making us feel better. And, importantly, these services increase the vibrancy of All Saints’.

As I draft this report, I am reminded of one of All Saints’ frequent posts about “Being the Church”. That meme speaks of caring for the poor, forgiving often, loving God, etc. As a challenge to all of us, I would make that meme more specific as to All Saints’:

### **BE ALL SAINTS’**

How can I serve? Let me count the ways!

Be an usher, an acolyte (no matter your age) or a reader,

Sign up for the Altar Guild and Flower Guild (men are welcome, too!),

Sing in the choir (you will feel better!),

Help keep our Church Buildings and campus beautiful – volunteer for a workday,

Volunteer to bring food for the EYC and enjoy their youth!

Come to one of the prayer services (three are during the noon hour),

Share a donut and a cup of coffee with a new person at Coffee Hour and  
volunteer to help,

Bring your children to Sunday school (Children are our future!),

Come to the Lectionary Class or Theology in Liturgy Class and expand your understanding of the scriptures,

Greet a visitor or new member after church and invite them to a potluck,

Come to Potlucks, bring your children and enjoy the Community!

Say “hello” to our clergy and staff and thank them for their tireless service!

Share your ideas about reaching out to members of our community and become more involved in All Saints’!

In closing, thank you, All Saints’ parishioners, for the personally meaningful opportunity of serving as your Senior Warden for the past two years. My singular thanks and gratitude also go: to the Reverends Phillip Parker, Becca Walton and Dr. Billy Walton for their guidance; to my Warden colleagues, Fred Cannon and Stephen King, who made being a Senior Warden fun; to the 2021 and 2022 Vestries from whom I learned so much; to Nancy Sweat for her organization (and for the great bulletins she prints for the choir); to Michele McBride, Bud Nelson and Mike Fitzpatrick for keeping us financially straight; and to Tommie Moore, without whose wisdom, knowledge and friendship, I would have been lost!