



on

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY — October 1, 2023

“Six Pillars of a Healthy Church”



One of my passions in life as a priest is to help grow the church. I have come to believe that healthy churches grow in three ways. They grow spiritually in Christ, numerically in new members and financially in the gifts and offerings of parishioners. When people ask how can churches achieve such growth, I share with them the six pillars of a healthy church. You can remember these six pillars by the acronym **SWEEPS** – Service, Worship, Evangelism, Education, Pastoral Care and Stewardship.

Service. Bishop William Burrill would say, “The church that lives to itself dies by itself.” Service is meeting needs, healing hurts, and caring for the vulnerable in our community. It is having an outreach orientation, thinking of others and not just ourselves. It is not just saying love with our lips but expressing love in our lives. Love always expresses itself in deeds – in acts of kindness, mercy and generosity. Showing love is the greatest witness to our Christian faith. As a post-Vatican II Roman Catholic song put it: “They will know we are Christians by our love.”

Worship. Every Sunday Episcopalians profess our faith in Word and Sacrament in the use of The Book of Common Prayer. We come from different backgrounds, have different experiences, and see the world in different ways, but we are one in our worship of God. Bishop Michael Marshall said that the church is a community of people who have nothing in common except Jesus Christ in whom they have all things in common. We all have our idiosyncrasies, our unique mannerisms, habits, and speech. We are certainly not all alike, but by the grace of God we are all drawn to the Lord's Table to eat the Lord's food – to feast on Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Someone once said that if you want to know what Episcopalians believe,

look at how they worship. In almost every Episcopal church you see the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty – God’s presence revealed and proclaimed.

Evangelism. William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury during World War II, said that the Church exists for the benefit of those who do not belong to its membership. That means engaging in evangelism: sharing the good news of God’s love in Jesus, so that all persons come to know him as Savior, follow him as Lord, and live as active members of the church. The challenge for the church today is how to share the Gospel with a growing number of people who never attend church or may not even know the Christian story. This is no easy task in our secular culture, and yet Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all people (Mt. 28:19-20). We have a wonderful message to tell: God’s unconditional love in Jesus that transforms lives, forgives our sins and gives us the hope to face the future with faith and courage, confident that the best is yet to come.

Education. Christian education is more than information. It is formation leading to transformation. Education is more than learning the basics of the Christian faith. It is about experiencing God on a personal level – knowing God not off the top of your head but from the depths of your heart. A healthy church is one where members are growing in faith, using their spiritual gifts in ministry and living faithfully in a rapidly changing world. To put it crassly, we need to think of ourselves as in the “God business.” People who come to church expect an encounter with God – to experience God in a personal, powerful way. How can we help people experience God? How can we better explore faith questions in a nurturing and non-threatening manner? And how can we balance the head with the heart so that we reach both thinkers and feelers? We need both a rational faith that is intelligible and a supernatural faith that is felt more than understood.

Pastoral Care. Quality pastoral care ministries offer a loving and grace-filled response to the joys and pains of being human. Caring for the elderly, the sick, the homebound and people in crisis is the heart of a loving church. No member should fall through the cracks, or be forgotten, ignored or disregarded. Every member is entitled to the love and support of a caring church family. While clergy do a great deal of pastoral care, the New Testament model is that members minister to members – what we call every member ministry. I encourage you to think about your spiritual gifts and how you might use them at church and in the community.

Stewardship. The new life in Christ leads to a new lifestyle in Christ. Stewardship is everything I do after I say I believe. It is connecting belief and behavior, creed and conduct, the profession of my faith with the practice of my faith. Often, we think of stewardship only in terms of money, but it actually involves our whole lives. It is about our response to the unfailing, unlimited love of God. What can I give to God when God has given me everything? That is a humbling question which each of us must ponder ourselves. I love the way the hymnwriter Isaac Watts put it:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine, / that were an offering far too small; / love so amazing, so divine, / demands my soul, my life, my all.”

This fall I encourage you to think through these six pillars of a healthy church. Remember, we are all works in progress. None of us have arrived; we are all in process. We stumble at times, but God picks us up and we move forward. Of this I am certain: God is with us through all the ups and downs of our lives. Never lose hope because God is with us always.

Blessings,
Fr. Gary Nicolosi

Fr. Carlos is away this week at a clergy conference. Fr. Nicolosi is our guest contributor. Dr. Gary Nicolosi is an Episcopal priest and lawyer who has served in churches and on diocesan staff in the United States and Canada. He has written hundreds of articles and led seminars and workshops on church vitality across North America. Gary is passionate about transforming lives in Jesus and forging a way forward for the church in a secular, postmodern world.

Readings for The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 Philippians 2:1-13 Psalm: 25:3-9 Matthew 21:28-32

CALENDAR

Note: We continue worshipping in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer at 10:00am are held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY October 1, 2023 The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church
11:30 Blessing of the Animals in All Saints' Courtyard
Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org
Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org
Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children
Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am
Christian Formation Meets next on Sunday October 8 at Noon
in the Rector's Office. Book Study: "God's Secretaries: The Making of

the King James Bible” by Adam Nicolson

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chapel

THURSDAY Spanish Class 1:00pm to 3:00pm in the Flower Room. Taught by Fr. Carlos

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY **October 8, 2023** **The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Mass in All Saints’ Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

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OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

www.allsaintschurch.org