

The Compass

... Pointing People toward Christ



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SPECIAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC EDITION – FALL 2020

From the Rector

As I began writing this column, I learned that Antarctica is the *only place on the planet* where there is no coronavirus. That certainly puts things into global perspective!



We know now that this plague originated in China. Author Richard Lederer, in his article “Viral Words” (MENZA Bulletin, 04/15/20), helps us to understand what’s behind the words that have dominated our lives for most of this year.

Corona derives from a Greek-through-Latin word for *garland, wreath, or crown*. The name refers to the virus’ characteristic appearance under a microscope. “Its bulbous fringe resembles a crown, as in *coronation*.”

Virus began as a Latin word that meant “poison”—as in the venom from a snake or spider. It also signified “filthy” or “slimy”

referring to the foul places that caused people to become ill from contaminated water or overflowing sewers.

Disease comes from the Latin, meaning, “without ease.” In the late 14th century, the word became associated with illness.

Now that more than 228,000 Americans have died of the extremely contagious disease caused by a respiratory pathogen, we might be wondering why it’s called COVID-19. The name is formed by combining “CO” for *corona*, “VI” for *virus*, and “D” for *disease*. The “19” signifies the year (2019) the outbreak began.

Another word we’ve been living with for most of 2020 is *quarantine*, from an Italian word denoting the period of 40 days during which a widow could remain in her husband’s house without it being seized for debt.

Later, the word took on a related meaning—the 40 days in which a ship suspected of harboring disease had to remain in isolation. This reflected the belief that any given illness would be gone after

40 days. Eventually, *quarantine* broadened to signify any period of sequestering—as we are now intimately familiar with.

We’ve been hearing about Big Pharma’s rush to develop an effective *vaccine*. The word *vaccinate* comes from the Latin name for “cow,” *vacca*. Edward Jenner, an 18th-century British doctor, found that inoculating people with a serum containing the glandular fluid from cows infected with cowpox prevented smallpox in humans.

And finally, the word *epidemic* comes from the Greek *epidemia*, constructed from *epi* (among) and *demos* (people). The *pan* in *pandemic* means “all”—that is, impacting *every one of us*.

How do we cope with all of this? Mary Schmich writes in the *Chicago Tribune* (10/4/20), **“Inhale. Take a deep breath. A full exhale. And repeat, ‘Despair is not an option.’”** The great 19th-century Danish Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard said the opposite of *faith* is not unbelief, but *despair*.

(continued on page 2)

He believed that despair comes straight from the devil! Like many of us, I initially succumbed to despair and anxiety when my life and work were suddenly upended in mid-March. One Sunday, I was in church with all of you. Two days later, the Vestry voted to close down St. John's indefinitely. Missing Holy Week and Easter was something I had never done in my entire life!

It took a few weeks for me to realize that if things were not going to change or get better, I needed to find a way to live through this. Of course, *prayer* was

essential. And, learning to do what was necessary to bring the weekly videotaped services to the parish required a new kind of creativity that helped get me out of my rut.

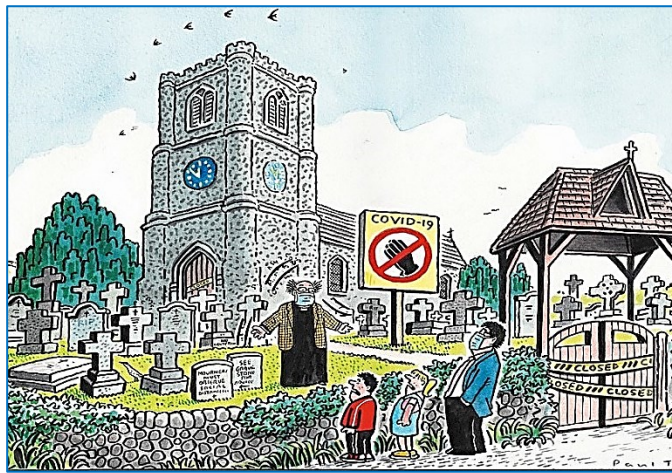


But what truly cheered me up was talking to as many members and friends of St. John's Church that I was able to contact by phone, every couple of weeks. I so appreciate everyone taking time to share your stories with me. We became much better acquainted

with each other, and it began to feel as though we were all part of the same family, doing our best to get through the unimaginable, together.

I learned that church members were also calling one another, sending cards to, and making soup for each other, continuing the Christ-like care and compassion that characterizes this unique and special congregation.

When we were finally able to resume in-person worship in our sanctuary on September 6th—albeit with many safety precautions in place—it was *so good* to see one another again!

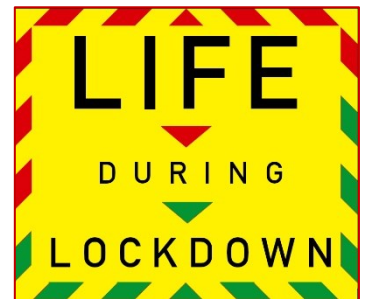


As I reflected on the many stories we shared during our quarantine, I decided that a special edition of "*The Compass*," which highlighted some of these, would help to catch us up with one another and build on that spirit of community that has held us together these many months.

I discovered that we had several common denominators in our "lock-down" activities. We:

- Cleaned out closets, basements, attics, garages, desks, and sheds;
- Sorted through "tons" of old family photos and slides;
- Learned to Skype or Facetime with our families, or take part in a class, meetings, or work through Zoom or another online platform;

- Binge-watched favorite (or new) TV series;
- Rediscovered the "comfort foods" that made us feel better (and gain weight);
- Took on a new creative project such as painting, sewing, weaving, or graphic design;
- Tried to stay in shape by walking, swimming, or exercising;
- Got closer to our dogs, cats—and spouses.
- Understood that we could actually do with less, and became deeply grateful for our homes;
- Realized that our faith in God through Jesus Christ, His love for us, and that of our family, friends, and pets, would see us through this nightmare—and preserve our sanity.



While not every member of St. John's Church contributed to this special edition, each story that was received is unique. I hope you'll enjoy finding out what your fellow parishioners (and Rector) did during the pandemic lockdown—and that the loving fellowship we share at St. John's Church, as well as our relationship with Christ, will continue to sustain us until better days arrive.

Yours in Christ's Love and Service, Mother Nina +

Ron and Linda Zynn



For us, 2020 was a milestone year. We both turned 70 and celebrated **50 years of marriage!** Where did the time go? We told our daughter, Shannon, that we did not want a party, so she came up with the idea of a card shower for us. What a nice surprise to hear from our family and so many friends wishing us "Congratulations!"



Flowers from our Anniversary

Because of the pandemic, we had to cancel three trips: One for our Golden Anniversary—a 15-day cruise ending in Dublin, Ireland for three nights; a family vacation to the shore; and a smaller cruise scheduled for 2021. Fortunately, refunds were offered, so all ended well!

This year also brought sadness to our lives. Linda lost her older brother, Larry, to congestive heart failure in March and his ashes were interred in St. John's cemetery in late September. The Funeral Home was helpful and supportive to the family in keeping his cremains until final disposition could take place. Linda took care of her brother and his affairs since her retirement in 2011 and will miss him immensely. But God knew it was time to call Larry home.

In June, Linda found out she needed to have a pacemaker implanted. She had been fatigued for about a year but attributed it to her role as caregiver for her brother. Her daughter kept pushing her to follow up, and when she did, the correct diagnosis was made. Her energy level is returning but still is not 100%. She didn't realize she had "burn-out" until the pandemic hit. It turned out that Linda really needed the time at home

to de-stress and put herself first with her health issues. Ron continued to enjoy playing golf. On the course, he has his good and 'off' days, but still keeps trying!



Both of us enjoyed being creative in the kitchen during the lockdown—Linda baked



peach-crumble pies, and Ron made Kosher dill-pickled green tomatoes.



The Zynns continued to be comforted by their little fur baby, Tobe, who gives them much joy.

We are so glad St. John's is back to having services in-person. We plan to attend when possible, but also need to be cautious, as Linda's health issues place her in the 'compromised' group. Looking forward to reading about what our extended church family has been, doing as well. Take Care! ❤️

Susan and Kurt Gansauer

On Palm Sunday, our son Jon adopted a cat from a shelter in Delaware. He named her "Leia," and she has been great entertainment for us all, the last several months.



Jon and Kurt made good use of the extra time with yard work and woodworking. Kurt made a cedar lounge chair that is easy for Susan to get into and out of, poolside. Jon made a coffee table and an end table. Susan tried new scone recipes—a favorite is maple pecan oatmeal. Looking ahead to sharing at a future coffee hour!

Dawn Filetti

During the pandemic, I kept working, because I have a job that's considered essential. Bob and I moved from Atglen to Downingtown in May, and I began a new hobby—I'm learning how to paint! I'm following the Bob Ross method used on YouTube, and DVD instructional videos. I created a small makeshift art studio in our new apartment, where I use oil paint on canvas. Painting is loads of fun and takes my mind into a much-needed "reality break" for a few hours. Three of my pictures are included below:

"The Grandeur of Summer"



"Night Time"



"Pine Trees" (this one's my favorite)



Paul and Mary Lou Weaver



These pictures of us were on our Garden Spot Village TV as part of a guessing game for the residents.

Our schedule since March here at GSV has been walking the 2-plus miles around Campus twice daily. We do a slow lap for Paul each time and then I do a speed lap of the same area.



Doing a lot of cooking, and found some new recipes. Making homemade sourdough bread that takes the starter to set for 2 days, then making the bread: mixing, kneading, shaping and baking. This part takes more than four hours, and I get 6 loaves of bread.

GSV has been so good, offering cooking classes, exercise classes, movies, concerts, and many other programs on our in-house TV.

We have been all masked, socially distancing, hand washing, staying home, and making wise choices if we need to leave the campus. We are very thankful to the CEO and all the staff of GSV for keeping the residents safe, and understanding that this is a harmful virus, but knowing that the Lord is with us every step of the way.

John and Faye Oberholser



We cleaned out closets, desk drawers, and took care of other things in the house that needed to be done.

Outside, John kept the lawn in perfect shape. He worked on all his equipment; washed cars and cycles; trimmed bushes; cleaned rain spouts; and anything else that needed attention.

Faye worked in her many flower beds—they never looked so good! She helped John with the bushes and held the ladder for him to do other projects. Faye also made cards; colored book marks; and tended to plants inside.

Many days, we walked two-and-a-half hours, and had three ways to go the same mileage. We saw our neighbors at a distance and talked with them, and also met other neighbors on the other side of the hill. We met some friendly dogs, too, and saw a baby mule—he was so cute!

We relaxed on our back porch and read many, *many* books there, and also read in our easy chairs, inside.

We missed our family and still have not seen our great-grandsons—just lots of pictures of them on the refrigerator, along with other family pictures there. Missed family, friends and church! God Bless you all.

Distance gives us a reason to love harder.

Tracy and Nancy Miller

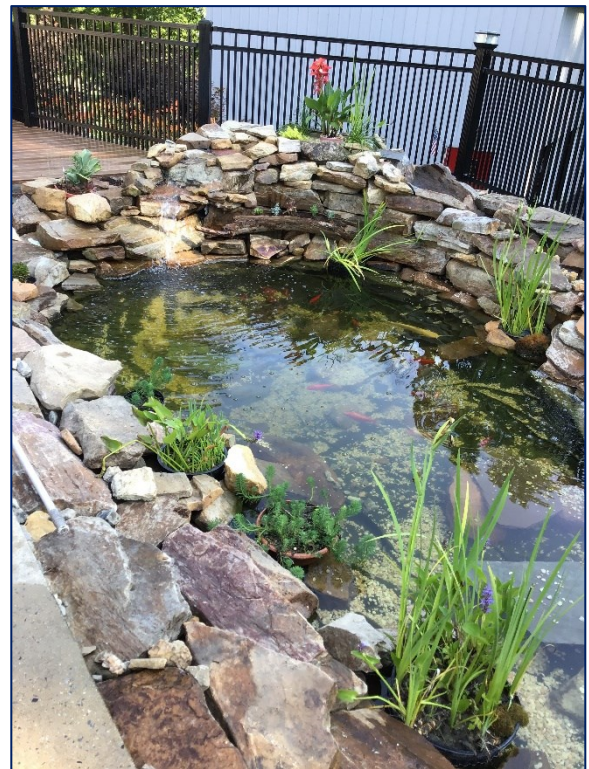
Tracy was on a voluntary ten-week layoff, and Nancy spent her days working as a nurse at the Tel Hai Retirement Community.

Tracy did all kinds of home improvements and got paid to do them.



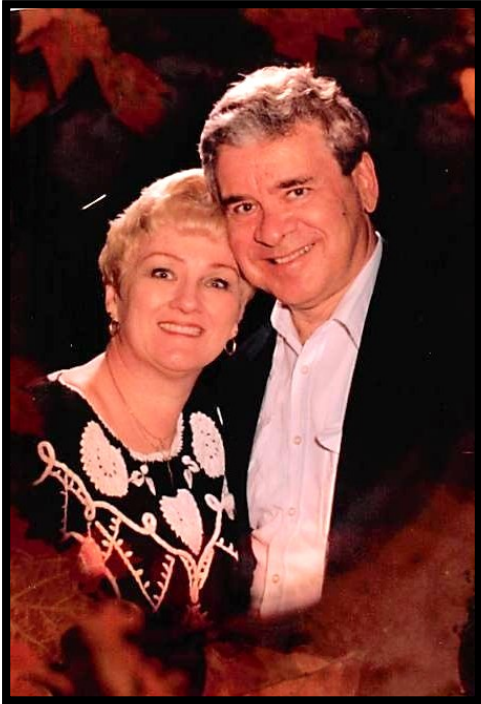
We also had 23 very large trees removed from our property ...

and together we rebuilt our fishpond.



Robin and Philip Lipsky

Note: For many months, Robin had been faithfully caring for her husband Philip at home. He suffered from Parkinson's Disease and passed away on July 26, 2020 at age 84. The Lipskys were married for 30 years. Below is an edited version of Philip's obituary, and Robin's favorite picture of the couple.



Phil, of Coatesville PA, formerly of Wilmington DE, attended the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, Class of 1957. He was a Pharmacist at Pathmark, and also owned Collingdale Pharmacy. Phil was very active in Collingdale's politics; he loved politics and history, and was always up for a good conversation. Football was his highlight of the year. He loved beautiful music, as well as good movies and shows. Phil also loved to travel, and served in the Air National Guard.

He is survived by his devoted identical twin brother Nathan Lipsky (the late Carole); his loving daughter Hope Cramer; his dear step-children Michael Carey (Sharon), Patrick Carey, Tricia Carey, Linda Romano (Pete), Bill & Jay Rogers, Kevin & Nancy Rogers, Daniel & Bernadette DeNight, and Danielle & David McGarvey; his cherished grandchildren Thadeus Cramer, Billy & Katie Rogers, Tara & Samuel Pellegrino, Ryan & Eric Carey, and Becca & Tony Wiedman, and his adoring nieces and nephews Michael Lipsky, Steven Lipsky, and Brenda Lipsky.

Philip's funeral was July 31st at The Danjolell Memorial Home of Broomall, and he is buried at Glenwood Cemetery. **"May his memory be a blessing."**

Sharon and Chris Fremont

Toward the end of February 2020, and into March, we had been on vacation to the Florida Keys and drove back, taking our time.



We made it home before everything began closing down. But the drive home

was eerie, as there was little traffic on the roads.

As many of you know Chris and I have a sailboat called "Why Knot," so we were able to keep busy working on it during the months of April and May.



This boat is 37-feet in length and has all the comforts of home.

By June we were allowed to take the boat out, following the rules of Maryland. Most weeks we would be on the boat for 3 to 4 days, then come home to Downingtown to take care of things at home, plus, start preparing for the next adventure on the sailboat.

This year because of COVID-19, we only got as far south as Cambridge. For this trip, we were on the boat for 7 days, with some overnights on the anchor, plus in other marinas. Later in the summer we went to St. Michael's MD. That trip, we were out for 5 days.



We've been very blessed to have this boat, as we were able to keep our sanity. We love this life! The boating season was over, the end of October.

We hope everyone at St. John's has found ways to have a good time, during this difficult year.

The Pandemic and the Cemetery

By Liz Palwick-Goebel

When the pandemic came in March, Doug Skiles, Don Faix, and Liz gradually stopped work at the cemetery as restrictions kicked in. As we all struggled to adapt to a new life, it became clear that the cemetery was a health-sustaining place to be, mentally and physically! It was easy to distance socially and still work together, while getting some of the work done towards preserving our cemetery, and also getting fresh air and exercise!

Some of the work the Cemetery Restoration Group and volunteers have done:

- raking around gravestones and planting grass seed;
- spraying the stone wall to kill and prevent new growth;
- planting grass seed where vines used to be along the stone wall;
- spraying ‘Wet and Forget’ on cemetery stones with the worst biological growth, which would interfere with reading the inscriptions;
- raising some of the toppled gravestones and setting them out on wood to dry;

- documenting stones for a historical record;



- handling forms, lists, and correspondence;



- encouraging and staying on top of interest by Boy Scouts in possible community and Eagle projects in the cemetery.



BEFORE

- placing wood under other leaning gravestones in an effort to stop or cushion their eventual fall;

- resetting some of the stones that had toppled or were in danger of falling, so that they are up straight, hopefully for another 100 years;



AFTER



These have all been carried out with deep thanks to Robert Mosko, and according to Mosko’s (and others’) approach of historical preservation rather than restoration.

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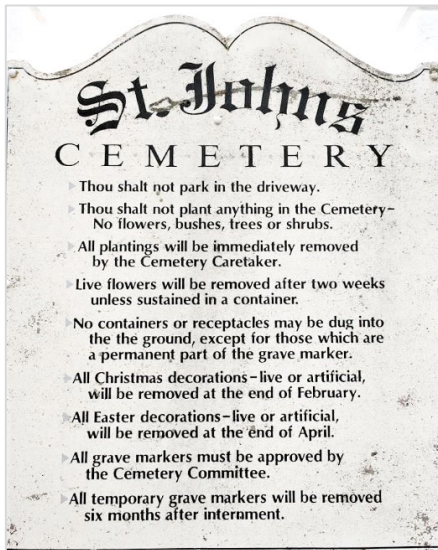
Weather permitting, we will try to meet on most Fridays at the cemetery. But check with us first. To anyone who might be interested: please come out to help!

Current work might include:

- cleaning and scraping stones
- scooping out around toppled stones
- helping to document/assess stones
- uncovering possible matches of footstones to headstones
- probing sections of ground for buried gravestone bases



Also, is there anyone with a special interest in doing research and gathering historical information?



Many thanks to all who have participated during the pandemic months, including **Grier Hoskins, Robin Baldwin, Suzanne Turpin, Ron Zynn, Bob Yarnall, Sharon Fremont, Alex Shurak, and Glenn Martin.**

Apologies to anyone who helped whose name is not listed here!

Fran Gilfillan

Here is what I did, following and during the early days of the onset of COVID-19, and the requested self-quarantine at the Tel Hai Retirement Community.

Having lost my husband, Dick, on November 29, 2019, I was still making the necessary adjustment to living alone and, at times, admittedly getting a little "down." Before we were self-quarantined and still allowed to socialize, I asked a friend what she would suggest for disposing of Dick's clothing. I was a bit taken aback when she mentioned that others made things such as dolls, quilts, pillows, etc. out of their loved-one's clothes no longer being worn.

This struck me as a little morbid early on, as I had learned following his death that, at least for me, clothing seemed to take on a different meaning, emotionally. I would look at a particular shirt or sweater and immediately picture him wearing it. Therefore, I was rather surprised at her suggestion, but gave it some thought for a few days. As time went on and the shutdown and quarantine continued, I began to think differently.

I sat down one day and 'took the plunge,' meaning, I made the first cut. I gathered together Dick's jeans, flannel shirts, and sweat shirts and started cutting. I did this for two-and-a-half days, and then began sewing.



Those who knew Dick well were aware of how much he loved and was proud of his children and grandchildren. So, my first project was a small quilt, with a matching pillow. I continued until I had made a pillow for each of his grandchildren, my grandchildren, and one for each of our children per family. When finished, I had made more than 30 pillows, using no material except his clothing.

I enjoyed doing this, as I like to sew and I believe it had therapeutic benefits for me. When feeling a bit 'low' I would tell myself, "Fran, just go and make another pillow." So, now I have pillows in several states, including Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, and at Penn State in Pennsylvania, and Purdue University in Indiana.



Nina George-Hacker and Rick Hacker

We moved into our apartment in 2016 and piled a lot of things we wouldn't use any time soon into a downstairs storage unit. After four years, we weren't sure what was even in there, or where to find anything.



So, one Saturday in June during the pandemic lockdown, we spent 10 hours emptying the unit; reviewing all the contents; throwing stuff away; reorganizing, storing, and labeling the rest. The result: the neatest storage unit ever!

After being partially laid off for several weeks, Rick went back to working full-time at Spectrum Printing in East Petersburg.

When he wasn't at his job, he spent a lot of time "auditioning" solo and choir music for St. John's services, and selecting and practicing music for the weekly worship videos we began recording for the congregation on Holy Saturday. Each video required 40 hrs. per week of work for Rick, Nina, and the videographer, and they were posted on YouTube, Facebook, and accessible from a link on our church's website.

Nina worked at home, writing sermons; creating graphics for, and preaching on, the videos; calling the congregation twice a month; and going into church once a week to work with Suzanne Turpin to check messages and mail, and send sermons and lectionary puzzles to members without computers.

With "Mom" at home a lot more, each of our three cats became much more interactive and affectionate. But the one who changed the most was Gracie, our part-Maine-Coon (13 yrs. old in March). She turned into a very talkative, every-opportunity cuddler.



Often now, I awaken with this warm, soft, *loudly* purring cat snuggled right up against my back. ❤️

In the midst of so much that was unfamiliar and unprecedented, I found myself drifting back to my Southern roots and thinking much more about my childhood, my father, and grandmother.

Combining this nostalgia for an easier era with the craving for 'comfort food' led me to cook up Southern vittles such as the plateful pictured here:

cheese grits; collard greens with oil & vinegar; buttered black-eyed peas; and extra-crispy fried scrapple. In fact, I did a *lot* more cooking since we couldn't eat out—trying new recipes and reviving old favorites.



During the lockdown, every branch of the Lebanon County Public Library system was closed—*except for* the one at the Cornwall Manor Retirement Community where we live. Since I love to read, I checked out lots of books and tried to read one a week—many times with Gracie kitty on my lap.



Rick's brother-in-law adopted a service dog, and his sister Kris brought the new furry family member to meet him and their Mom, Helen Hacker. Due to the pandemic, the siblings can only visit their mother at the Mennonite Home by seeing her through a

window and calling her on a cell phone.

This experience of forced confinement helped us to be even more grateful to God for **faith, family, furry friends, and food!**

Suzanne Turpin



WHAT I DID DURING THE PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN:

I wrote notes and cards to parishioners and older friends.

Since I love to cook, I made soups and casseroles for my neighbors, friends and some members of the congregation. It made me feel like I was doing something to help.



Fortunately, in June, I was allowed to start spending time with my grandson, Chase.

I worked extra hours at the church, creating a new vendors' list; cleaning out closets, file

cabinets, and the kitchen cabinets—so nice to be organized!

This duty became 'contagious,' so I cleaned out things at home, too.

Inspiration from Holy Scripture and a Prayer for These Times

"I am the Lord who heals you." (Exodus 15:26)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need." (Matthew 6:33)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:19)

Lord, give me the wisdom
to trust in Thy leading,
When trusting is all I can do;
When one step ahead is a step
into darkness;
Encompassed by foes, not a few.

There are those who would taunt
and cause me to waiver.
Being set behind and before
With enemies of my God
and my Savior;
O Lord, I would trust Thee the more.

Amen.

(from a 2020 edition of "The Fishwrapper")