



# *Evangelist* September 2020

Dear faithful family of St. John's,

Have you been able to keep a positive attitude during these months of trial and tribulation? Have you asked for God's help in keeping your spirits up? Has God helped you find ways to turn lemons into lemonade? Despite whatever has tried to pull the rug out from under you, have you been able to emotionally stand tall and determined? I pray that you have! And I pray that you can remember that we are a parish family, sharing each other's joys and sorrows, even if the opportunity to hug each other in person continues to elude us. For me, absence makes the heart grow fonder, and I long for that day when physical reunion can happen. I play with different scenarios in my mind of just what that day will look like, the worship we will share, the songs we will sing, even the snacks we will consume. Together. At Last.

But that reunion in our church clubhouse will be a while yet in coming. We must follow the diocesan guidelines, and so far we are only able to welcome fifteen masked persons at a time indoors, with no singing or close contact, and a thorough cleaning of the church both before and after each use. Some parishes have submitted a "covenant" document and received permission from the diocese to do that, but for safety and convenience we have not yet taken that step. We are hoping that, come later this month, that number might be increased if the region's infection rates continue to dwindle. The covenant we submitted was for outdoor meetings at various homes, and we have developed that strategy for meeting in person, again masked and with cautionary distancing. Check your mail. So far, though, the church building is sort of "off-limits."

Meanwhile, though, we have continued our "on-line" events since March. We have a coffee hour each Wednesday morning, called "**Hug~A~Mug**" which has been lots of fun, and our Thursday evening Bible study and prayers which has been very popular. I have hoped that even those of you who are not "digitally connected" could ask a friend or relative to help you join in by setting you up with a tablet, smart phone, or other device and the means to use it. You can join our Sunday worship online by consulting our new website, [stjohnsoneida.org](http://stjohnsoneida.org) and the outdoor meetings every 2 weeks have been well-attended. Led by our "**Learning Communities Initiative**" team members, and hosted by various parishioners, these meetings have brought people together for conversation and prayers. Thanks to hosts like Beth Wieland, Joan Livingston, Marty Walrath, Sandy and Jerry Aylesworth, etc., we've been able to gather for an evening together in groups of 10 or 12, sharing stories and prayers and catching-up after months of separation.

Since this a personal letter, I will share with you that in my heart I imagine us all still being in prayer together each day, and that has encouraged me and lifted my spirits. Prayer is any moment when we feel connected with God through Christ, whether in word or thought, and the knowledge that our prayer-times are intertwined together causes me to smile even when I'm feeling a bit lost. And I thank God for you all every waking moment. Our reunion is spiritual, and doesn't need to wait for vaccines or unlocked red doors to become a reality. And Jesus is our gracious host.

Love, Nick+

## FOOD PANTRY

Please continue to not bring items to the church but instead make a cash donation to these organizations below:

Karing Kitchen  
116 W. Grove St.  
Oneida, N.Y. 13421

Church on the Rock  
164 Madison St.  
Oneida, N.Y. 13421

Food Bank of CNY  
7066 Interstate Island Rd  
Syracuse, N.Y. 13209

I would also like people to consider donating to the CNYSPCA for the animals in need as well. Unopened packages of pet food and litter are appreciated or contact them at [FrontDesk1@cnyspca.org](mailto:FrontDesk1@cnyspca.org) to find out what they need the most.

CNYSPCA  
5878 East Molloy Rd  
Syracuse, N.Y. 13211

## Too Blessed To Be Stressed

Our ongoing ZOOM activities at St. John's:

Wednesdays: Hug A Mug Coffee Hour (**New Time**) 930 a.m. to 1030 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Study @ 7p.m.

Saturdays: Zoom Partys !!! Tons of fun and laughs.

Sundays: Church Service on Facebook Live @ 930 a.m. Please Join Us !

For **Hug A Mug**, **Bible Study**, as well as **Sunday services**, please watch your emails for the correct links (or email Father Nick and ask)

Dear St. John's Friends !

Are you missing your church family?

As we have already, we would like to gather in small groups outside at various homes, taking all necessary precautions.

The groups, with as many new participants as we can, will be shuffled into new groups to meet at new locations!

**If you'd like to participate, here's what you need to do:** Call, text, or write Fr. Nick an email to let him know you are interested. His phone number is: **(315) 727-1787**. His email is [fathernicksmith@gmail.com](mailto:fathernicksmith@gmail.com)

At these gatherings we will be following specific guidelines, and you'll have to agree to follow them for everyone's safety:

For the sake of safety, please wear a required mask over your mouth and nose

For the sake of comfort, please bring a lawn chair for yourself

For the sake of convenience, please go potty before leaving home

For the sake of hospitality, please avoid election-year political comments

This gathering will last about 90 minutes, and will be devoted to conversation followed by closing prayers. Sadly, there can't be any singing or loud outbursts that might spread virus germs. Uncontrollable laughter, though, might be an exception.

We'll still be having our Facebook Live Sunday services, of course; these gatherings are just a supplement.

**So, let Fr. Nick know ASAP if you'd like to get in on this!**

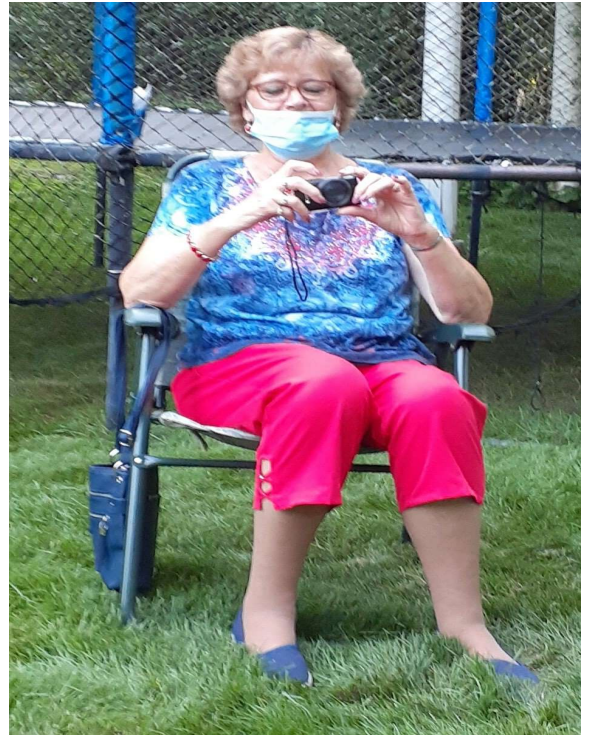
**\*These gatherings have been approved by the Bishop and her Covenant Review Team**

Thanks to Leslie & Mark, Carol & John, Beth and Roger, Joan, Marty and Sandy & Jerry for hosting our Gatherings so far.

**The following are photos submitted by Ann Hodgins from some of our Gatherings. Can you guess the St. John's member.**

# GATHERINGS





## A reminder about what life is really about

I arrived at the address and honked the horn.  
After waiting a few minutes I honked again.

Since this was going to be my last ride of  
my shift I thought about just driving away,

But instead I put the car in park and  
walked up to the door and knocked...

'Just a minute', answered a frail,  
elderly voice. I could hear something  
being dragged across the floor.

After a long pause, the door opened.

A small woman in her 90's stood before me.

She was wearing a print dress  
and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it,  
like somebody out of a 1940's movie.

By her side was a small nylon suitcase.  
The apartment looked as if no one had  
lived in it for years.

All the furniture was covered with sheets.

There were no clocks on the walls, no  
knickknacks or utensils on the counters.  
In the corner was a cardboard box filled  
with photos and glassware.

'Would you carry my bag out to the car?' she said.

I took the suitcase to the cab,  
then returned to assist the woman.

She took my arm and we walked slowly  
toward the curb.

She kept thanking me for my kindness.

'It's nothing', I told her. 'I just try to treat  
my passengers

The way I would want my mother to  
be treated.'

'Oh, you're such a good boy, she said.

When we got in the cab,  
she gave me an address and then asked,

'Could you drive through downtown?'

'It's not the shortest way,' I answered  
quickly..'Oh, I don't mind,' she said.

'I'm in no hurry.

I'm on my way to a hospice'

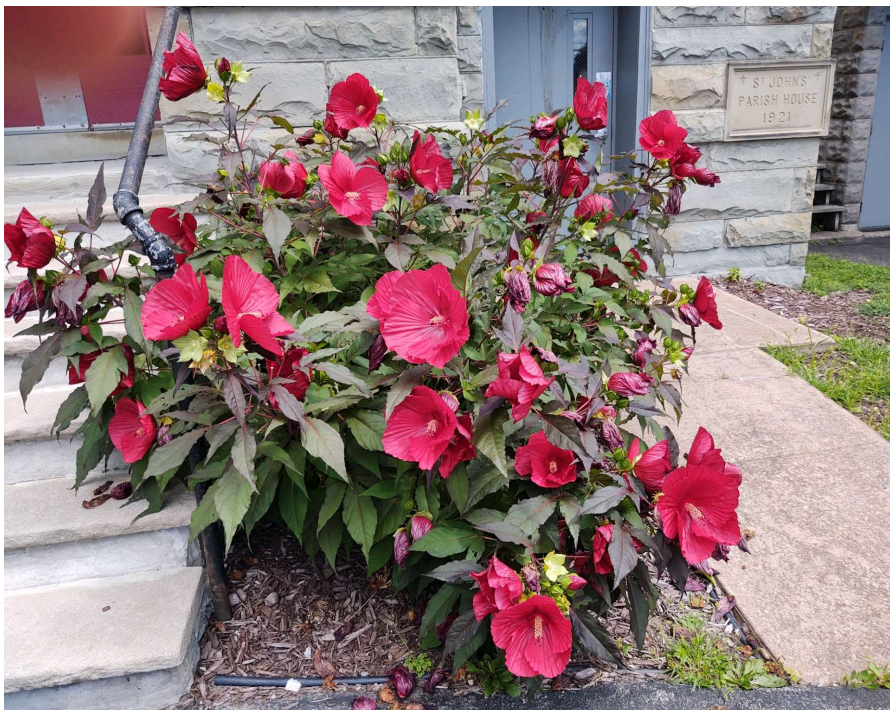
I looked in the rear-view mirror.

Her eyes were glistening.  
'I don't have any family left,'  
she continued in a soft voice...  
'The doctor says I don't have very long.'  
I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.  
'What route would you like me to take?' I asked.  
For the next two hours, we drove through the city.  
She showed me the building where she  
had once worked as an elevator operator.  
We drove through the neighborhood  
where she and her husband had lived  
When they were newlyweds.  
She had me pull up in front of a furniture  
warehouse that had once  
Been a ballroom where she had gone  
dancing as a girl.  
Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of  
a particular building or corner  
And would sit staring into the darkness,  
saying nothing.  
As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon,  
She suddenly said, 'I'm tired. Let's go now'.  
We drove in silence to the address  
she had given me.  
It was a low building, like a small  
convalescent home,  
With a driveway that passed under a portico.  
Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon  
as we pulled up.  
They were solicitous and intent, watching  
her every move.  
They must have been expecting her.  
I opened the trunk and took the small  
suitcase to the door.  
The woman was already seated in  
a wheelchair.  
'How much do I owe you?' She asked,  
reaching into her purse.  
'Nothing,' I answered.  
'You have to make a living,' she said.  
'There are other passengers,' I responded.  
Almost without thinking, I bent and  
gave her a hug.  
She held onto me tightly.

'You gave an old woman a little moment  
of joy,' she said. 'Thank you.'  
I squeezed her hand, and then  
walked into the dim morning light.  
Behind me, a door shut.  
It was the sound of the closing of a life...  
For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk.  
What if that woman had gotten an  
angry driver, or one who was  
impatient to end his shift?  
What if I had refused to take the run,  
or had honked once, then driven away?  
On a quick review, I don't think that  
I have done anything more important in my life.  
We're conditioned to think that our  
lives revolve around great moments.  
But great moments often catch us  
unaware – beautifully wrapped in what  
others may consider a small one

*PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY  
WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT YOU SAID,  
BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER  
HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL...*

submitted by Jack MacMullen

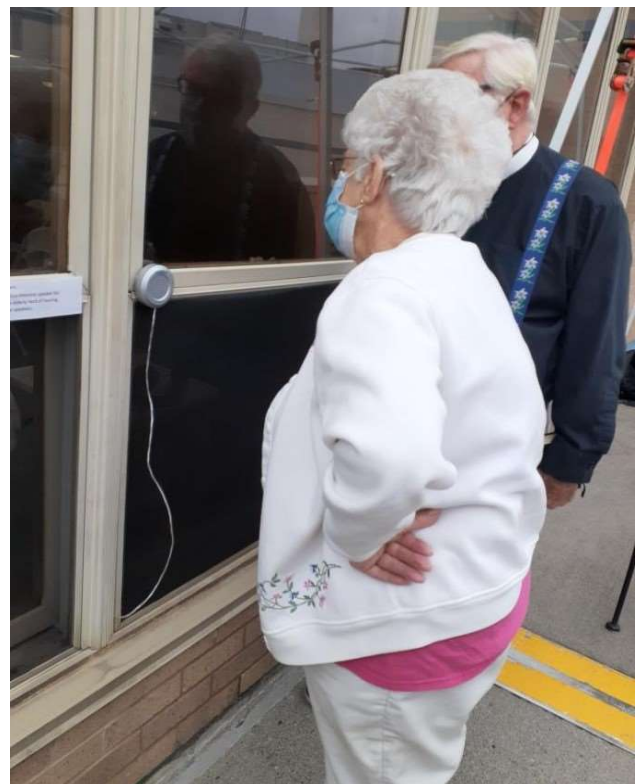
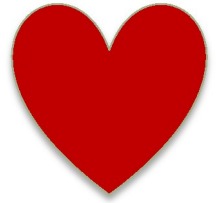


Beautiful Hibiscus bush  
growing outside our  
church.

Submitted by:  
Colleen Hilts

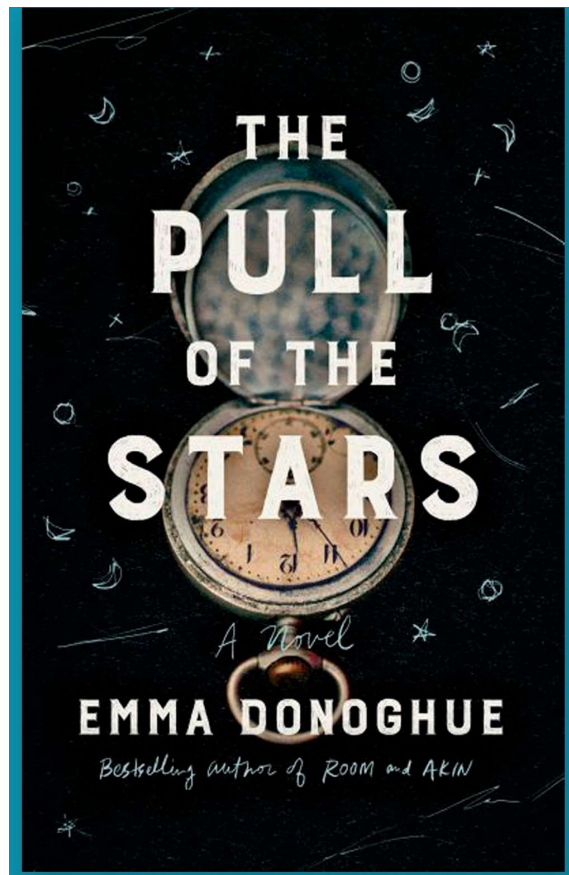


# A Visit with Laura Bennett



## LAURA'S BOOK REVIEW

Dublin Ireland is being destroyed by disease and war. At it's center, in a staff challenged hospital, are nurse Julia Power along with her colleagues and a group of expectant mothers, quarantined together fighting a new flu. In the course of three days in 1918, their lives change in unexpected ways. Through it all, light is found even in the darkest of days. Through strength we overcome the worst.



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Phone: (315) 363 -1940

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan Probe

Rector: The Very Rev. Arthur W. Smith

Parish Administrator: John Reinhardt

Treasurer: John Macmullen

Clerk of the Vestry: Valerie Hill

Senior Warden: Susan Slaunwhite

Junior Warden: Leslie Zebrowski

Vestry:

Sandra Aylesworth

Sheila Aylesworth

Cathy English

Valerie Hill

Ann Hodgins

Shelly Sears

Laura Weismore

Shane Weismore

Beth Wieland

Loving God, by your grace you have gathered us from many walks of life to become a loving family at St. John's. Help us to sustain the miraculous love within this parish, and guide us in sharing this love with our neighbors. All this we ask through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Please submit Evangelist articles to Laura Weismore by the 15th of each month. Anything not submitted by the 15th, will go in the next newsletter.

[snowkittens7311@gmail.com](mailto:snowkittens7311@gmail.com)