

SOUNDINGS

Saint
Christopher's
Episcopal Church 
Spring 2021

Fending



The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Rector

“Fending” is the title of a short, humorous, *New Yorker* article (Roz Chast, April 23 and May 3, 2021 issues). According to her, the word “fending” describes the process of “...picking around the kitchen, seeing what’s there, and making a meal of it...There is no prep, aside from maybe heating stuff up.”

After a few months of fending and foraging around her kitchen, and especially in her refrigerator, Ms. Chast wondered what others called their kitchen “fending” activities. So, she polled her friends and came to this conclusion: “Turns out there are lots of fenders. Also scroungers, scavengers, and foragers.” Then she put the question out on Instagram, and in a few days she received more than 1,700 responses! Here are some of my favorite descriptions of fending:

- “getcheroni”
- “goblin meal”
- “anarchy kitchen”
- “mush gooey”
- “going feral”
- “jungle dinner”
- “California plate”
- “eating promiscuously”
- “ifits,” as in “If it’s in the refrigerator, it’s fair game.”

“Fenders” we all are!

For 14 months the pandemic has isolated, disconnected, and disrupted our lives. While we have discovered new ways to reach out, connect, and communicate, our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and wholeness have depended (now more than ever) upon our ability to take care

of ourselves. COVID-19 has forced us to “fend” for ourselves.

The formal definition of “fend” is: “To look after and provide for oneself, without any help from others.” Hopefully, a helping hand reached out and embraced you during the dark depths of the pandemic—a time when we collectively sunk deeper and deeper down into what the Psalmist referred to as the “mire” (“a situation or state of difficulty, or distress, from which it is hard to extricate oneself”). Hopefully, you had help “fending” in the pandemic mire.

I know of one person who fended for herself. After contracting COVID-19, she was hospitalized, and then released to convalesce at home. Shortly thereafter, her spouse contracted the virus, and died in the hospital without a final in-person visit and goodbye. After her beloved husband’s death, she was

forced to quarantine, thus precluding visitors. Her loving and attentive family was immensely helpful, but they could not visit. In my book, she is the textbook definition of “fending.” Physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, she “looked after and provided for herself.” She met her suffering, struggle, and

soul searching with courage, strength, hope, fortitude, faith, grace, and prayer.

In different ways—some small and some large—we all fended for ourselves during this pandemic. At times we may have felt isolated, on our own, anxious, and a tad bit depressed, as we bided our empty “alone”



Fending, continued

time. Yet, the reality is this: We were never on our own and fending for ourselves. A wise Jesuit priest once told me that any experience of peace—no matter how brief or ephemeral—is a sign that the Holy Spirit is bearing fruit in our hearts, spirits, and souls.

Prayer, meditation, and contemplative practices are spiritual forms of fending. They are the source and power of love, which enables God to take care of and provide for us. During the pandemic:

- Prayers did *not* have to be six feet apart.
- Prayers did *not* have to be masked.
- Unlike toilet paper, there were enough prayers to go around.
- Unlike food insecurity, there was prayer security.
- Prayer was the preferred way to travel.
- Prayer was a wonderful inner journey of the soul.
- Prayers went viral (in a good way).
- Prayers infected us (in a good way).
- Prayer was the vaccine already working inside us.
- Prayer built up antibodies against despair.
- Prayer was the safe space we could all enter together.
- Prayer was a safe space that allowed in-person gatherings before the CDC did.
- Prayer saw us through.

This is how prayer affected the pandemic.

From the Senior Warden



Win McCausland
Senior Warden

When Brian approached me about joining the Vestry and being Warden-Elect three years ago, I did it with some hesitation since I was so new to the parish. Over these last two-plus years I've learned a great deal about the church, the Vestry, and the members with whom I've been privileged to serve. Their various

interests, gifts and an overall commitment to tackle whatever issues we have faced are a constant theme.

This year we have no shortage of issues, and perhaps the biggest is regathering as a congregation. We are focused on this issue and relying on the input from the Regathering Task Force to provide guidance.



Roz Chast (photo: Bill Franzen)

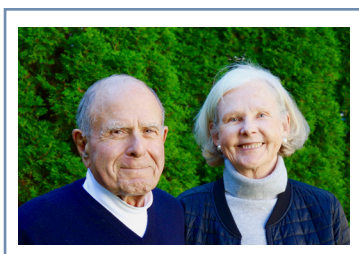
In the *New Yorker* article I referenced, the author uses acronyms to describe “kitchen fenders”: “OYO” means “On Your Own,” and “YOYO” means “You’re On Your Own.” While we may have been fending for ourselves in our refrigerators, “OYO,” we were, nevertheless, steadfastly guided and strengthened by the mystery of the living presence of the risen Christ.

Before we move forward into the hopeful light of a COVID-free life, let’s pause and give thanks and take solace knowing that we were not, and never will be, On Your Own. God will never say to us, “You’re On Your Own.” We may have to fend and forage for food in our kitchen and refrigerators; but, we never have to forage and fend for spiritual nourishment. In the kingdom of God, there are no scroungers, scavengers, foragers, or fenders. With Christ the spiritual journey is a seven-course meal!

At our recent Vestry virtual retreat, the sole topic was when and how can we safely regather, considering the twists and turns of this pandemic. I am looking forward to seeing each of you in person when that day arrives.



Stewardship 2021: Keeping Connected



Joe & Debby Saliba
*Chairs,
Stewardship Committee*

We extend our sincere thanks for your wonderful support of this year's campaign. In the presence of the pandemic you rose to the challenge and we raised \$552,000.

It was gratifying to witness the wonderfully cohesive and solid support of our parish family. And, we could not have done this without our very dedicated committee who helped organize the campaign, assisted in the mailings, and made the follow-up calls to conclude the campaign: Mary Bast, Pam Hufnagel, Ginger Plexico, John Sargent, Bob Summersgill, and Ann Ward.

Goll Farm School Is Back in Session!



Linda Hughes
*Chair,
Together With
Africans*

Spring has arrived at Goll Farm School in Liberia with new ideas, hopes, aspirations and dreams of a bright future through education. Parents of our Goll Farm School students recognize and appreciate the value of a basic education for each and every child. With approximately 250 students in various grades, the school has become a center for

education and information for the entire community. Just like us they have been affected by COVID-19 and all of its ramifications.

The picture shows the older students assembling for a day of classroom education. Despite the lack of masks and other protective measures, they attend in person school since they have no alternative. Without the scholarships provided by the St. Christopher's family, many of these children would be forced to work to support their family. The connection with St.

Christopher's enables Goll Farm School to provide a pathway to fundamental educational skills, which will shape their futures in a very meaningful and positive manner.

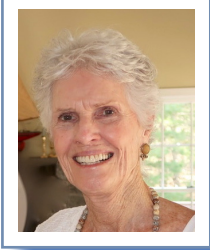
Your Together With Africans (TWA) committee encourages you to take a few moments to ponder the impact that a \$100 scholarship will have on the life of a student.

The school recently added a simple chapel to nurture the spiritual lives of the students and their families. The school feeding program provides for nutrition they would not otherwise receive to allow them to grow in a health manner.

You can become a supporter of our Goll Farm School outreach by considering donating a scholarship (\$100 per student per semester) or any amount you desire. Checks should be made out to St. Christopher's with Goll Farm School written onto the memo line. By doing so you will ensure the stability of Goll Farm School and make a direct positive impact on children yearning to be educated.



The Rev. Dr. John Martiner: 55 Years of Ministry



Mary Gulrich
Parishioner

On April 11, 2021, Priest Associate John Martiner celebrated the 55th anniversary of his ordination, which was held in 1966 at St. Paul's Church, Wallingford, Connecticut. I asked Mary Gulrich to interview John and give him an opportunity to reflect on his years of service. ~ Maury A. Castro

Q How did you celebrate this day, and what emotions did it elicit in you?

Providentially, Brian was on vacation and I was the preacher and celebrant at the 10 am Holy Eucharist. How else would a priest want to celebrate this milestone, but to be at the altar, saying Jesus's words over the bread and wine—taking, blessing, breaking and giving? Fifty-five years ago, the day after my ordination, I stood at an altar, and said Jesus's words. This April 11, I did the very same at St. Christopher's Church. As I write this, my eyes are full with tears of Thanksgiving. I have been blessed with such a rich life.

Q As you look back to your ordination day, what do you recall?

I have a photo of the nine participants in my ordination service. We were ordained according to the Rites in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. We were very young men. Seven of these nine men have died; all good and faithful servants.



John is seated (L) next to Bishop John Esquirol.



John Martiner on the day of his ordination

Q What ministry challenges were you facing?

My ministry faced tumultuous, yet invigorating times: Civil rights and Vietnam war protests; the ordination of women; acceptance and ordination of gays and lesbians; increased secularization of society; questions about the church's relevance; the financial insecurity and aging of congregations. I was well trained for parish ministry at Berkeley Divinity school, but how innocent I was in 1966.

Q What was the impetus or inspiration that moved you toward the priesthood?

I was an "accidental" Christian. My family did not attend church. My mother's family had some sort of Congregational or Methodist background. My father's heritage was Italian-American Roman Catholic, who had no use for the church. But, when I was very young, a neighboring family invited my brother and me to attend their small Episcopal Church in New Haven. I grew to love the Episcopal Church, which proved to be the beginning of my awe of liturgy, ritual, prayer, and community.



*John and Betty
in their garden
at their home
in Harwich.*



Q What sustained you during the many years of cultural, doctrinal, ecclesiastical and personal challenges as a priest?

I was inspired by my grandmother, who taught me to seek beyond my “comfort zone.” This led me to bring youth groups to work camps in Puerto Rico and the British Virgin Islands, and adult groups to Israel, Greece, England, and Ireland on spiritual/educational pilgrimages.

I was sustained by role models, like the Rev. Woosley Couch, who was the personification of Christ-like kindness. Also Morton Nace, the Director of Youth and Family Ministry for the Diocese of Connecticut, and director of the Episcopal Camp. I began there as a camper in high school, then asked to be the Assistant Camp Director through my first year of seminary. I can still hear Morton loudly proclaiming, “It’s fun to be

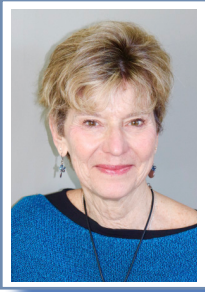
a Christian.” I can say that I have found it fun to be a priest; he gave that to me. And, happily, it was at camp that I met Betty. Such a blessing.

I was also sustained by the many opportunities of study and reflection through seminars, continuing education, and the attainment of a Doctor of Ministry from Hartford Seminary. Mentored in my project by Sister Miriam Theresa Winter, I addressed the effect of liturgy on the development of a ministry of social action.

I am sustained and blessed by Brian’s embracing of this “old warrior” as a Priest Associate at St. Christopher’s.

Finally, I have had a wonderful life with Betty, which has included praying together daily. Betty and prayer have sustained me, and kept me joyful and faithful to my vocation. Blessed be God!

Pastoral Care Initiatives



Judith Felton
Pastoral
Associate

After more than a year of living in COVID-time, we are at the threshold of hope, feeling the promise of regathering. I know I'm not alone in feeling so excited to see each other face to face, yet there is also a bit of trepidation. Before us is a very unique and particular type of re-entry, requiring our pastoral gifts of kindness, compassion, patience, and prayer. We are up

for this though; if the past many months have taught us anything, it is that we are a strong, loving, and deeply caring community.

In the last edition of *Soundings*, I wrote about the pastoral care provided to many parishioners by our Stephen Ministers and our pastoral care team. Because of their heartfelt connections and consistent support to many, we can rest in gratitude that the pastoral needs of our parish continue to be addressed.

In addition to the work of our pastoral care teams, I have continued to offer a weekly Zoom Bereavement Support Group, open to parishioners and the community. As we all know, many have suffered deep loss during the pandemic. Given the accompanying isolation, the process of working through grief has felt very lonely for some. Those who attend the weekly bereavement group find support and companionship during this difficult journey. Should you or someone you know be in need of such support, please call me.

Outlined below are some new initiatives that emerged over the past few months as well:

- **Through the Storm Door:** Peter Hughes is the mastermind of this wonderful initiative, which helps us stay connected to parishioners, especially those who live alone, by offering greetings and seasonal gifts "through the storm door." Following his lead, several volunteers delivered Advent wreaths during Advent and palms on Palm Sunday to around 60 parishioners. Many thanks to Patrice Milley, Peter Hughes, and Bob Braman for providing the wreaths, to Bridgette Renaud and Sue Sargent for ordering palms, to Jeff Arnold, Mary Bast, Peter Hughes, and David Smith for ensuring the implementation of this initiative, and, finally, to all the volunteers who delivered the gifts.

- **Friends Helping Friends:** Recently our parish responded with enormous generosity to an appeal for funding to assist a member of our parish with home repairs. From this appeal, we have been able to establish a Friends Helping Friends fund. The purpose of this fund is quite simple: to assist members of our parish with the cost of home repairs necessary for their safety and security. Opportunities for assistance will be identified by members of our parish who regularly do pastoral visits, such as the Rector, myself, Stephen Ministers, and others. As requests come forward they will be reviewed by the Pastoral Associate and the Friends Helping Friends team: Peter Hughes, Tom Cottrell, and Bob Braman. Please contact me if you are aware of someone who could benefit.
- **Priscilla Chick Memorial Fund for Pastoral Care:** In honor of their mother, the daughters of beloved parishioner Priscilla Chick wished to establish a fund that would reflect Priscilla's deep love for St. Christopher's and her legacy. After careful consideration of Priscilla's love for people, her ability to make everyone feel like they were her new best friend, her skill and talent as the Parish Nurse, and her gift of providing and receiving pastoral care, this fund was established as a means of addressing the pastoral needs of our parish. How wonderful that Priscilla will be remembered in this way and how grateful we are.
- **Tea, a Good Book, and Conversations Exploring the Sacred:** As a means of staying connected during the short days of winter and early spring, I facilitated two book groups, the first focusing on *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor and the second focusing on *An Altar in the World* by the same author. Some wonderful discussions ensued!

In addition to all of the above, I continue to offer pastoral care and counsel to individuals and encourage you to share my availability with others.

Many thanks to this parish for providing the leadership and support needed to uphold pastoral care. Not a day goes by that I am not grateful for the care and collaboration so evident at St. Christopher's. I welcome your ideas for and participation in the work of pastoral care. Please feel free to contact me at 860-301-7481 or by emailing me. I love to hear from you.

Uncommon Thrift Has Strong Start in 2021



Louise Montross
Manager,
Uncommon Thrift

Uncommon Thrift, the former St. Christopher's Gift and Consignment Shop, opened for the year on February 12, with a new name and facelift, and was off to the races! The shop had never opened so early in the season, but with more people in town, based on the circumstances of COVID-19, it was the busiest winter many can remember

and the stars were aligned. With a full contingent of talented volunteers, plenty of donations, and a mild winter, it has proved to be an Uncommonly strong season!

We expanded the social media presence to include a monthly email newsletter, weekly Facebook postings, online sales, and an Instagram account. It has broadened our reach, increased our presence in the area, and when we open on Thursdays, people are often waiting to snap up something that was posted on Facebook the night before.



A shopper entering Uncommon Thrift



Priscilla Chick
(also a faithful volunteer at the thrift shop!)

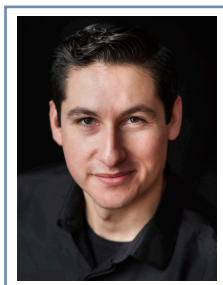
We are also glad to report that a new and more updated point of sale system has been installed that is simpler to use, touch free, enables us to have better selling information, and will be less expensive. Thank you David Smith for your efforts in moving us forward!

With 50 percent of our volunteers and donations coming from outside of the congregation, we see Uncommon Thrift being a conduit to the community and a partner with the Chatham Food Pantry. Another first, and something we hope to continue: vouchers for \$50 were handed out in December to clients of the Chatham Food Pantry.

We head into summer with great enthusiasm and lots of new ideas. We will be sponsoring a Whale in the Park designed by a talented Cape artist, and we will be participating in the Oars in the Stores event sponsored by the town.

We thank you for your continued support of Uncommon Thrift, whether it be donations, volunteering, or coming by to shop, always looking for the "Unexpected."

The Pieter J. Schiller Memorial Pipe Organ Installed



Maury A. Castro
Organist &
Choirmaster

Early on Monday morning, April 12, an enormous truck pulled up on Main Street in front of St. Christopher's, bringing to fruition a dream that has been alive for almost two decades: a new pipe organ for our church. A handful of staff and volunteers joined the six artist-builders from the Dobson Pipe Organ Company in emptying the contents of the truck into the church and Parish Hall. Three weeks of construction ensued, after which the physical installation of the instrument was completed.

The next phase of work begins on May 23, when a new set of artist-builders will begin to voice and tune the instrument. This is a process that will take many weeks. This can be a very frustrating time in the

construction of a new instrument. After all, it's all there in front of us! Why can't we hear it? The answer is that each of the 1,855 pipes needs to be carefully adjusted, mechanically, to create a sound that is not only distinctly beautiful, but a sound that is harmonious with the rest of the 1,854 pipes! This is a crucial part of the building process, and makes all the difference for the enjoyment of the listener. Remember: This instrument should easily last 200 years; a couple of months of preparation is nothing compared to that tenure, but well worth the investment.

All dedicatory events were of course put off due to the pandemic. As we resume a normal liturgical life, the Organ Dedication Task Force will begin to chart appropriate dedicatory events, including a dedicatory liturgy. In the immortal words of Pieter Schiller, for whom the instrument is named, "Onward and Upward!"





508-945-2832

stchristopherschatham.org

The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Rector

The Rev. Dr. John Martin
Priest Associate

Judith Felton
Pastoral Associate

Maury A. Castro
Organist & Choirmaster;
Communications Director

Debra Gebhardt
Director of Children,
Youth, and Families

Bridgette Renaud
Parish Administrator/
Assistant Treasurer

Ali Crockett
Facilities Manager

Peter Hughes
Treasurer

Sandra Bowden
Curator, The Gallery

Ted and Martha Miller
Managers, Food Pantry

Lou Augustin
Sexton

Earth-Honoring Faith Update

Bravo to the supporters of the 100% Solar Project, whose generosity raised \$26,189—achieving our goal, and then some! We can't wait to celebrate the installation of the final 35 panels, which you made possible. All funds go toward purchasing and installing the panels. Our special thanks to all for making that happy day a reality. Going fully solar is good for St Christopher's and good for the planet.

For the third year of E-HF activities, we are broadening ways to achieve earth-honoring goals. Efforts are underway to realign our activities to include Eco-Justice, building on knowledge gained from the Sacred Ground program. It's notable that St. Christopher's members already support the Chatham Food Pantry and Uncommon Thrift, both of which serve the greater community. While still in the formative stage,

E-HF initiatives fall roughly into the following 3 groupings:

- **Food and Faith**—What are ways we can make food choices that are kind to the Earth? How might we support more equitable distribution of clean foods?
- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**—As a church, we have reduced single use plastic to a minimum. What are other ways we can improve?
- **Energy Usage at Church and in our Homes**—Making use of free energy audits both in the church building and in our homes can lead to reduced costs and greater efficiency.

We will focus on determining best practices, educating ourselves, and advocating for policies that support God's creation. If you're interested, come join us. Meeting time: third Thursday of each month at 2 pm via Zoom. Please contact Peggy Davis at peggol@comcast.net to find out more information.

Parish Statistics

Deaths

Alfred (Al) Haven, Jr.
October 7, 2020

The Rev. Marshall Hunt
December 1, 2020

Priscilla Chick
January 27, 2021

Sidney L. Harvey
November 6, 2020

Elizabeth (Liz) Naughton
January 5, 2021

Sara Sibley Lenhart
February 11, 2021

Carol English
November 19, 2020

Elizabeth Rhuda
January 26, 2021

Theodore (Ted) Fritsch
February 24, 2021

Church e-mail list: If you are not on the church email list and would like to be, please subscribe yourself at the bottom of the homepage of the church website, www.stchristopherschatham.org, or email Maury A. Castro at mcastro@stchristopherschatham.org. By adding your address to the list, you will receive the midweek e-mail and periodic messages from the Rector.

Digital Soundings: All who are on the email list receive *Soundings* electronically via email, and it is available on the website. If you would like to be taken off the print list, please contact Bridgette in the parish office.



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Chatham, Massachusetts 02633

Spring 2021

Non-Profit Organization

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Art Exhibition: From Eden to Eternity

The current exhibition, *From Eden to Eternity*, is comprised of molas, which are colorfully appliquéd pieces of fabric handcrafted by the Cuna Indian women of the islands in the Gulf of San Blas and used for clothing, decoration, etc. Read all about this remarkable art form on The Gallery at St. Christopher's page on the church website.



Naming of the Animals



Mola