

Volume 15, Issue 6
October 2021

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THE GOOD NEWS

TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER AND TO MAKE HIM BETTER KNOWN

St. Paul's Fall Stewardship Campaign is Under Way!

Sharon Pilmer

FAITH, GENEROSITY AND MISSION: GROWING TOGETHER is the theme for our annual Fall campaign, which will run from October 24 - November 14. Although we typically focus on our planned giving for the upcoming year for a few weeks in the Fall, I want to challenge all of us to think of stewardship as more than the annual pledge drive.



“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”—*Luke 6:38*.

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that our God is generous, giving, loving, forgiving and gracious. In response, God invites us to a loving response to His generosity, 365 days a year. When we examine our lives, we would be hard pressed not to see God's generous hand at work. When life is viewed through this lens, we are filled with gratitude.

Christian stewardship is the intentional and prayerful act of thanksgiving. It shapes how we manage our resources of time, ability and money. What we return to God through the church is only part of our stewardship practice.

In the coming weeks we will give thanks for the generosity of our people, the gathered community of faith that is St. Paul's Oakland. We will see how our gifts of time, talent and treasure translate into mission and ministry. When our collective giving is great, the possibilities for creating God's kingdom on earth are endless!

Our ingathering of pledges will culminate on November 14. Please mark this on your calendar and join us to celebrate! Questions? Comments? Ideas? Please get in touch with Sharon Pilmer: pilms@hotmail.com

RECONNECTION CONVERSATIONS



Opportunities for community fellowship and conversation have been limited during the pandemic. We have missed seeing each other and talking with you in person, so during the month of October we will be holding several “Reconnecting Conversations”. These will be hosted, small group gatherings, either outdoors or via Zoom, both on weekends and during the week. The purpose is fellowship and conversation. We are intentionally keeping size of the groups small (8 people) to help facilitate conversation.

Please [sign up here](#) to find a date and time that will work for you. Your host will get in touch with you via e-mail or phone to give you specifics about the meet up.

Rector's Reflection

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson

I'LL BE BACK!

This is one of my favorite movie lines, and anyone who knows anything about former governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, would remember that he is well known for this line in the *Terminator* franchise.

When I started my time off/vacation/sabbatical, I wasn't sure if I had it within me to use the famous line in regard to my relationship with St. Paul's. What I did know, with every fiber of my being, is that I was exhausted beyond measure. The body, the mind and the spirit were running close to empty and there was an urgent need for replenishment. Thankfully, the Episcopal Church has made provision for its clergy to intentionally engage the process of renewal and rest to allow us to rebalance our lives and ministries. Over the years, I have come to realize that the only way a long-term ministry can sustain and strengthen both the congregation and its ministers is when the ministers are serious about engaging in their sabbatical time. The amount of time afforded for sabbatical changes from diocese to diocese. In our diocese, it's five months for each five years of ministry with the congregation.



The COVID-19 pandemic has made it hard for clergy to take traditional sabbaticals. We normally try to go to conferences, workshops and other special programs directed at helping us stay up to date on all things ministry related. As I was preparing for my time away from St. Paul's, my focus this time around was not on meetings, events, conferences, or travel. My focus was rest and disconnecting. Believe it or not, I expended a lot of energy trying to find ways to do nothing and it was harder than I thought. Throughout the month of June, I was in conversation with our Senior Warden, Parish Administrator or Deacon every day. It took every single day of that month for me to arrive at a place where I finally felt comfortable not responding to a text, phone call or email from someone at St. Paul's.

July was my true sabbatical time. Under the theme of discernment, I started the month in conversation with Bishop Marc Andrus, our diocesan deployment officer and other colleagues in ministry. Each one of them loved me through the process of digging and searching deep within my heart, mind and soul to understand the Spirit's guidance for my present and future ministry. I entered the conversations feeling like I was in a dark tunnel with very little light of my own and no light at the end. By the end of July, both the tunnel and the horizon were hopeful and bright.

August was a month for restoration. I binge watched *Game of Thrones*, spent a week in Carmel doing nothing, avoided every scheduled board meeting and cooked a lot. By the last week of the month, I was ready. Ready to reengage with the world of church and ministry. Like Schwarzenegger's Terminator, I was ready to be back. Unlike the Terminator, I am not back with guns or a mind for destruction, but rather with a strong sense of call to build up the future ministry of St. Paul's Oakland.

From the Senior Warden Sharon Pilmer

During our long COVID-19 absence from our buildings many of us learned how many people's faith is inextricably bound to the building in which they usually worship. It took the whole way we worship to topple into a heap of rubble for us to think about the role our buildings play in our worship life. What COVID taught me is that it isn't 'an either or' but 'a yes and'... the beautiful, familiar, and memory-laden windows and walls of our church buildings fuel many for their work in the mission field. When out doing the difficult work of the gospel it's glorious to have a brick-and-mortar place to gather in thanksgiving, in lament and in everything that lies between.

The Rev. Cn. Cathy Dempsey-Sims, Canon to the Ordinary in the Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York.



I experienced this sentiment, as I am sure many of you did as well. Our sacred space is a gift. Stepping inside from the street feels to me almost like being in a different world. To say that I missed worshipping indoors would be an understatement.

As I write this article, we have had two indoor worship services inside our beloved building. It was great to be back indoors, see familiar faces and move through the eucharist in our beautiful setting after 18 long months.

Things look different, though. We have limited capacity, for now, to 75 persons. Pews are roped off. Food pantry supplies inhabit some of the roped off pews because of changes in their workflow, with bags distributed out of the church rather than the office building. All are masked. We have doors and windows open and 8 air purifiers with HEPA filters operating during the service. Most significantly, all participants in *indoor* worship need to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19. Many thanks to all of you who came early and gladly produced your proof of vaccination. Thank you for loving your neighbor as yourself and for protecting the vulnerable. I am happy to report that 100% of congregants participating indoors are vaccinated.

News Brief—air quality

Work continues to improve the air quality in the church. \$5000 has been spent on the air purifiers we see in the building during services. The large fan that pushes outside air into the church resides in the basement. It may date from the building of the church 109 years ago! It is in very poor condition. It will either be repaired or replaced soon and a better air filtration system installed.

Some of you may feel uncomfortable returning to indoor worship based on your personal risk tolerance. For those in this group, and for those who are not vaccinated, we have two options that do not involve indoor participation. We continue to stream the services to our Facebook Group page, and happily our WiFi signal in the church is much stronger now thanks to some improvements to the system undertaken by the school. We also have an **OUTDOOR** option during the 10 am eucharist that involves a projector and a big screen in the courtyard. Clergy will offer the sacrament outdoors for those who choose this option.

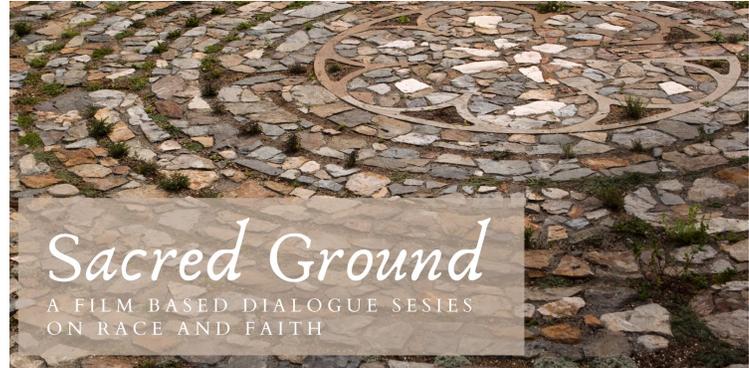
Thankfully, the data is trending in the right direction in Alameda County (new cases, number of positive tests, hospitalizations), so we are cautiously optimistic and hopeful that our worship life will slowly get back to normal as well!

Thanks be to God!

Adult Faith Formation

The Rev. Anne Jensen

We will be offering *Sacred Ground* again this year. The people who participated in this program all agreed that it was worth the time and effort. We especially valued reading *Children of the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman, getting to know one another, and honest discussions of the films and readings. Here is the official description:



Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories.

Sacred Ground is part of *Becoming Beloved Community*, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

Please contact the Rev. Anne Jensen if you are interested. (Annehj@aol.com)

Some people have asked about the national program for Black people, *Healing Internalized Oppression*. This program is not available on the parish level and is offered by the office of Black Ministries as a workshop. This course is open to all Black Episcopalians. To learn more [click here](#)



FOR ALL THE SAINTS and FAITHFUL DEPARTED

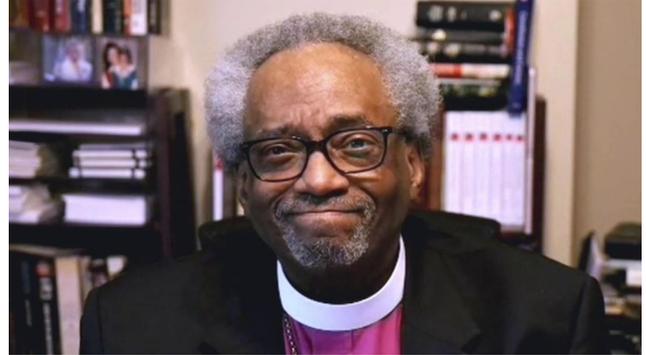
The many months of the Covid-19 pandemic have robbed our communities of any sense of normalcy, which includes significant changes in the ways we mourn, remember and celebrate the dead. It has been painful for so many to not have the opportunity to be with family and faith community to pray for and ask God to hold our departed loved ones in God's peace. As we approach the celebrations of All Saints and All the Faithful Departed at the beginning of November, we would like to include all our recent faithful in our prayers to God. We ask that you share the names of those you wish to be included in our prayers, particularly those who have died over the last 2 years. We will include their names in the November newsletter and pray for them in our service for the faithful departed. Please send the names to admin@stpaulsoakland.org.

Reform the Church in the Way of Jesus

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Excerpt from Bishop Curry's homily during the recent House of Bishops meeting in St. Louis

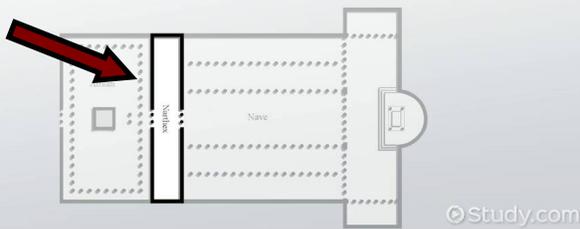
[The narthex of a church] is the in-between room, but more than just the in-between room. Narthex is that space that actually is the link between the world and the church. It is that space that actually is the link between the sacred and the profane. It is the space, that in-between space, where existence is actually lived and looked at differently. It may well be that it is this place where time and eternity intersect, where divine and human actually meet, where there is a co-mingling between God and God's creation and God's people. Narthex. More than just a physical name, but it may mark the place. A threshold. A crossing. A confusing place. A liminal space. In 2016 before the pandemic, Richard Rohr wrote this about narthex. Actually, he was talking about liminal space. He said,



We too often remain trapped in what we call normalcy — 'the way things are.' Life then revolves around problem-solving, fixing, explaining, and taking sides with winners and losers . . . To get out of this unending cycle, we have to allow ourselves to be drawn into sacred space, into liminality. All transformation takes place here. We have to allow ourselves to be drawn out of 'business as usual' and remain patiently on the 'threshold.' The *limen*, in Latin, the betwixt and between, the familiar and the completely unknown. There alone our old world is left behind. There alone we meet the new existence of which we are not yet sure. It's a good place, for there alone genuine newness begins. It is the realm where God can get at us because our false certitudes are finally out of the way. This is the sacred space where the old world falls apart and a

bigger new world is revealed. It is the doctor's waiting room. And our call is to wait on the divine physician. (partial paraphrase)

narthex
an enclosed porch or meeting area just inside the western entrance of a Christian church



The church, before collusion with the [Roman] Empire, that church looks something like Jesus. The church that dared to live into narthex, to let go of the way things were, to behold the way things could be. Brothers, sisters, siblings, dream of that church again like Jacob. Behold the church that looks like the one upon whom angels ascend and descend.

May we dream of that new and re-formed church, not formed in the way of the world but formed in the

way of Jesus and his love. Genuinely, truly, authentically a branch of the Jesus Movement today — a community of individuals and small gatherings and congregations of all stripes and types, a human tapestry, God's wondrous variety, the kingdom, the reign of God, the beloved community. No longer centered on empire or establishment, no longer fixated on the preservation of institutions, no longer propping up white supremacy or in collusion with anything that hurts or harms any child of God or God's creation. By God's grace, a church that looks and acts and lives like Jesus. Welcome to narthex, and welcome to behold a new heaven, a new earth, a new you, a new me, a new we.

"We are climbing Jacob's ladder ... We are climbing Jacob's ladder... We are climbing Jacob's ladder... Soldiers of the cross." Amen.

The entire text of Bishop Curry's speech is here: [Presiding Bishop's Sermon](#)

Vestry Highlights

Robert Knapp

Any member of the Parish may attend Vestry meetings, which are at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise noted; the full minutes of the meeting are available to parish members upon request by contacting the parish administrator or a member of the Vestry

THE 2021 VESTRY

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio
Wilson, Rector
Sharon Pilmer, Senior
Warden
Will Cowart Jr., Junior
Warden
Erica Terry-Derryck,
Clerk
Ann Goggins Gregory,
Treasurer

VESTRY BY CLASS Class of 2021

Erica Terry-Derryck
Sergio Prieto
Lisa Strait
Class of 2022
Will Cowart
Ann Gregory
Sharon Pilmer
Class of 2023
Flarnie Adams
Brian Stanke
Maura Lane

DEANERY DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

2020
Delegates
Melanie Blake
Tom McGarrell
Jeanette Dinwiddie-
Moore
Alternates
-vacancy-

The Vestry is the elected volunteer leadership of the church. Meetings are open.

Below are highlights of the monthly meeting, September 22, 2021.

The Vestry unanimously approved the St. Paul's vaccination policy for staff and clergy. All must be vaccinated by about mid-October. The Vestry will deal with any request for an exemption to this policy.

The Vestry voted to approve a bit over \$5,000 for the air purifiers that help us worship more safely in the nave of the church. In all, approximately \$11,000 has been spent to date on mitigations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Stewardship Committee will begin its fall campaign on October 1st and plans on an in-gathering of pledges on November 14th.

The report of the Finance Committee indicated that pledging is close to budget expectation; plate contributions are significantly lagging previous years' donations. Expenses are lower than budget. Investments continue to do well and supply the funds for meeting our budget when other sources of income fall short.

The Junior Warden reported that the damage to the chapel floor is in the process of being repaired. He also noted that a large fan that pushes outside air into the church resides in the basement. It may date from the building of the church 109 years ago! It is in very poor condition. It will either be repaired or replaced soon and a better air filtration system installed.

The Vestry currently lacks a liaison to the Social Justice Committee. Father Mauricio will work to find a volunteer to fill this position.

Richard Larson, co-chair of the audio-visual committee, submitted a committee proposal to Father Wilson outlining next steps in the quest for an improved audio-visual experience at St. Paul's. As this document was submitted only on the day of the Vestry meeting, no useful discussion could take place. Father Wilson will be in conversation with Richard about some of the clauses that seemed problematic and will then submit a revised document to the Vestry for discussion and possible approval.

Two persons have contacted the church and expressed an interest in the combined School chaplain/St. Paul's children and youth leader position. Father Wilson will be in conversation with these persons over the next weeks. The position remains open for additional inquiries/applications.



Treasurer's Report

Ann Goggins Gregory



Through August 31, 2021, we are behind in our net income projection by ~\$27K. This is mostly due to lower-than-budgeted revenue and expenses that are tracking with budget. I've included a summary of financials below, with some specific notes on revenue and expense trends.

| | Year-to-date actuals as of August 31, 2021 | Year-to-date budget through August 31, 2021 |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Revenue | \$ 169,565 | \$ 202,810 |
| Expense | \$ 309,167 | \$ 315,206 |
| Net Income | \$ (139,602) | \$ (112,396) |

REVENUE DYNAMICS:

Pledges are tracking close to budget year to date.

Plate revenue is significantly off budget (\$23K actual vs. \$35K budgeted year to date). This is very different than the trend we saw in 2020 when we exceeded budget expectations for plate.

Investment income is below budget, but this is a timing issue (investment income is "lumpy").

EXPENSE DYNAMICS:

Personnel is under budget by 7% or \$13K. This is primarily due to the open Children & Youth Ministries position.

Maintenance and repair is over budget by \$12K for the year. This is due to A/V sound system maintenance, elevator contracts and repairs, and safety repairs in preparation for reopening.

On the balance sheet side, our investment portfolio continues to perform well despite recent volatility in the market. Between December 31, 2020 and August 31, 2021, our portfolio balance has grown by over \$300K.

As always, I'm available for your questions or comments at goggins.gregory@gmail.com.

Social Justice Update

Sharon Pilmer

Social justice work is thriving at St. Paul's as the Vestry looks for a liaison to replace Lane Ceric. The food pantry under the leadership of Deacon Carolyn has continued to serve 60-70 clients out of the church twice monthly with a committed group of volunteers.

Sorting and bagging
food for the Pantry of
Hope



A/V Project Update

Richard & Vicki Larson, co-chairs

The A/V Committee is continuing its work to research, and then make recommendations for, long-term options that can provide consistent and improved on-line streaming of church services. The wi-fi signal for the church has recently been upgraded due to the hard work of the School. They generously share their signal with us. This upgrade has made the broadcast of services much more reliable.

Families and Children Update

Applications remain open for the position of Children and Youth Ministry. This position will be shared with the School. The person appointed will work with our families and at the same time perform the duties of the chaplain of the School.

First In-Person Worship September 12, 2021 Carolyn Knapp



About 75 St. Paul's parishioners entered the long-closed doors of the church on that cool, sunny morning and stopped to show their proofs of vaccination to Sharon Pilmer, our highly-organized and health-conscious Senior Warden. After receiving a service sheet and finding a pew that was not roped off and did not contain shrouded Food Pantry items, they joined in singing with an organ for the first time in 18 months. It was a beautiful experience for those inside the building and for the folks who elected to remain outside in the courtyard to watch the service on the big screen and receive communion there. In subsequent weeks the audio has improved, and we've become more adept at lining up to receive bread and individual wine cups from stations at the communion rail – and at lifting our masks briefly to consume the elements. Many gathered in the courtyard and on the sidewalk to chat afterwards. Want to enjoy a longer conversation? Be sure to sign up for one of the reconnecting conversations (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

**The Prometheus Symphony Orchestra
2021-2022 Concert Series
Celebrating 57 Years of Music Making
WE ARE OPEN!**



Prometheus Symphony Orchestra
Eric Hansen, Music Director



***** Saturday, October 2, 2021 ***
3:00 PM (Preconcert talk at 2:40PM)**

**Franz Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 99 in Eb major
Hector Berlioz: Ouverture des Les "Francs-Juges"
Sergei Prokofiev: Summer Night Suite Op.123**

Audience members must show proof of vaccination for admittance

Admission Free



Music and Society in Tudor England

A Lecture series by St. Paul's Parishioner John Prescott

**The Collision and
Collusion of Old and New:
Music & Society in Tudor England**
A Series of Music History Lectures
by John Prescott, Ph.D.

Five Saturday afternoons
October 16, 23, 30, November 6, 13
2:00pm-4:00pm via Zoom



Sign up: If you wish to participate, email me at: johnrichardprescott@gmail.com. Specify which weeks you want to attend. I will then email you the Zoom link for each session you choose.

Suggested Donation: \$25 per individual session, or \$100 for the entire series.

Pay by: PayPal or Venmo at: johnrichardprescott@gmail.com. If paying by check, please email me at: johnrichardprescott@gmail.com and I will send you my mailing address.

The Windows of St. Paul's

Robert Knapp

An homage to Christian Action World War II in the Philippines



With the outbreak of war on December 7-8, 1941, the parish was plunged into a whole new world of anxiety and concern. The fall of the Philippines shortly after Pearl Harbor was an especially hard blow. But the parish chose not to commemorate in a new stained-glass window the pain of hearing of American dead. Rather, they chose an act of compassion by an American soldier in a truly Christian response to a terrible situation. A notice at the dedication noted that the window was based on an actual photograph taken by the Army Signal Corps on the Bataan Peninsula. Showing an American Army Captain giving water to a dying Japanese soldier, it is a magnificent illustration of the Christian ideal, expressed by St. Paul in the words, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink." The image that inspired the window is below.



In the quatrefoil, an American soldier gives water to a wounded Japanese soldier. To the left, an Army nurse; to the right, a preacher; in the center, a Red Cross tent with an American flag flying above. A Philippine soldier sits to the left of the preacher. Clockwise from the top: seal of the Diocese of the Central Philippines; branch insignia of the U.S. Navy, the U. S. Army Air Corps, the U. S. Marines, U. S. Signal Corps, and the U. S. Army.

Text on the glass reads: An American officer gives water to a wounded foe. Commemorating all who served in the Philippines 1898-1942.

The plaque below on the wall reads: Dedicated by parishioners on Mother's Day 1942, in honor of General MacArthur and the heroic defenders of Bataan.

The Cummings Studio in San Francisco created the window.

October Worship Schedule

All services will be live-streamed on the Church's Facebook page and can be viewed later on YouTube. For details go to: <https://www.stpaulsoakland.org/streamed-services.html>
 You will need a reservation to attend in-person services. Folks on the Parish e-mail list will receive an invitation the Tuesday before the Sunday service. Missed the invitation? Go to the Church website beginning Wednesday morning and follow the directions there.

Sunday, October 3

8:00am

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

10:00am

Choral Eucharist, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

4:00pm

Evensong in-person (by reservation) & streamed

Wednesday, October 6

12:10pm

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

Sunday, October 10

8:00am

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

10:00am

Choral Eucharist with hymns, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

Wednesday, October 13

12:10pm

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

Sunday, October 17

8:00am

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

10:00am

Choral Eucharist, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

Wednesday, October 20

12:00pm

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

Sunday, October 24

8:00am

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

10:00am

Choral Eucharist, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

8:00pm

Compline, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

Wednesday, October 27

12:00pm

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

Sunday, October 31

8:00am

Holy Eucharist (streamed)

10:00am

Choral Eucharist, in-person (by reservation) & streamed

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*Dear Readers:
Currently, the newsletter is not being distributed by regular post. If you know of someone who does not have access to the electronic version, please contact Parish Administrator at 834-4314, Ext. 501 or admin@stpaulsoakland.org. She will make a hardcopy and send it.*

Newsletter contributors

sought

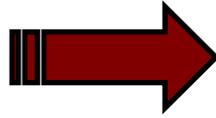
We are interested in hearing from writers and photographers; please email us if you would like to donate your talents.

The deadline for each edition is the 25th of the month previous to publication. Please send your submissions of no more than 400 words to

cknapp@earthlink.net

From the Editors:

Watch for news on these fronts next month!



Outreach and Hospitality
Junior Warden
St. Paul's School news

Diocesan Doings
The Convention is Coming!
Diocesan Convention latest updates

dio **172nd Convention**
CAI **of the Episcopal Diocese of California**
Friday, October 22 & Saturday, October 23, 2021

The Convention will again be meeting virtually by Zoom this year due to the pandemic.

The Committee on Dispatch, the Communications Working Group, and the Secretariat are all working hard to help this virtual Convention run much more smoothly than last year's.

Interested in how it's going to be done?

[Take a look at the NEW! Convention website](#)