

Pandemic Updates

We asked church members to share how they are doing and what they have been up to while the pandemic has kept us apart. Here are the responses.

From Jill and Caro+

We have both been staying very busy with our work - working from home is a challenge as we have to work around each other and the parrots, dog and cats. Fortunately Caro+ has an outside office so we aren't trying to work right next to each other. We are walking as much as usual and have several exercise classes each week. Many nights we relax watching the very silly British quiz show QI on Britbox.

From Kevin Cadigan

Judith and I are in North Carolina in a rather gorgeous old folks home. It's full of Democrats where quarantining, masks, social distancing and common sense keep the Covid infection at bay. Married for fifty six years, we muddle along. I keep a truce with her dog who hates me and her cat who bites me. She maintains the polite fiction that I have anecdotes she has not heard. Are we bored? Of course we are. What day of the week is it? Never quite sure we check back and forth. But in a pandemic there are worse things than being bored.

We are among the unreasonably blessed. We have the surety of safety, food and shelter and a love that can not be untangled by siege.

From Brad and Susan Miller

Brad and I cherish walking with the pup on the beach. I bought a paint-by-numbers kit and haven't got very far down the numbers. Comparably, I bought a language course and haven't got very far. -- it seems as if we have an eternity to finish things because shut downs will be forever. For a while I was "doing" 3 churches on Sunday: one in Florence, Italy where an old friend was interim Rector, old parish in Durango, and - of course - St Bens. Now just doing the latter two. Blessings all

From Ginny Conrow

As a healthcare worker in a primary care office, 2020 has been a challenging year, to say the very least! The key for me has been flexibility, accepting what is in the moment and working with it. As co-workers, our office staff has grown closer, working together and supporting one another as we face uncertainty and a host of other problems and annoyances. I cherish solitary time away from work, as well as time with friends and family. I've been hiking in many of the wonderful areas in our own backyard with girlfriends who can laugh and share together from the heart--a precious gift!

From Esta Kandarian

I've been busy at the Abundance Shop since we reopened at the beginning of June. I've been so grateful to have somewhere to go, to have useful work to do, to be able to talk to people in person,

and to have a paycheck! At home I've been working my way through my TBR collection acquired at the shop. I estimate I have enough reading material for a four year stay at home order.

From Dianne Long

There is no end to amusements at home. Walking the dogs, reading, sketching, piano practice, Italian lessons online, yard work, and culinary experiments. Other than suffering from COVID early in the season, all perfectly normal. Best wishes to all.

From Jo Oliver

As some of you may know I bought a farm in Vermont and moved back home in October.

I was fortunate to get here before it got cold and had time to get my firewood stacked and prepare for a real winter after 7 years on the Central Coast. All is well so far, though my dog keeps looking hopefully for the door that leads to the back bay! I wish everyone a peaceful and safe New Year! Be well!

From Jane Wu

During the fall I worked on a back/side yard patio garden and dog run. I spent many hours obsessing over things such as planters that were substantial but lightweight, types of plants that would live in the hottest side of the house, how attract the most birds and butterflies! I Scrounged materials for a homemade bird bath (do you KNOW what birdbaths cost??), looked for independent metal-worker artisans for garden art and perused fall sales for summer umbrellas and chairs. Had lively discussions with my wife about the necessity (or not)of having an outdoor clock.

I have spent lovely hours in the garden being with God and in nature and I forget I am in town in a mobile home park.

I've cooked meals for neighbors and delivered them and read lots of books, mostly fantasy and British mysteries. Watched as many movies and TV series that had sensible dialogue and actors over 14.

Sharon and I have had many small adventures with Charlie walking and taking drives. She's been Zoom singing. Somehow, we're busy.



From Roz Malone

Riding the exercycle in the garage with the garage door open and chatting with folks walking by and handing out doggie treats to canine friends taking rides up or down Hwy 1, Zooming with friends and family, sharing graduations, worship, dinner parties all virtually enjoying Tuesday morning prayer and book study with Hollister Institute participants reading mostly British mysteries streaming BritBox TV programs like Silent Witness phone chats with friends near and far hanging out with my sweetheart socially distanced wine on the deck with one friend at a time or a couple from the same household delivering Food Bank boxes to folks in our neighborhood

From Barry Turner

Church work, home improvements, family history, children support, grandchild day care.

From Steve Cake

Steve has been gleaning again when gleans are scheduled, but we have hit a mid-winter lull. I am hoping to get back to that soon.

I built a bench for Karin out of scrap lumber collected over the last few years; it looks pretty good.

Lots of reading on serious subjects, and not so serious, and tonight I am enjoying the sound of rain on the roof, without feeling driven to take my usual evening walk.

I miss you all; any chance to return will be very welcome. Viva la vaccine!

From Jill Denton

I'm grateful for all our fur and feather kids and the opportunity to be with them lot more every day...watching Bunny Love our cock-
atoo and BubuLinda his sweetheart making love, playing, singing and demolishing their house made from a Samuel Adams box. Cuddling with Shadow Maria Rilke and enjoying our natural beauty with him daily. And playing with the cats...especially young Wesley James!

From Laura Thompson

The year started relatively normal & we were looking forward to an extended trip to the British Isles. Around March, we canceled our reservations as Covid 19 had ascended upon the world. Caution came upon us along with washing hands repeatedly, wearing masks & NOT looking forward to the upcoming Presidential Election. We carefully planned a road trip to Oregon & WA. Our faithful 16 year old companion, Scarlett, was in poor health & we achingly had to end her life on Sept. 1. On Sept. 2 we left very sadly on our road trip. This was the first time we did not have our beloved MinPin, Scarlett with us.

On the Oregon coast we encountered smoky air, road closures & news of mass evacuations because of MANY fires. Sadness overcame us as we saw hundreds of people camping along the roads, sleeping in their cars & hurrying for shelters. The stark realization of what many people were experiencing hit us squarely in the face.

With God's Blessings, we safely visited my daughter, Alice, in Portland, Oregon & long-time friends in WA.

After a period of normal abnormality, we again planned a road trip following the November 3rd Presidential Election! When we arrived in Albuquerque, NM we celebrated the outcome with champagne & our high school friends. With a multitude of cautions & safety measures, we managed to see friends in Deming, NM, Brian McHugh & Dennis Much, whom many of you will remember. Onto Phoenix & Buckeye, Arizona carefully visiting old friends.

After returning home, the deaths in the US from the virus has shot up to over 300,000. Closer to home 2 beloved members of St. Ben's have joined their Maker. Our government shamefully plods along like a blind & toothless humanoid. I wonder if the current man in the White House will ever leave.

Thank you St. Benedict & Shepherd Caro & all those faithful followers that attend to the chores of our church & our community services. May 2021 hold more Peace, Love & Blessings.

From Judith and Kevin Cadigan

We are so grateful that the worst thing we have to complain of is boredom! Kevin and I are at our retirement community in Chapel Hill, NC, close to our younger daughter and her family; normally we would have come out to Los Osos for five months or six months over the summer, but of course not in 2020 (though the family actually drove out and spent some six weeks in our house). We hope so much to get there in 2021, as we miss our friends and the climate! But we are extremely lucky to be here; the community is vigilant to keep Covid out, so far very successfully. We order one meal a day, usually dinner, which is then delivered to us, but there are no gatherings of more than 15 people and those only outdoors under a tent - heated and lighted but drafty! We now have an Episcopalian evening worship service every other Sunday in which I take part, often reading one of the lessons; on the other Sundays I try to "attend" St. Ben's via the Facebook live-stream, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time. We meet the family on our patio for lunch most weekends when the weather is warm enough, or in summer cool enough; those meetings are another of our many blessings. With love to everyone

From Ed Valentine

Ed Valentine here, frequently referred to as "hey you." In some ways, nothing exotic in my life to report, and in others a miracle. Fifth grandchild born Sept. 11 in ABQ New Mexico. We were there. Love to all.

From Pat Stoneman

I've been doing exercises with many different videos on YouTube. I picked up local veggies at Clark valley organic farm to avoid market, but they are on seasonal break right now.

From Benjamin Nucum

Advent and Christmastide has been darkness mixed with light. Darkness due to deepening depression, light because of the prayers of the Church and the daily office of the Book of Common Prayer, especially the Psalms.

From Leslie Stanley

Over the months I've found some things that absorb my attention, and make time at home enjoyable. One is cooking. I can really get involved in this! Time flies, and it's a very useful activity! Another is reading. I am a detail person, and love reading about how people do things. Right now, I'm reading "Everest-The First Ascent". It's about Dr. Griffith Pugh, an Englishman, who was asked to work on improving oxygen distribution units used by climbers, in this case, climbers who wanted to be first on Everest. Dr. Pugh designed new climbing boots, tent material, foam sleeping pads, and other items which eased the problems of frigid air, alarming winds, and oxygen delivery at high altitude. To help with the tedium of being housebound, exercise is the ticket for me. I take quick outdoor walks, and ride my exercise bicycle while watching TV. My outlook improves immediately!

From Jean Senter:

To keep somewhat sane, I turn my living room into a gym 2 or 3 days a week and work out. Then I drink a lot of coffee and eat chocolates and laugh with friends. To keep from dropping into a pit, I listen to Caro everyday, sometimes twice a day, whisper a blessing her way and give thanks.

From Karin Cake

I'm remembering months of waiting like we did during Bomb Drills in the 50s. "Sit quietly, don't talk or wiggle, wait for the All Clear signal to go back to what you were doing. Don't waste time discussing it."

After weeks turned into months, the pains began...physical, mental and spiritual. I realized I was breaking down like a horse that's gotten stiff, swollen and dispirited. I began my personal reclamation project by drinking lots more water, standing rather than sitting, reconnecting with my beloveds by phone (standing up), breathing more deeply, doing yoga on the beach in Hawaii and going barefoot in the morning on our little patch of grass. Now the pains are gone, my breathing is getting better and I'm even remembering more easily. Now I have a fresh start on my life, thanks to self-quarantining and all the good ideas during the coffee hour chats. Thanks to God for the gifts of healing in our human bodies!

From Cathy Gildea

My family is close enough to drive for a visit so we all carefully quarantined before Christmas. It was a true joy to be able to spend a week together and to have a full house for Christmas. There were lots of board games, bird walks, and movie memories to sustain us through the months ahead and we know we are fortunate to be able to savor these pleasures. Best wishes for a Happy New Year to all and a much brighter 2021!

From Maureen Titus

Ok, after all these months I should be totally organized at home. Hasn't happened YET!!! I am not expecting it to happen tomorrow either. There is always next week or next month. However, I have been busy with other projects and have been working with some wonderful dedicated volunteers from St. Ben's. Between the Abun-

dance Shop, Laundry Love and Community Dinner serving every Thursday evening I have not been bored or wondering what to do next. I so appreciate all of these people. During this time I have continued trying my best and to be "part of the solution, not be part of the problem". While I cannot make life better for all, I will attempt to help who I can through these great programs. Peace, Love and Hugs to Everyone

From Sarah Chesebro

Life in the Chesebro household is without a dull moment. We continue to look after Payton, our almost 2 year old granddaughter. We have recently moved Dian, David's sister, into an independent living facility in Santa Maria and are in the process of cleaning out and preparing her mobile home for sale with the help of John Cribb. David keeps busy with his Masonic duties and as Saint Benedict's Shadow Sacristan. Sarah is taking a break from her Caltrans work as a retired annuitant and is focusing more on her work at Saint Benedict's as the Director of the Altar Guild/Sacristan and the Provincial Representative of Altar Guild for Province VIII of the Episcopal Church. Happy New Year!

P. S. Sarah's mother, Marianne, turned 88 this year and is 'chomping at the bit' to drive her Jaguar once again up and down US 101 between San Bernardino and Los Osos.

From Mary Ellen Rico

Work (essential worker). Come home, take care of cats, house, and garden. Repeat 5 days a week. Best time of day is my almost daily nature lunch walk. On weekends, sleep in trying to catch up on some sleep lost during the week, take care of cats, house, and yard. When able, I've gone kayaking and hiking. Listening to music during most of it helps keep me sane.

From Celeste Pennington

Most mornings I walk near the ocean - often on the sand with my feet in the water. Sometimes the wind is so fierce that it's hard to stay upright. Covid is fierce. I'm finding that living in accord with it while not being blown over by it is a balancing act, if ever there was one. Some days I don't see a future that's any different from today which, frankly, is horrifying as the numbers rise and rise. But the virus hasn't stolen my ability to be delighted by things - like the bucket full of fresh water and washer fluid at the gas pump the other day - and by a FaceTime the other night with my granddaughter in SF, two hours of being with one another ever-so tenderly. We're nowhere near the end of this. I'm still practicing, balancing, learning. I hardly have a summary today. I do have everything I need to keep moving. My gratitude is profound. I'm doing the best I can. I trust that is enough.

From Louisa Beeler

I finally got enough courage to cut my own hair. Looks rather good!

From Lorraine Schwenk

This last quarter of 2020 has been strange and challenging. In September and October, work was so busy, I was frequently working more than 40 hours per week. It was a struggle with all the precautions for COVID plus the general desire of guests to "get away from all that" and pretend there was no virus. I found my voice. I kicked people out. I apologized, sometimes, too. And then, with the new SIP orders, my job has been cut back and I am struggling with the Unemployment Department to get my benefits rolling again. It made for a strange Christmas with few gifts and much fear and anxiety. Many opportunities for prayer.

Several churches and other spiritual organizations decided, without formal organization that I could see, to begin Advent observances November 1. This is in perfect harmony with my practice for years, so I was delighted to find new resources and opportunities.

Our kitties remain a blessing and I pray I get to have that vaccine early next year.

From Sandy Garvanian

Hiking was on my agenda for 2020, then Covid 19 hit...all the better.

I started out walking the streets of Templeton in late March and early April waving at the few drivers hungry for human contact. The people walking their dogs would keep their distance and the dogs seemed to long for human contact. It was a strange time...but I drew closer to my Creator on those walks interacting with nature and the birds. The second half of 2020 I spent hiking more in nature..Fiscalini Ranch, Montana De Oro, Elfin Forest. In the past couple of months I have been hiking with a couple of friends and venturing out to new places like the Gaviota Wind Caves. San Simeon and Lopez Lake.

From Alice Welchert

Most mornings I sit by the east window in our second story kitchen enjoying hot coffee and reading "The Sun" magazine. It's my quiet, peaceful time.

It's also a wonderful time to watch birds. I've added a second humming bird feeder and they are still whirring about guzzling nectar. Scrub jays and crows come for peanuts -- some they bury in the dirt for later, some they enjoy as take-out. Towhees hop around on the ground eating seeds and bugs. I have a birdbath attached to my back fence. They splash so enthusiastically I often have to refill it once or twice a day. Sometimes I just see the wet splash marks on the fence.

This past year we adopted two senior cats, Meow-meow and Clawdia. They are both quite ample and Clawdia looks like she's ready to have a litter of kittens (even though she's spayed). Most days I walk our dog, Chato, for an hour or more so he's worth his keep in the exercise department. Chato is a cross between a chihuahua and a holy terrier. Other than that I do Zoom Zumba twice a week and pilates once a week.

For entertainment Willie and I often watch movies and BBC crime dramas from the library and play the occasional game of Scrabble. I talk to my sister once a week for a long time about nothing much at all (it's an art) and now and then go on a "cheap date" with a

friend -- the Dollar Tree and local antique malls are favorite destinations. We sip Diet Cokes through straws discreetly slipped under our masks. Yup. Things are hopping on the 1500 block of 10th Street, that's for sure!

From Barbara Schippers

Fun with food has been the Saturday night solo event. "It begins with sweating the onions, red pepper and any other leftover veggie you might have, add a can of tomatoes, some tomato sauce, a little dash of vinegar, a touch of sugar, oregano, and S&P. If you have an overabundance of zucchini spiralize them and make a salad." Bake some bread...I'm tired of it...everyone's now gluten free or on keto.

Grocery bill, at the end of the Master Card month, comes in much higher than the gasoline bill. Hmmmm?

"It's Rainy and Cold today and I don't know what I'm going to do with myself. I'm tired of doing the same thing I do every day...and even though I have no business complaining about anything because it doesn't get any better...the glass is half-empty!!! It's not fair. I'm being cheated by you and everybody else. So...what are you going to do about it?"

I think I need to stop drinking...Naw!

"I think I'm glad to have a glass."

"The best presents can't be gift wrapped. Friendship & memories. What a great comfort...particularly these days.

A work-from-home-job would be nirvana. All I do now is work "at" home on "it". Oh, so Tiring. But am the luckiest girl I know."

"Traveling these days is like running across a battlefield hoping the Covid sniper doesn't pick you off as you race to the other side.

Gotta' be smart about it. The invader will be defeated but we have to hide from it until it's safe to come out. We've got another 6-8 months before we can drop our guard...slightly. It's not going away, but great memories will keep us going until we can live the moments again."

Hang on Sloopy! Keep the Faith! It's NOT the last dance!!!!

