

The Saints'

"I want to be in that number"

All Saints' Episcopal Church - Memphis

February 2024



A Both/And Church: The State of All Saints' in 2024

The state of All Saints' is both small and mighty. I'll have more to say about that later. But first, a story.

An elderly man, the head of a three-generation family, suffered from advanced dementia. His adult son said he could cope with his father as long as he considered him a piece of the furniture and did not bump into him....The little grandson spoke up, telling his father that he was wrong, that his grandfather was still here.

Pauline Boss, family therapist, researcher and author, tells this story in her book *The Myth of Closure*. She ends the story with these words: That little boy...knew about both/and thinking while his father did not.

My introduction to both/and thinking began when I read a little book published in 1980 and re-released in 2008, by Parker Palmer. It's called *The Promise of Paradox: A Celebration of Contradictions in the Christian Life*. A Methodist who became a Quaker as an adult, Parker Palmer has been one of my primary spiritual teachers over the past forty years. I am still formed and informed by his wisdom.

Parker explains how, in the words of Nobel Prize winning physicist, Neils Bohr, that "the opposite of a fact is a lie. But the opposite of one great truth may be another great truth." The question is: How comfortable are you or I with holding two opposite truths in a both/and - rather than in an either/or - way? Let me put the question differently: How comfortable are you - how comfortable am I - with paradox?

Both by his actions and in his words, both by what he says and by what he does, Jesus shows us what it means to be "the author of our salvation," as our Eucharistic prayer says. Jesus is the author of our salvation because, as Mark's Gospel tells us, he taught with authority (1:22). Jesus authors - he creates new life, both in us and for us.

Now, if Jesus is truly the Lord of our lives, if he is really our ultimate authority, he's in charge. In both his talk and in his walk. In both his dying and in his rising. In both his divinity and in his humanity. He's a paradox, this Jesus. That's one reason why it's so hard to follow him. Every. Single. Day.

When we do follow Jesus, he is the one who shows us how we can be saved from a world of sin, sickness, and suffering. The word "save" actually comes from the same root word as salve, which older folks know is an ointment that helps healing. Whether our illness is in our minds, bodies or spirits, or in all three, Jesus both saves and heals.

My new #1 spiritual teacher these days is an Episcopalian who will visit Memphis next month. Dr. Catherine Meeks recently retired as founder and executive director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta. You can find details of her visit in a special flyer that will be part of All Saints' February newsletter.

In her most recent book, *The Night is Long but Light Comes in the Morning: Meditations for Racial Healing*, Catherine Meeks speaks in her first meditation of the challenge Jesus offers a lame man lying at a pool of water known for its healing properties. That lame man had been lying there for 38 years, waiting for someone to come along and help him to some of those healing properties. He complained about not being able to get into that pool whenever the angel who brought healing would arrive.

Jesus saw what was going on with this man and simply asks him, "Do you want to be healed?" Dr. Meeks says that, for us, "in order to move forward, we must resolve the inner conflict of wanting to be healed but hoping to remain the same. This question, 'Do you want to be healed?,' rings loudly," she says, "for all who inhabit the planet," and not everyone will have the courage to say yes to the healing our God invites us to receive.

She also says something else, something about the paradox of both/and thinking: It is a challenge to learn to hold competing truths in (both) your head and (your) heart....(Here's) an example. The civil rights movement was very successful and made this country better. On the other hand, it failed to address systemic racism in the way that was necessary to completely change deeply rooted structures of oppression, which continue to exist. Both of these statements happen to be true. When one can hold this type of understanding (both) in one's head and (in one's) heart, and find the energy to stay in the space created by it, much good can be achieved.

That's not easy. It may hurt both our heads and our hearts to try to be "both/and" about some of the things or situations in our lives. Novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald put it this way: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function (my emphasis)." I agree.

Now, when I think about the state of All Saints' Church, this church that is both small and mighty, I think about another church that was small and mighty: the very first church, that first band of Jesus followers. I'm talking about the twelve disciples.

In addition to a dozen guys who gathered around Jesus, there were women, too, including Mary, Jesus' mother, and others. Those original women and men, those first disciples were not great in number. But look at what they set out to do - and did!

A church whose numbers are small does not need to mean that church is without influence. Over the years All Saints' has made a real difference in the lives of countless people who have found a home here, including me and both David and Mary, two of my siblings. The music, the garden, the outreach All Saints' has offered all these years continues to make a mighty, little impact in the Sea Isle Park neighborhood and beyond.

So what say ye, disciples of Jesus at All Saints'? What's your plan? In 2024, how will you live more fully into being "both small and mighty"? I'll be watching, praying and cheering you on, no longer as your priest in charge, but as a priest "at large." May God continue to richly bless this community of faith in the years to come. AMEN!

The Rev. Thomas A. Momberg
January 28, 2024
fathermom1949@gmail.com

Thank you, Fr. Tom!



Thomas A Momberg

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Today is the end of era. From full-time congregational work, to part-time to...only God knows. From in charge to at large. It's truly been a privilege and a pleasure.

I'm grateful for all I've learned - especially from all those people who've loved me, no matter what. Deo gratias.



Senior Warden Report

We have made it through January without a major weather related incident for which we are grateful. Many thanks are in order for Doug Jones who kept the faucets streaming, temperature in the buildings warm, and other precautions to prevent burst pipes for a week. As a result of the snow, ice and freezing temperatures, the annual church meeting had to be postponed until January 28. In-person service was canceled on January 21 and we thank Father Tom for emailing his sermon, as well as posting on the church website.

We have had a productive January in spite of the weather, with Worship Leader Training on several days, a session on Centering Prayer by Eileen Olewinski and a concert by the Miracles from the Baddour Center. Thank you, Father Tom, Beverly, Lyn, Janie Morris and all who worked to facilitate a successful concert by this fine group of individuals.

The Brownies are again meeting at our church on the first Wednesday of every month. Cookie sale information will again be provided if you wish to support this troop in that way. More information on how to order cookies to follow.

Starting Monday, February 7th at 5pm. Dancers, Inc. will offer their first class for free! Children's Audition Classes are now enrolling for our spring program. Monday and Thursday classes start at 4pm under the direction of Karen Zisoff. Go to website to download a registration form to fill out. First class: Body wear: wear what you want. Call or text to make an appointment first: www.dancersinc.us 901-301-danc (3262).

We would like to thank Father Tom for his faithful service to All Saints from May of 2022 until now. He has supported our endeavors for community outreach including our concerts, community garden, community yard sales, SipFest, Blessing of the Pets and others. He will be taking some much needed time off but we know that he will continue serving the Diocese. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

Connie Cupplies
Senior Warden

3 opportunities in February 2024

to hear from the recent recipient of
the President Joseph R. Biden
Lifetime Achievement Award

CATHERINE MEEKS IN MEMPHIS



THURSDAY

Feb. 15, 2024 @ 7 p.m.

Grace-St. Luke's
Episcopal Church

Memphis Theological Seminary's
Barbara A. Holmes Lecture
1720 PEABODY AVE., MEMPHIS

FRIDAY

Feb. 16, 2024 @ 12 p.m.

Calvary Episcopal Church

102 N. SECOND ST., MEMPHIS

SUNDAY

Feb. 18, 2024:

Teaching & Preaching
at Idlewild Presbyterian
Church

during the Sunday morning
services

1750 UNION AVE., MEMPHIS

ABOUT

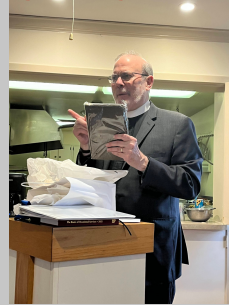
Catherine Meeks, PhD, is Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to the center's opening she chaired its precursor, Beloved Community: Commission for Dismantling Racism for the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. A sought-after teacher and workshop leader, the core of Dr. Meeks' work has been with people who have been marginalized because of economic status, race, gender or physical ability as they pursue liberation, justice and access to resources that can help lead them to health, wellness and a more abundant life. This work grows out of her understanding of her call to the vocation of teacher as well as her realization that all of humanity is one family which God desires to unite.



January Happenings



AGO's Twelfth Night Party



Annual Meeting & Farewell to Fr. Tom

The Miracles Concert



**Note from Darlene: To my dear friends at All Saints',
Thank you for the nice surprise on my 95th birthday and for the gifts. Since I have no
family close by, I have always considered you as my family. I love you all!
Darlene**

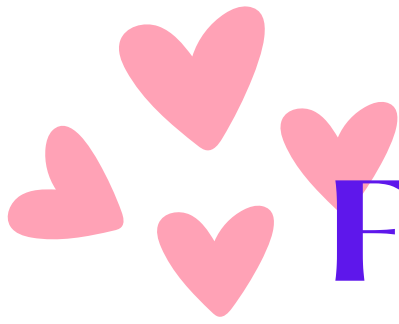


Happy
BIRTHDAY

TO YOU

February

The Rev. Tom Momberg	1
Shirley Bullard	5
Doug Cupples	6
Pat O'Shea	18
Ann Peyton	19



2024 FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 Church Service 10am	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Church Service 10am	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Church Service 10am	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Church Service 10am	26	27	28	29		

Community Events

Feb. 7 Girl Scouts 5:30
Feb. 11 & 25 Special Friends 4:30
Feb. 18 GMRS 2:00
M,T,Th Dance Inc. 4:00