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*The Temptation of Christ (Luke 4)*  
*(Peter Paul Rubens, 1620)*

## From Father Douglas

Dear People of St Andrew's Parish,

I hope you are doing well and have begun the observance of a blessed and holy Lent.

As I announced last week, **beginning this Sunday, 06 March, we will no longer be requiring anyone to wear a mask in worship (or any other parish event). Anyone who chooses to wear a mask, however, is welcome to do so.**

This decision, which I vetted with the Worship Committee and then sought the Vestry's approval of, takes into account several current realities: The Omicron surge is firmly in retreat; vaccination rates are, presumably, about as high as they are likely to go in the near term; and many state and local governments and businesses are lifting their masking requirements.

I believe our collective national mindset about COVID is changing, as

well. Many of us are, both publicly and privately, now discussing COVID in terms of living with it, as with the common cold or influenza, rather than eradicating it altogether. Over the last week, I have read a few articles in which the notion of 'individual decision; social responsibility' has been discussed: Each person chooses whether or not to wear a mask, but also takes cognizance of the fact that choosing not to wear one in the presence of certain factors (*e.g.*, not being vaccinated; having been exposed to COVID recently, etc) may have adverse consequences for others. Another public health thought leader spoke in terms of masks being like raincoats: We all own them, but we wear them when we need to and not all of the time. I find all of this consistent with the Christian hope that we have in and through Our Lord and Savior, complemented by the gifts of knowledge and wisdom with which our Creator has endowed us.

The Worship Committee and I briefly considered a two-fold approach in which masks would be required for those who were not vaccinated but not required for those who were. As a pastor, however, I am not comfortable creating any such division within our parish family. As your priest, I *do* presume that if you are not vaccinated, you either have a sound medical reason for this that you've discussed with your physician; or you have prayed deeply about this and discerned, with the Holy Spirit, that this decision is the right one for you.

We may reinstate a mask requirement if we experience another surge. The latest guidance from the CDC is to look at a three-fold measure (number of COVID cases, number of hospitalizations and availability of hospital beds) to determine when masks are recommended. Right now, Litchfield County is "Low" on this score; universal mask-wearing is indicated only at "High."

When you come to church on Sunday, you will notice a new sign on the door: "Masks are optional, and welcome." I think this a good tone for us to take now—and one that allows us all to practice the dual mission Jesus calls us to: generous hospitality and heartfelt love of others.

\*\* \*\* \*

In my early Lenten readings, I came across the following excerpt from a poem by Oscar Wilde. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol [*i.e.*, Jail]" is a long meditation on the life of convicts in a late nineteenth century prison, with a particular eye toward the hanging of a man sentenced to death. I find that these three stanzas, however, speak well nigh universally for those who choose to contemplate their own sinfulness—and Christ's promised forgiveness. And so, I offer then to you for the beginning of your Lenten journey.

... And thus we rust Life's iron chain  
Degraded and alone:  
And some men curse, and some men weep,  
And some men make no moan:  
But God's eternal Laws are kind  
And break the heart of stone.

And every human heart that breaks,  
In prison-cell or yard,  
Is as that broken box that gave  
Its treasure to the Lord,

And filled the unclean leper's house  
With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah! happy day they whose hearts can break  
And peace of pardon win!  
How else may man make straight his plan  
And cleanse his soul from Sin?  
How else but through a broken heart  
May Lord Christ enter in?

\*\* \*\* \*

Take good care, and may God continue to bless the work of the Kingdom you are doing.

In the peace and love of Christ,  
Douglas+  
[Frdouglas.sak@gmail.com](mailto:Frdouglas.sak@gmail.com)  
860-592-0171 (rectory, and *also* rings on mobile)

P S We have only three people signed up for our nine-week Tuesday evening exploration of *The Way of Love*; I hope more of you will join us. More information appears below and in the mailing you recently received. I ask that you prayerfully consider whether you are being called to deepen your walk in Christ's love by becoming part of time for sharing, praying and reflecting.

## Our Interim Director of Music: Welcome, Susan Guse!



The Music Commission is delighted to announce that **Susan Guse** (pronounced "goosey") has agreed to serve as our Interim Music Director through the end of August, while we complete our search for a permanent



director. Susan's first day with us was Ash Wednesday.

A resident of Hopewell Junction, New York, Susan says she enjoys a beautiful commute to Kent. Most recently, she supplied for three months at Trinity Episcopal, in Fishkill, New York, and one month at Zion Episcopal, in Wappingers Falls.

From January 1990 until her retirement in August 2020, Susan was Children's Choir Director for eight years, and then Music Director for twenty-two years at St John's Lutheran Church in Poughkeepsie. The church music program expanded rapidly during her tenure. Saint John's installed a new Casavant Pipe Organ in 1998 and purchased five octaves of handbells and five octaves of chimes in 2000. Under Susan's supervision, St John's had four Handbell Choirs, Children's Choirs, an Adult Choir as well as a String Ensemble, Recorder Ensemble and Brass Ensemble.

Prior to moving to the Hudson Valley in 1989, Susan served as Music Director at St Mark's Lutheran in St Louis, Missouri, and St John's Lutheran in Dayton, Ohio. She has a Master's Degree in Sacred Music from Wittenberg University and a Bachelor's Degree from Smith College (majoring in music).

Susan and her husband Mike (retired from IBM East Fishkill) have three adult sons, two grand daughters, ages 5 and 7, and two small dogs.

Please be sure to greet Susan when you see her on Sunday and welcome her to the St Andrew's parish family!

## This Week at St Andrew's

Friday, 04 March	Prayer & Meditation	5:30 pm
Saturday, 05 March	Kent Singers Concert: <i>Songs of the British Isles</i>	3:00 pm
Sunday, 06 March	Holy Eucharist: <i>Lent 1 (in person only)</i>	8:30 am
Sunday, 06 March	Choir Rehearsal	9:15 am
Sunday, 06 March	Holy Eucharist: <i>Lent 1 (in person and live-streamed)</i>	10:30 am
Sunday, 06 March	Kent Singers Concert: <i>Songs of the British Isles</i>	3:00 pm
Monday, 07 March	Bible Study: <i>The Gospel of Luke</i>	11:00 am
Wednesday, 09 March	Rite of Reconciliation (private Confession)	5:00 pm

Wednesday, 09 March	<i>The Way of the Cross</i>	5:30 pm
Wednesday, 09 March	Mid-week Eucharist ( <i>in person and live-streamed</i> )	6:00 pm
Wednesday, 09 March	A.A. for Women ( <i>Zoom meeting; email us for info</i> )	7:00 pm
Thursday, 10 March	A.A. Meeting ( <i>Parish House</i> )	7:30 am
Thursday, 10 March	Initial Meeting of St Andrew's Widows' Gathering (soon to be renamed!)	10:00 am
Thursday, 10 March	Officers Meeting	5:00 pm
Thursday, 10 March	Al-Anon Meeting	7:00 pm

## Mark Your Calendars for These Events...

Details about each of these events can be found later in this issue of the *Epistle*

Saturday, 19 March	Music in the Nave: <i>Manhattan String Quartet</i>	4:00 pm
Saturday, 26 March	"Her-Story," a cabaret celebration of famous women; performed by Suzanne Tanner, narrated by Katherine Almquist, dance by Lyra Wilder (Reception to follow)	4:00 pm
Sunday, 27 March	Open House at the newly renovated Christ Church Cathedral (Hartford)	3:00-5:00 pm

## St Andrew's Current COVID Status

### THE PARISH IS OPEN.

We have now resumed all of our usual pre-COVID practices except the sharing of the Common Cup; we distribute the Wine in individual portions.

We will continue to livestream our 10:30 liturgy on Sundays and our mid-week services.

## Worship During Lent: Wednesday Evenings



On **Wednesday evenings during Lent**, our customary 6:00 pm Eucharist will be preceded by an opportunity for the Rite of Reconciliation (more popularly known as "Confession"; *Book of Common Prayer*, p 447), in private, at 5:00 pm; and, at 5:30 pm, by the *Way of the Cross*, a liturgy of 14 very short lessons that lead us to reflect on Jesus' sacrifice and death ... and our need of the forgiveness He's already given us. (You may come for one, two or all three of these offerings. They are separate rites, and you needn't stay for all of them.)

If you have never attended a mid-week Eucharist ... or if you're interested in exploring Confession or the Way of the Cross ... Lent is an excellent time to 'try on' one of these new liturgical practices and reflect on how it draws you closer to God. Please come!

## New for Lent: A Small Group Journey Through *The Way of Love*



**THE WAY OF LOVE**  
*Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*



Our primary Lenten offering this year will be a small group that will come together to journey through the Episcopal Church's *Way of Love*. The *Way of Love* is a set of seven very simple disciplines—shown in the graphic, above—intended to connect us with Jesus more regularly and more deeply in our daily lives. It is *not* a lot of reading or theology, but rather a call to personal reflection and experimentation (for example, trying to read the Bible for 10 minutes each day). A brief video introduction to the *Way* is available [here](#). While you can engage the *Way of Love* alone, it's an even richer spiritual journey when taken as a group: We are enriched by each others' experiences and supported by our commitment to the group.

Therefore, on nine Tuesday evenings, beginning on 08 March, a small group will come together at 6:00 pm in the Parish House. We'll share a simple supper and then take time to share with one another ... and discuss how to 'do' the *Way of Love* in our own lives. We'll close each evening with a brief service of Compline, and then be on our way home no later than 8:00.

This really is a low-cost, low-risk spiritual 'try-on' that stresses flexibility, do-ability and being gentle with oneself. It's ideal for anyone who's seeking to go a little deeper ... to live a little more intentionally ... to hold their faith in their heart and not just their head. And all are welcome!! If you would like to be part of St Andrew's *Way of Love* small group (or if you have any questions), please let Fr Douglas know.

## Update from the St Andrew's Refugee Resettlement Team and an Opportunity to Welcome



The house in New Milford is move-in-ready. We anxiously await the family of six, including four children ages ten to fifteen. We expect them to be here in the next few weeks. Thank you to the Housing Team members and everyone who's been supporting us along the way.

As a way to welcome the family, Fr Douglas suggested that handwritten cards would be a great way to show the family that they are welcome and we are happy to have them here. Since the family speaks very little English, the

welcome messages should probably be short and to the point. We think that the children in our parish could especially reach the children of the arriving family by creating cards with artwork and pictorial messages. Please bring your cards and creations to coffee hour at the Parish House **this Sunday, 06 March**. There will be blank cards available on these Sundays if you would like to create a card on the spot. We will deliver the cards to the house.

Thank you, St Andrew's!

## Summary of the February Vestry Meeting



The Vestry's meeting on 17 February—the first for our newly elected members—was devoted mostly to welcomes and orientation. The Vestry also approved several routine motions governing our financial and banking operations and appointing chairs of various parish commissions and committees. The annual Parochial Report for 2021 was also approved.

## "New" Vestments for Lent

You may notice that we are using new, deep violet vestments for Lent this year. I received these as an ordination gift from the very first parish I ever served, as an intern before I began seminary: Holy Apostles' in Yardville, New Jersey. A parishioner named Lynda with whom I'd grown close during my time there had, in turn, donated them to Holy Apostles'. The vestments had been made for her father, who was, like me, also a 'second-career' priest. Very sadly, Lynda's father died not very long after he was ordained to the priesthood.

This set of vestments includes a frontlet, which hangs only part-way to the ground, rather than the complete frontal to which we are accustomed. The frontlet enables us to view the legs of the Altar and see it as a true table where, indeed, a banquet is served at every Holy Eucharist.

*-- Fr Douglas*

## This Date in Our Parish History





We recently observed an important milestone in St Andrew's history. Tuesday, 22 February, marked the 214th anniversary of the meeting held to form and organize an Episcopal parish in Kent. While there had been Anglican, and then Episcopal, worship in Kent since the 1760s, it wasn't until 1808 that formal action was taken to establish a parish here. And look at us now!

*(Our thanks to John Barton for pointing this out – and providing a parish newsletter from 1958 that marked the 150th anniversary of this occasion.)*

## Help Support the Kent Food Bank



Please help our parish family continue to support of the Kent Food Bank by sending a check in any amount to:

Kent Community Fund  
P O Box 262  
Kent, CT 06757  
*memo: Food Bank*

These funds will be used to purchase vouchers for local families in need, under the direction of Kent's Social Services Director. In addition, it is useful for the Director to have IGA gift cards to give to families who are in need. Please consider purchasing a card, for \$25 or \$50, and taking it to Town Hall or dropping it in the donations basket in the Narthex. (You can also place it in the

offering plate, marked for the Food Bank.)

The Kent Food Bank also accepts food donations. They are especially in need of staples such as **beans, rice, tea, coffee, sugar, nuts, hot & cold breakfast cereals, peanut butter, jellies, jams and tuna**. Make certain that the 'Best by ...' dates are not past! Please remember that the Food Bank accepts pet foods as well!

You may drop off food items on Fridays from 10:00 am - 12:00 noon in the back of the Community House on Main Street. You may also place donations in the basket in the church Narthex or in the bin in the breezeway at the rear of the Rectory.

## Lections for this Week

### The Last Sunday After the Epiphany

*Year C*

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-2,9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13



## Past Services and Homilies

Please click on the link below in order to view past services on YouTube and to read homilies from previous Sundays located on our website.

[Homilies and Past Services](#)

## Worship Services

**-Sunday-**

**Holy Eucharist**

8.30 a.m. & 10.30 a.m.

Rite I at 8.30, First Sundays;

Healing Service at 8.30,

Third Sunday

In person

8.30 a.m. & 10.30 a.m.





(10.30 a.m. available live stream on YouTube)



**-Wednesday-  
Holy Eucharist**  
6.00 p.m.

**-Friday-  
Prayer & Meditation**  
5.30 p.m.

**-Holy Days-  
Holy Eucharist**  
6.00 p.m.



## 12 Step Meetings

**Wednesdays**  
A.A. for Women 7:00 p.m.  
*Zoom meeting*  
*email us for info.*

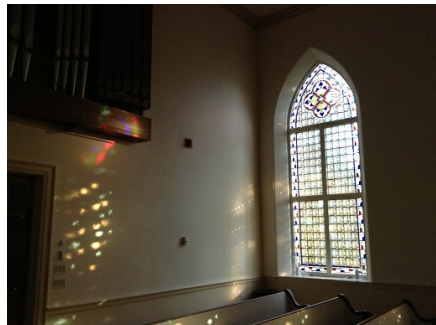
**Thursdays**  
A.A. at 7.30 a.m.  
(Parish House)  
*resumed*  
Al-Anon. at 7.00 p.m.  
(Old Vestry Room)  
*Suspended until March*

**Fridays**  
A.A. at 8 p.m.  
(Great Room)  
*temporarily until First Church opens*  
*resumed*



## Parish Staff

**The Rev Douglas S  
Worthington,  
Priest in Charge**  
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860-592-0171





**Thomas W Holcombe,**  
Organist & Director of Choirs

**KC Compton,**  
Parish Administrator

**Joan I Cassel**  
Financial Secretary

**Randy Osolin,**  
Verger



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Parish office open everyday except Friday from 10 am- 5 pm  
(2 pm on Thursdays)

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