ST ANNE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - SMALL BUT MIGHTY



St. Anne's Episcopal Church

DECEMBER
2021
Newsletter

Dear beloved faithful of St. Anne's,

At our Diocesan Convention last month, I was reminded several times about the phrase and the meaning of *beloved community*. It is what the scriptures call the brand-new way of being. It is what our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, calls us to be with each other. "Come and join us," he says! If you want your life to be filled and blessed with this love that is so different from human love's brokenness, then come on in and give yourself to it. Come into our community of beloved persons who belong to God.

Come to St. Anne's and see how we are trying to be those Christians called to love each other and the world. Thank goodness God did not say we had to be perfect first. ©

Come join us this season of Advent, when we prepare for the coming birth of the child who will save us from ourselves, if we let him. Read about all we are doing, and when our services will be. Please email or phone any of us with your hopes and concerns, comments and questions. Especially, please let us know if you would like a clergy visit or pastoral care attention during the upcoming Christmas season.

With joy to be with you,

Mother Jennifer

Advent Online Services

Advent Wreath Lighting with Prayer and Song on Facebook Live

St. Anne's Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/ StAnnesBillerica)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday evenings

at 7:00-7:20 PM

Nov. 30 through Dec. 23

Christmas Services

Dec. 24 1:00 PM In-Person Holy Eucharist

Silver Tea to follow

Dec. 24 9:00 PM Holy Eucharist In-Person and

Online

Dec. 26 9:00 AM Online Service of Lessons and

Carols

Jan. 2 9:00 AM In-Person and Online Service of

Lessons and Carols

Online services are streamed on St. Anne's Facebook page (<u>www.facebook.com/StAnnesBillerica</u>) and YouTube Channel ("St. Anne's Episcopal Church, N. Billerica MA")

Worship:

9:00 am Sunday in person

Weekly worship on our YouTube Channel: "St. Anne's Episcopal Church, N. Billerica MA" (Subscribe and see videos of our services!)

Our services are replayed on BATV

Check out our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ **StAnnesBillerica**

("Like" to see videos of our services as well as other news and information!)

Check our website (stannes-billerica.org) for a link to the services.

Contact information!

St. Anne's Episcopal Church PO Box 134, 14 Treble Cove Rd. No. Billerica, MA 01862

Office Ph: 978-663-4073 Thrift Shop Ph: 978-667-6268

Email: stannesbillerica@gmail.com rector@stannes-billerica.org

Website:

stannes-billerica.org





Thrift Shop

Thrift Shop hours for December will be Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 AM until 2 PM.

Stop by the shop and check out what we have.

Vestry:

Ed Giroux	Warden
Michael Hopkins	Warden
Sue Geen	Treasurer
Marguerite Massey	Clerk
Brenda Komarinski	2022
	2022
Rosemary Kinser	2022
Jose Torres	2022
Russell Bent	2022
Linda Kusnierz	2023
Dorothy Callihan	2023
Janet Lyna	2023
Marie Figenbaum	2024

Mother Jennifer's Office Hours:

12-4 pm Tuesdays Thursdays 2-5 pm

Note that on Thursday, December 16, Mother Jennifer's office hours will start at 3 pm.

PLEASE call or email her with any kind of pastoral concern.

Church Office Hours:

Thursdays 2-5 pm



We will be placing poinsettias and greenery in the church for Christmas this year. You are invited to make a donation towards these, in thanksgiving for or in memory of individuals. These names will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Please call or email the church office if you would like to make a donation (checks may be mailed to the church).

All names must be submitted by Sunday, December 12

Angel Tree by Sandra Giroux



Each year St Anne's has wonderfully and generously supported Angel Tree. This year we would like to Support House of Hope in Lowell Massachusetts.

They have 58 families that live in a shelter and more than 100 that are involved in the housing and stabilization program. We at St. Anne's can help provide some presents for the children and parents during the holiday season.

Due to the continued pandemic, St. Anne's will be purchasing items from wish lists created by the House of Hope (Amazon & Walmart) and have them shipped directly. If you choose to support the Angel Tree project, please make a donation via Venmo, Realm, a check mailed to the church, or see me on any Sunday.

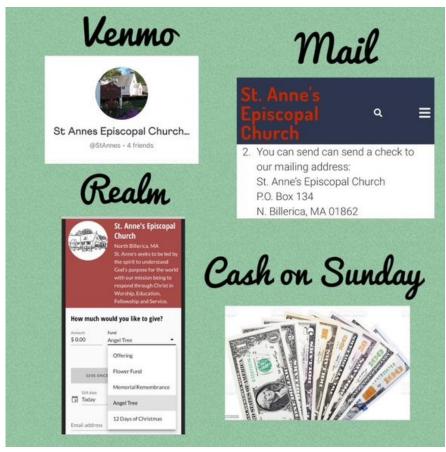
Please send in your donation as soon as possible, as we need to allow time to purchase and ship gifts. All donations should be received by **December 12th.**

We all need help at some point in our lives. We at St. Anne's have many ways we can impact and help these lives. Thank you for your continued support for the Angel Tree Project. We all hope for next year to have a physical Angel Tree at St. Anne's.

I do hope you will be able to help.

If you have any questions please contact me <u>978-621-1112</u>

or SandraforStAnnes@yahoo.com.



Safe Church

<u>by Brenda Komarinski</u>

St. Anne's Safe Church Policy can be found on our website (http://stannes-billerica.org/safe-church/). If you need help completing your Safe Church training, please let Brenda know. If you have completed your Safe Church training recently, please email your Certificate to Brenda Komarinski (bkomarinski@gmail.com).



Social Justice Committee

Social Justice - a way to allow everyone to feel welcome and respected when they come to worship

Twice a month, starting in December, the members of the Social Justice Committee will be sharing personal stories of our experiences with racism at the beginning of the service. All are welcomed to share their stories. If you have a story that you would like to share, please let one of us know.

-Brenda Komarinski, Marguerite Massey, Russell Bent, and Michele O'Shea



A note on Music...

by Peter Morelli

The Season of Advent is a wonderful time of the year. Wishing you peace and happiness this holiday season!

Watch for another Advent Hymnsing video this year!

I'll also be playing some music for the Holiday video for BATV.

And the choir is looking forward to helping lead and inspire with the music during Advent and for Christmas Eve!

Sincerely,

Peter



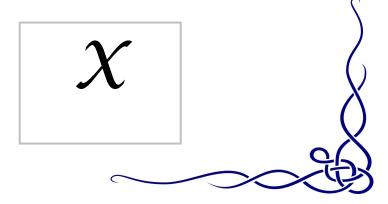
Church School

<u>by Brenda Komarinski</u>



Take-home lessons from November are available now. If you'd like one, please let Brenda know (bkomarinski@gmail.com). For those interested in in-person lessons, our next in-person lesson will be Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 3:30pm. In-person lessons will require wearing masks due to the pandemic. If you are interested in assisting with in-person lessons, please let Brenda know. The symbols we will be looking at are the Christogram IHS and the Chi.





THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS FAIR"

Starting Sunday, December 12th, and continuing through Thursday, December 23rd, we will have a raffle drawing. The person whose raffle chance has been pulled will be the winner for that day's prize.

How can you Help?

- We need prizes. These prizes can be anything **new**: theme baskets, gift cards, or anything that **you** would want to win. If you would prefer to do a monetary donation, I can do the shopping for you. The prizes will need to be turned into the church by December 9th. I will be in the church between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm. We will be putting donations together to create 12 amazing prizes.
- Buy chances. 1 for \$5 or a book of 5 for \$20. Chances will be available for purchase from Sunday, November 28th through Sunday, December 12th. They may be purchased during coffee hour, at the Thrift Shop, and through Realm (please comment if donations are for prizes or chances).
- Our Facebook page will have a link please share it to your own page.

Winners will be announced daily on Facebook and will be contacted through phone or email.

Please feel free to contact me, Lisa "Kinser" Carpine: 978-808-2068 (feel free to leave a message) or email me at lisa.carpine@outlook.com.

Community Spotlight

by Sandra Giroux

The Billerica Community Pantry is here to serve the food insecure in Billerica. This program is open to all residents who feel the need.

Currently we serve approximately 225 - 250 families a month. But please know we can always add more recipients if needed. You are not taking away from anyone. We are here to help. Please register at https://billericacommunitypantry.com/home/registration/.

If you are able to support the Pantry, we can use your assistance. Did you know how far we can make a dollar stretch?

- \$25 can feed a family of 4 a holiday meal
- \$15 can purchase 30 dozen eggs
- \$13 can purchase 10 4-packs of toilet paper



If you are able, please send a donation to the Billerica Community Pantry. Our Pay Pal, Venmo and mailing address can be found by clicking the following link: https://billericacommunitypantry.com/home/contribute/

Thank you.





What I have been thinking about...

- 1. How to list the kinds of pastoral care a parish offers. In the priest's, wardens', and Vestry's conversations about how pastoral care in our parish has changed with our different availability of our priest's time, I have been searching for ways to understand how we all share in the pastoral care needs of our community. Here are 8 categories: Crisis care, Funeral counseling, Widow/er follow-up, Homebound, Active parishioner support, Friendship visits, Lay Eucharistic Minister visits, Calls & cards. Let me know if any of these pique your curiosity!
- 2. From our Diocesan Convention's Report from the Racial Justice Commission, I read pages about The Episcopal Church and Slavery: A Historical Narrative. It starts with this sentence about our denomination in 1784 when our first bishop was consecrated. "The Episcopal Church, as a body, did not question the institution of slavery." While I am shocked, I am not surprised at our own church's long grappling with the meaning of cultural institutions. Where do we want us at St. Anne's to be today? Is our history relevant to us?
- 3. I am so looking forward to the new liturgical season of Advent's waiting and Christmas's delight!
- 4. I'm looking forward to the annual gathering of our whole parish at 11:00 am on Sunday, January 30th. Our Annual Meeting is the part of our Episcopal structure that makes us Protestant. You have a say in all our decisions!
- 5. Annual Reports will be due to our parish office (<u>stannesbillerica@gmail.com</u>) on Tuesday, January 4th (with the exception of our Finance reports that must wait for bank statements).



Technology/Virtual Worship Committee Report

For those of you watching from home, I don't think much has changed, and that's a good thing. If you're in church, some of you have already noticed some changes. For instance, the speaker in the back of the church is now working, and the microphone cable that used to run from the microphone room to the piano is now gone, removing a tripping hazard.

Both of those are thanks to a friend who is an audio engineer and who helped out one weekend trying to trace back all the cables. There's a stack of cables in the microphone room that are no longer needed, but the audio quality remains the same or better. Some of these cables may have contributed to a background hum, and that seems to be, if not gone, at least harder to hear.

On the computer front, work continues to document the process and write down any potential problems. For the first time in almost 2 years, Sandra and Mark were able to sit as congregants and the streaming went off with no issues. Big thanks to Ron, Eli, and Ed who ran the show that day. It was so nice to be able to sit in the pews again!

As for next steps, we're in a really good spot now. We have a second team trained up, have had more people approach with interest in helping out, and the process to get from a bulletin to a running service is a lot smoother. We're finally at the point where, aside from two cameras and some tucked away cables, the church looks like it did two years ago, but now we're able to send our small but mighty message around the world.

It's hard to believe that we are almost all the way through 2021. And we have come a long way. During the year, we solidified our agreement with Mother Jennifer as our first ever Priest-in-Charge. During 2019 - 2020, our Vestry recognized that from a financial perspective, we could only afford a 20 hour a week priest. During 2021, we learned what it means for the lay leadership to work with a part time Priest. Essentially, it means that the lay leaders need to take more responsibility for the daily operation of our church buildings. This became even more clear during our Vestry retreat (on Zoom) with a PIC Consultant provided by the diocese. I think we have come a long way to relieving Mother Jennifer from having to handle the business of the church, but we have more to do.

We have introduced St. Anne's to the Internet in several ways. Firstly, and I think most importantly, we have learned how to broadcast our service each Sunday morning live on the Internet. With today's technology, literally anyone can become a star of sorts on the Internet. Our services are available on YouTube each week live, and you can even watch a re-run. Another way that we have introduced our parish family to the Internet is through our online portal, Realm. Currently, Realm is primarily an online version of our church directory. However, it has many more capabilities than just an address book. Please see a Vestry member or a member of the Realm implementation team for additional information.

There have been several facilities improvements as well. We've installed new roof fans in the sanctuary. Our online services are made possible via the two Point, Tilt, Zoom (PTZ) cameras that have been permanently mounted in our sanctuary. Additionally, the whole PA system and microphone wiring has been vastly improved as well.

We were saddened as well during 2021. We said goodbye to several of our parish family. I don't want to list them all, for fear of forgetting someone close to you. But we all know that our church feels emptier than we'd like. May they all rest in peace.

We've accomplished a lot during 2021, including re-opening our church building, resuming the Eucharist and exchanging the peace during our Sunday worship service.

I'm sure there is more that we've accomplished and I'm just as sure that we have more to do. I bring all this up as we approach the new year and prepare for our annual meeting. Please know that your lay leadership is working hard to provide an updated and comfortable facility for all of us to worship. We are pleased to welcome the new year with Mother Jennifer and our lay leaders. 2022 should be a very exciting year for all of us.

I hope you all have a pleasant holiday season.

Your Co-Wardens.

Ed Giroux

Mike Hopkins



"Advent is patience. It's how God has made us a people of promise, in a world of impatience."

-Stanley Hauerwas

Diocesan Convention Updates

The 236th Diocesan Convention happened on November 13. Michele O'Shea, Lisa Lavoie and Todd Baldwin attended on behalf of St. Anne's.

One of the first things we wanted to share was the welcoming of Christ the King Church to the Diocese.

Please see the link for the video: <u>Christ the King Anglican Community Church in Lynn</u>. (Search for this phrase on YouTube if you cannot click on the link.)



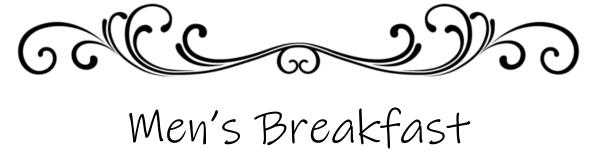
Annual Address to the Convention: Bishop Alan Gates

In his annual address to the Convention, Bishop Gates talked about the various ways that we as a Church have come together as a community during the pandemic, and about the Church's focus on addressing important issues such as climate change and racial injustice. As we learned about and reflected on the accomplishments of so many parishes and communities across the Diocese, we paused to recognize with awe and gratitude the contributions that St. Anne's parish has made during this challenging time. We created and supported virtual services, continued to support the Billerica Food Pantry, and created our Social Justice Committee. Our Regathering Committee has been hard at work, keeping St. Anne's compliant with ever changing local and CDC guidelines to keep us all safe.

As the St. Anne's 2021 convention delegates, we had the opportunity to learn about the proposed plans for the Diocese for the coming year. We look forward to providing the parish with convention highlights over the next few months as our community considers the role St. Anne's will play in contributing to the Diocesan initiatives. The link to the Bishop's address can be found here: http://www.diomass.org/news/diocesan-convention.

We wish you all a blessed and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Todd Baldwin, Michele O'Shea, and Lisa Lavoie



The Men's Breakfast is held at 8:30 am on the 4th Saturday of every month. This is an informal breakfast group where all are welcome. There is no membership requirement and no reservations – just show up and join us. Discussion ranges everywhere from the weather to what's going on at the church, and onward to whatever is on anyone's mind. Breakfast is at the Deli King Restaurant, 885 Main Street in Tewksbury, and it's a cash only business. Most breakfasts are between \$8 and \$12 per person, and the food is excellent. See you there.

From the desk of the parish administrator

by Jayleigh Lewis



December just might be the busiest month in the parish office. Bulletins for extra services are being prepared, holiday giving and decorations are being coordinated, and all of the regular week-to-week tasks still need to be accomplished. There is something about this time of year that makes me want to hibernate, as the trees and the animals do. Yet, there is much to be said for doing things that lift our spirits (and the spirits of others) while we move through these days.

I am learning two things from this, my first year of being so involved in the behind-the -scenes work of Advent and Christmas. One is that I appreciate times of quiet, of being with God in the dark and the silence. My experience of the building of St. Anne's, at this time of year, is primarily one of darkness, as my weekly office hours

now stretch into the time after the sun goes down. When I go into the church to place the Sunday bulletins, I must often navigate by feel rather than sight. It has been an exercise in confidence and in growing relationship with this church, as I now know where to go even when I can't see. There is much in this that reminds me of how to walk with God. Although sometimes I wish I could know what the church is like in morning daylight, I have learned to recognize the holiness that is present here in the dark and the quiet, and to be grateful for it.

The other thing I have learned is how time-intensive the simplest of tasks can be, when done well and thoughtfully. Before coming to St. Anne's, I had never assembled a church bulletin, and I had not known how much work goes into doing so. While much remains the same week to week, and I use the copy and paste functions liberally, there is no substitute for careful proofreading, for imagining and re-imagining the total effect of the layout as well as the accuracy and precision of each word. The same holds true for the monthly newsletter, annual report, etc. This is one reason it is so helpful for me to receive your submissions for these by the deadlines, as it allows time for that extra attention to be given, when there is not so much of a rush to complete the project before it must be distributed. Thank you for honoring this—as I imagine our parish leaders and volunteers also know, behind-the-scenes work can be hard and exacting, but it is also rewarding when the community helps to lift it up.



You are invited to join us on Friday, December 3rd, at 7:00 pm, for popcorn and a movie! We will be watching *More Than A Month*. This is a thoughtful and humorous 52-minute film. There will be room for discussion following the film.





Re-Gathering Report

The Re-Gathering Team met on November 2nd and reviewed current protocols and practices.

There are no changes. In addition, we discussed the two services to be held on Christmas Eve. The church will be disinfected between services using the mister disinfector. Hymnals will be returned to the pews for the Carol Sing. Food service was reviewed related to several gatherings. Coffee Hour: no change. The Social Group made an inquiry regarding the serving of pizza; guidance was provided. And it was determined that food handling at the Silver Tea will be similar to the handling of food at Coffee Hour.

On November 15, the Diocese issued a revised statement regarding COVID-19 Requirements and Recommendations. There were a few changes that were made, but none that affect our current practices. Billerica continues to require the wearing of masks indoors.

http://www.diomass.org/covid-19-updates-resources

Included is a reflection on the pandemic from Bishop Gates, which was part of his Convention address. A quote from his reflection: "But also, how will we live – that is, what will characterize our behavior in this anxious and challenging time? How will we get through this? And how will we maintain and prioritize our humanity as we do?" Take a read of the brief reflection in its entirety.

Our next Re-Gathering meeting will be on January 11.

-Kathy Brewster, Ken Kinser, Linda Kusnierz, and Marguerite Massey

"God saw the world falling to ruin because of fear and immediately acted to call it back with love."

-Peter Chrysologus, fifth century





Education for Ministry (EfM)

In January 2022 we are hopeful of bringing together a small spiritual community focused on studying our faith and exploring what the "priesthood (or ministry) of all believers" means to us as individual laypersons. EfM (Education for Ministry) is an ecumenical, Episcopal Church-affiliated program.

The School of Theology of the University of the South (https://efm.sewanee.edu/) has created this four-year distance learning curriculum blending individual study, small group interaction, and worship. Recently, the Christ Church based EfM group has met primarily on Zoom due to the pandemic. This has reduced distance and transportation issues as barriers to participation and can continue over the winter months. The EfM mentors would like to know the level of interest by early December in order to organize registration and obtain materials in time for a start early in 2022.

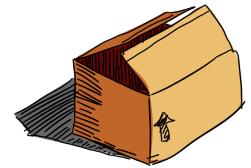
For more information, contact Rosemarie Buxton, <u>rosebuxton@yahoo.com</u> 978-886-1802, or Steve Taylor, <u>sdtaylor.home@hotmail.com</u> 978-623-3385.

Facilities Report

Keeping our facilities uncluttered:

Occasionally we have boxes left over from deliveries to St. Anne's or from an event at the church. These are sometimes left in the kitchen area. If boxes need to be discarded, please make sure they are clearly marked as TRASH and put into the kitchen area, and our Sexton will see that they are removed.

issues. What was the problem? When and where did it occur?



If you see a problem with the facilities that needs to be addressed, please let us know, no matter how small or big the issue appears to be. If something is broken, something is not cleaned, or something is out of place, we may not know about it, and consequently, nothing will get done. Also, please be specific. "A broken kneeler is in the church" isn't helpful. We need to know where it is and what you've observed. The same thing applies for cleaning

At any given time, there are facilities issues that need to be fixed, repaired or that will require cleaning outside the normal duties of the Sexton. We have a spreadsheet with a list of these items, large and small. Those needing immediate attention will be handled but may still be recorded; others will be handled as appropriate. Larger issues may be expensive and may need to be planned for over a long period of time, but there may also be things we've missed, so please let us know what you see. You can contact Mike Hopkins, Ed Giroux, or Jayleigh to report what you see, and we'll let you know what can be done. If *immediate* action is needed, it would be best to call or text Mike at 603-765-3736, or Ed at 781-296-3232.

Scholarship Thank Yous

In late summer, we collected scholarship applications from students affiliated with St. Anne's, to help with their educational expenses. Those scholarships have been disbursed by the Endowment Committee, and we have received a few notes of gratitude!



Dear St. Anne's Endowment Committee, I am so great he to have recieved this Scholarship for my 2021-2022 acadmic Year at Salve Regina University. Thunk you all so much on behalf of myself and my fumily.

May you have

Peat St Annes
Thank you for the donation
for my scholarship it will be
put to good use.

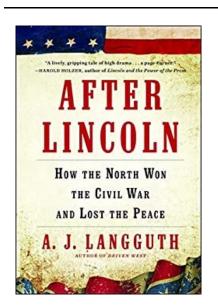
a holiday kind of happiness
in your heart all year!

Happy Holidays + Happy New Year!

- Gruce Kennedy

thank you again - Boston Bergeron U

Social Conscience Book Club



The Social Conscience Book Club meets every other Monday at 5:30 PM. We are thinking about offering access to the meetings on Zoom as well. If this is something you are interested in, please contact Marguerite Massey (mammassey@aol.com), Brenda Komarinski (bkomarinski@gmail.com), or Russell Bent (bentr49@gmail.com).

Currently we are reading *After Lincoln: How the North Won the Civil War and Lost the Peace* by A. J. Langguth. We are reading three to four chapters for each meeting with an hour of discussion.



The following poem was submitted for your reflection this month by Russell Bent, on behalf of the Social Justice Subcommittee of the Vestry.

I, Too

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides, They'll see how beautiful I am And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.



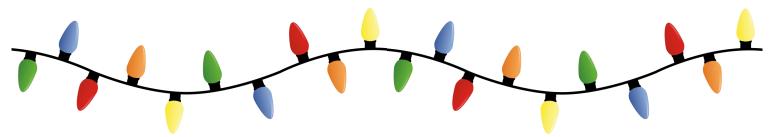
Birthday and Anniversary Prayers

O God, our times are in your hand; Look with favor we pray, on your servant _____, as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

David Carpine	11/2	Steve Hopkins	12/2	John Kusnierz	1/7
Maria Baldwin	11/3	Belinda Fletcher	12/5	Sandra Giroux	1/11
Eli Baldwin	11/4	Marguerite Massey	12/7	Carol MacKenzie	1/25
Norm & MJ Zarella	11/5	Pat Cregg	12/10	Mike Hopkins	1/27
Jennifer Stockton	11/19	Andrea Jeffrey	12/18		
Amy O'Sullivan	11/20	Lisa Carpine	12/25		
Jose Torres	11/24	Nicole Knowles	12/26		
Julie Komarinski	11/28			-	

If you or a loved one are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion, and want it to be included in the next newsletter, please email stannesbillerica@gmail.com and let us know.



ZUMBA WITH CAROLISA * MINI-SESSION @ ST ANNE'S

Mondays 6:00 - 7:00 pm * five weeks starting December 13

Advance sign up required @ moonlightdjz@gmail.com

\$45 for the series * Gift Cards available!



Move, Groove, be Fit & Have FUN! Get funky to a fantastic mix of dance classics to current plus plenty of 80's, 90's; plus latin and Bollywood. Mix it up with a different line dance each week; Learn an Irish & a barn dance! It's easy to catch on; adjust the workout to suit you. Best are sneakers without much tread. Beginners & all fitness levels welcome – try it with friends! Keep moving through the holidays *Dance off calories in this FUN & friendly class!

** Masks are required at all times in the building. Participants will be spaced apart in accordance with current CDC guidelines.

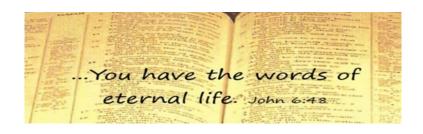
Further info & Sign up: moonlightdjz@gmail.com

FB: Carolisa Moonlightdjz

St. Anne's Prayer List

Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you gather the lambs in your arms and carry them in your bosom: We commend to your loving care this child _____. Relieve their pain, guard them from all danger, restore to them your gifts of gladness and strength, and raise them up to a life of service to you. Hear us, we pray, for _____. Amen.

Ana Blesso, Barbara Rogers, Cyndi, Debbie Blesso, Dianne Brown, Donald Fudge,
Donald Sutton, Sr., Elaine Howland, Elaine McLaughlin, Fred Brown, Helen, Irene Mouradian,
Janet Lyna, Jean Flight, John Phillips, Jose Torres, Sr., Joseph Pleva, Joshua Young,
Kathy Chang, Leonard Youens, Linda E., Marie Figenbaum, Marie Horgan, Mark Figenbaum,
Mary Hyatt, Mary Lander & her daughter Christine, Norm & MJ Zarella, Pat McCleave & family,
Paul Hamner, Ricky & Mrs. Greene, Sally DiRocco, Sarah Komarinski, Susan Fader,
Tammy, Tom, Vicki Mahoney



"As we decorate and celebrate, we do so to mark the memory of your redemptive moment into our broken world, O God.

Our glittering ornaments and Christmas trees, our festive carols, our sumptuous feasts -

By these small tokens we affirm that something amazing has happened in time and space - that God, on a particular night, in a particular place, so many years ago, was born to us, an infant King, our Prince of Peace.

Our wreaths and ribbons and colored lights, our giving of gifts, our parties with friends - these have never been ends in themselves.

They are but small ways in which we repeat that sounding joy first proclaimed by angels in the skies near Bethlehem."



from "A Liturgy to Mark the Start of the Christmas Season"
 in Every Moment Holy, Volume I
 by Douglas Kaine McKelvey