



# ST. AIDAN'S STAG & STAFF

*The growing community of St. Aidan's is called to be God's light and loving presence through faith, sacrament, and outreach.*



## They're BAAAACK!

Yes, backpacks and school supplies are coming back again this year.

**Between June 15<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup>**, the Outreach Committee will collect school supplies to distribute to the children of our Little Pantry visitors.

### YOU can help!

Donate cash (note OUTREACH in your check's memo line), or buy any of these items:

- A backpack
- Crayola crayon 24 count
- Crayola markers (washable, broad line)
- Water color (8 colors), washable
- Wide-ruled notebooks
- Pocket folders
- Elmer's disappearing glue sticks (purple)
- Pencils (black & colored) and erasers

**Thanks for giving these children a great start to the school year!**

Laura Johnston

## LOVE THY NEIGHBOR



## WAS NOT A SUGGESTION



First Saturdays —

**JULY 5**

**Cooking 8am  
Eating 8:30am**

Dear Friends,

If you are reading this newsletter, you know that the church offers you something you need. We gather at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church on a Sunday morning to rest in a place of peace and to worship God in community. We all need to spend time resting and worshipping with one another. In some ways, the church is a refuge from the chaos of life in this summer of 2025, as we balance trying to make sense of the national and world news with daily interactions among family and friends. While all of us need to rest and recharge, the Episcopal faith community never stops challenging us to find new ways to show our love for God and with one another.

This is what Jesus teaches. He is still challenging us to listen to one another, to reject suspicion and lies, and to consider how the Holy Spirit moves people toward greater unity. I encourage you to regularly participate in Sunday morning worship at St. Aidan's, where we rest and recharge our spiritual batteries, then together we consider how we will accept Jesus' challenge to support even those with whom we disagree. When you travel, I encourage you to find an Episcopal church where you can participate in worship. In times of stress, in times of uncertainty, and in these summer months, regular church participation gives us what we need — the strength to sincerely love each other.

Mother Esther +





Ted was born in Peru and was sent to America to study at 7 or 8, along with his mother and siblings.

As a teenager, Ted lived in an all-girls dormitory in Rochester, NY where his Mom served as house mom. He flashes a wicked smile when he recounts stories of dorm life.

Ted is an avid off-road biker who has attained considerable renown as an Enduro racing legend. He is personal friends with John Penton, the father of the Enduro and designer of the Penton motorcycle that Ted drives.

Traveling all over the US, Ted seeks the thrill of the endurance rides and some of the most beautiful, sometimes treacherous off-road conditions. Think "over the river and through the woods." He is a winner of multiple awards including the "Iron Man Award" presented at the Colorado 500, one of the premier Enduro races in the world.

Recently, Ted was honored with his name etched alongside his hero, John Penton, on this prestigious award. Ted attended the 2024 Colorado 500 at 96. If you have an hour, ask him about this multiple days-long race.

Ted is a trickster and self-proclaimed troublemaker. He loves to word-spar and isn't shy about needing his friends. If you engage in conversation with him, you'd best be ready to think quickly and stay on your toes. And don't forget, when you are ready to go your separate ways, don't say "goodbye" to Ted. Say "so long for now" because "goodbye is too final."



From notes on conversations with Ted by **Dan Beml**

**ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**



**Good news:** St. Aidan's Vestry unanimously approved the plan to move forward with the Patio Native Garden!

It is contingent on available funds. Right now we have roughly \$2500 designated for Creation Care which will cover the cost of the native plants.

The first step is smothering the lawn for the garden in July. Due to private donations of time and money, we are able to purchase wood chips without using "plant" monies. If St. Aidan's volunteers install the cardboard and wood chips in the designated area, it will save us \$1927.50. With additional donations, we will engage expert help from Native Roots personnel for plant installation, ensuring better plant survival.

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



In the Spring, the landscaper, Danielle Bell, will select the plants that are listed in her design plan, bring them to St. Aidan's, and position them. Again, if St. Aidan's volunteers plant them through the mulch, it will save \$1853.60.

**Watch/listen for announcements about volunteer times and activities!**



The choir and the congregation thank **Pat Gardner** for another year of inspiring music and spirit-filled leadership

**and Farewell**

to Leah Stadel who so ably accompanied us in our praise! We wish her well in all her future endeavors.



Cake and cookie celebration of St. Aidan's music program!

**STAG & STAFF**

# GOOD NEWS



**Sydney Wetzel** congratulates her brother, **Cameron**, on his graduation from Slinger High School and his Honor Society medal. He is the son of **Eric Wetzel**

## Tara Nooyan shares great memories from her recent travels —



Our daughter, Katharine Nooyan, graduated May 6 from Chicago's Loyola University in Environmental Studies. She has an internship at Garfield Park in Chicago running the community garden and education programs while working on her Master's Degree in Environmental Law & Policy from Loyola. Her proud Dad is my husband, Michael. I'm pretty proud, too!



**Lily**, daughter of **Amanda and Fido Mercado**, participated in the Schauer Center spring dance recital.



From my recent trip to Pennsylvania and New York — I finally met friends I've known since Covid. A few of us had never met in person. The individual in the wheelchair is one of my best friends. We had never met in person as he has brittle bone disease and is unable to travel. It was a wonderful trip and Pennsylvania is beautiful!



Statue of Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade who led the Union in the Battle of Gettysburg after only being promoted three days earlier. I'm particularly proud of him, as he is my cousin (4 generations back)!

## Linda & Mike Weber with grandchildren —



Otto Viste and his car

Canna Weber as lost boy in Peter Pan with Lena behind.



Otto, Austin, and Linea Viste camping.



# Alice's Restaurant

I spent my coffee time watching rabbits this morning. We live in a cluster of four houses off a cul-de-sac, and our living room and kitchen face into the woods. On the living room side there is a hill that climbs up rather steeply. We have woods on our half of the hill, our neighbors have sumac, but in the middle of the hill live rabbits. Have you read *Watership Down*? This is a perfect time to be reading a book about politics without it being about politics as much as about rabbits. This morning there is a pair of rabbits out on my lawn, eating dandelions. They clip off each flower stem at the base and then chew, pulling them in like a piece of spaghetti. Interesting. They go from dandelion to dandelion clipping off the blooms and chewing them from the bottom to the top. They keep an eye out for the birds and anything like me letting the dog out, and when they have had enough dandelion stems, they retreat into the weeds and the flowers and scurry back up the hill. Breakfast is done, and it's time for me to get busy too. Or read.

This is a good crock pot or oven meal. I admit I am woefully behind the times with no air-fryer or Instapot, but then I am retired and have time to watch rabbits and cook.

**Honey Garlic Chicken (for 2)                      350\* — 30"**

- 2 Chicken thighs**
- 1 Onion chopped**
- 4 cloves garlic smashed flat**
- Salt and pepper**
- Honey**
- A splash of chicken broth or water or wine**

**Season and brown the chicken in a pan you can cover later.**

**Remove chicken and brown the onions, adding the garlic when the onions are nicely colored.**

**Put the chicken back in, add a good squeeze of honey and a splash of broth. Cover and put in the preheated oven. Read a book for half an hour. Enjoy.**

**Alice Pollock**

**ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

## Quilts for Good!

From her second sewing retreat of the year, **Mary Moran** sends this message:

"During these two retreats I have completed seven of the ten quilts that St. Aidan's will raffle in early October, and we will once again have a booth at the Pink Pumpkin Run. As last year, people will be able to choose the quilts they wish to win and choose between their donations going to Pink Pumpkin Run or St. Aidan's Little Food Pantry. Last year we raised almost \$1700. My new goal is to break \$2000. Both fliers and raffle tickets will be available in August."



**STAG & STAFF**

# ST. AIDAN'S MINISTRIES SCHEDULE



	6	13	20	27
<b>Reader</b>	M. Hoffmann	B. Mendoza	T. Schlaefer	C. Gardner
<b>Prayers</b>	L. Schrunk	A. Pollock	C. Gardner	K. Fairchild
<b>Acolyte</b>	L. Daley	S. Schmidt	J.P. Schrunk	A. Schrunk
<b>Usher</b>	Webers	Schrunks	J. Pierce	Pollocks
<b>LEM</b>	L. Johnston	M. Hoffmann	M. Weber	B. Schrunk
<b>Counters</b>	Fairchild/Gardner	M. Moran/A. M-Meigs	Schnorenberg/Hoffmann	M. Weber/J. Pierce
<b>Cleaning</b>		Pollock/Johnston		Schnorenberg
<b>Altar</b>	G. Kelly			



Don't forget — **Third Sunday is Giving Sunday!**

## 2025

	3	10	17	24	31
<b>Reader</b>	A. Pollock	K. Fairchild	L. Molenda	S. Schmidt	E. Wetzel
<b>Prayers</b>	L. Molenda	D. Beml	T. Schlaefer	E. Schmidt	M. Hoffmann
<b>Acolyte</b>	L. Daley	S. Schmidt	J.P. Schrunk	A. Schrunk	L. Daley
<b>Usher</b>	Schnorenberg	Schmidts	Webers	Schrunks	L. Molenda
<b>LEM</b>	J. Pierce	A. Pollock	M. Hoffmann	L. Johnston	M. Weber
<b>Counters</b>	Weber/Moran	M-Meigs/ Hoffmann	Fairchild/Gardner	Weber/Schnorenberg	Moran/Pierce
<b>Cleaning</b>		Gardner		Trewyn	
<b>Altar</b>	P. Paddon.				

If you cannot serve your appointed time, please arrange for a substitute. Thank you.  
 Any **permanent** changes to the schedule should be reported to  
**Gail Hefti** at [gail.hefti@gmail.com](mailto:gail.hefti@gmail.com) or 920-740-3997.

# PARISH EVENTS — JULY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>  <p>St. A. B'fast Main St.</p>	<b>3</b>		<b>5</b> <p>Men's B'fast 8:30 am</p>
<b>6</b> Worship — 9:30 am	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>  <p>St. A. B'fast Main St.</p>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> Worship — 9:30 am  <b>F-a-B due</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>  <p>St. A. B'fast Main St. Café 7 - 9 am</p>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> Worship — 9:30 am   <p>Sharing Sunday</p> <p>Stag &amp; Staff articles due</p>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>  <p>St. A. B'fast Main St. Café 7 - 9 am</p>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  <p>Community Lunch 11:30 am 1st United Methodist</p>
<b>27</b> Worship — 9:30 am	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>  <p>St. A. B'fast Main St. Café 7 - 9 am</p>	<b>31</b>		



**St. Aidan’s Office Hours**

Wednesdays — 9 am to Noon  
 Fridays — 9 am to Noon  
 Or by appointment

**How to reach us —**

Church Mailing Address:  
 670 E. Monroe Avenue  
 Hartford, WI 53027  
 Church Office E-mail:  
 secretary@staidans-hartford.org  
 Church Website: www.staidans-hartford.org  
**Church Phone: 262-673-7273**

**The Rev. Esther Kramer, Ph. D.**  
 262-309-7661  
 estherkramer0806@gmail.com

**Deacon Terry Garner**  
 414-807-4378  
 dcnterry.g@gmail.com

**Tara Nooyen**  
 Administrative Assistant  
 secretary@staidans-hartford.org

**Mary Beth Moran, Treasurer**

**Vestry Wardens**

Eric Wetzel, Senior Warden  
 Laura Johnston, Junior Warden

**Vestry**

Geri Kelly  
 Lynn Molenda  
 Mike Morgan  
 Mike Weber

**Stag and Staff — St. Aidan’s Newsletter**

Published monthly — Deadline: Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
 Micki Hoffmann, Editor  
 Contact: mphoffmann70@gmail.com  
 or 262-673-2903



**Prayer Chain**

If anyone has a prayer need for someone or something, please call **Alice Pollock** [262-707-3456] or the church office.

<b>Mondays --</b>		
AA	7 - 8 pm	Parish Hall
<b>Tuesdays --</b>		
Women’s AA	Noon	Parish Hall
<b>Wednesdays</b>		
Office Open	9am - Noon	
<b>Fridays</b>		
Office Open	9 am - Noon	
<b>First Saturdays</b>		
Men B’fast	8 am	Parish Hall
<b>Sundays</b>		
Worship Service	9:30 am	

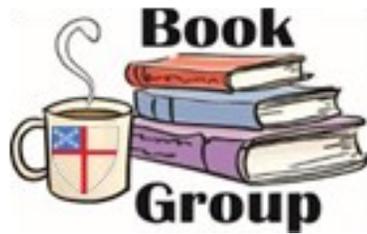
**For information about groups or scheduling the building, contact the Church Office.**



- 5 Pat Paddon
- 13 Dan Beml  
Leah Daley  
Greta & Dan Beml
- 18 Pat & Fred Paddon
- 22 Loraine & Terry Garner
- 25 Tara & Paul Nooyen
- 27 Jennifer Olson
- 30 Sandy Tracy

**Hartford Community Lunch**  
**Saturday, July 26**  
**11:30 am**  
**1st United Methodist**

Lunch is served at 11:30am. Come for a free hot meal with the Hartford Community! To volunteer [9 am—2 pm], just show up on the day.  
 If you have questions, please contact **Larry Thomas** at **262-955-4900**.



**St. Aidan's Book Discussion is Returning!**  
**Wednesday, September 3, 2025**  
**12:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**

*Putting on the Mind of Christ: The Inner Work of Christian Spirituality*  
 by  
**Jim Marion**

What does it mean to follow the path of Christ today? "Putting on the Mind of Christ" is the first book to offer an integral understanding of the Christian spiritual path--one that examines the basic stages of spiritual development described by the great saints and sages, along with the psychological stages of development used by modern psychology.

**Building Maintenance**

As our building ages, we need to complete various building maintenance projects. The first, scheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup> will be to replace a 42' length of sprinkler system pipe. Over the years, there have been several repairs made to this length of pipe. It's now time to replace it. The cost of this is \$4700. Later this summer (date not yet determined) we will fill cracks and reseal the parking lot. The cost of this project is \$5900. As we near the date of this project, we will communicate via ENews and an announcement to ask you to avoid the parking lot for several days. Thanks for your patience as these maintenance projects get underway!



**Laura Johnston**  
 Jr. Warden



St. Aidan's concluded the choir year with "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" on Trinity Sunday.

**YOU** belong in this picture!  
 Choir rehearsals begin again in  
**SEPTEMBER!**

Singing in a choir  
 is cheaper than therapy,  
 healthier than drinking,  
 and more fun than working out!



**Hartford City Band Concerts**



**Woodlawn Park**  
**8 pm — Wednesdays**  
 July 2  
 July 9  
 July 16  
 July 23  
 July 30  
 August 6

Enjoy great music and a warm atmosphere!!



## Creation Care — Information YOU can use —

### 12 benefits of native plants

#### 1. Save water

Our planet might be full of water, but the availability of clean, safe drinking water is shrinking. The clean water that spurts out of your hose as you irrigate the lawn, garden, or flower bed is valuable water that is worth saving. Native plants generally require less water than non-native plants. Since native plants are adapted to the typical amount of rain that an area receives, they usually don't need irrigation. Native plants also develop deep root systems that allow them to store water for long periods.

#### 2. No fertilizer needed

If fertilizing your non-native plants (including your non-native lawn grass) is like watching your time and money run down the drain, then you'll love native plants.

Native plants have adapted to their ecosystem's soil. So whether they've adapted to poor soils or fertile soils, they can survive off the soil's available nutrients without the help of fertilizers.

Not only does this save you time and cash, but it's also a great benefit for the environment. Fertilizers pollute storm-water runoff, resulting in toxic waterways for fish and other aquatic organisms.

#### 3. No pesticides needed

Pesticides are another pollutant native species don't require. After years of adaptation, native plants have developed their own natural defense against the area's insects, diseases, and fungi.

As Bob Henrickson, Horticulture Program Coordinator at the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, explains, "An established native landscape does not need supplemental watering, ... herbicides, insecticides, or fungicides." In other words, a native landscape taps into generations of resilience to thrive without modern micromanaging or chemical inputs.

#### 4. Resistance to local weather

Because native plants have adapted to the local climate and weather conditions, they are more likely to survive than non-native plants.

For example, if you live near the ocean and experience frequent hurricanes, salt-tolerant native plants are more likely to survive the high winds and salt spray than non-native plants that have never needed to adapt to such conditions.

#### 5. Rarely invasive

If you're not careful, an invasive plant can take over your whole garden. English ivy, for instance, might be a beautiful vine that reminds you of quaint cottages, but it can quickly overtake vulnerable plants if you don't maintain it.

Many non-native plants have invasive qualities, while native plants are rarely invasive. Not only do native plants restore balance in the yard, but they also require far less maintenance than invasive plants.

#### 6. Erosion control

Erosion — it's a real pain in the yard. It changes the shape of your yard's slopes and planting beds and even redirects water flow. You can help prevent erosion by planting native plants in troublesome areas. Thanks to their deep root systems, native plants help stabilize and anchor the soil.

Continued — Page 10



## Creation Care Information YOU can use continued —

### 7. Restore natural habitats

By planting native plants in the landscape, you are enhancing the natural habitat of local wildlife. Birds, pollinators, chipmunks — all sorts of animals rely on native plants for fruit, nuts, nectar, seeds, and shelter.

Henrickson explains that native habitats include a broad range of plants in an area: “You can think of “native” as what plants occur naturally in a particular region... This includes native grasses, wildflowers and woody plants — trees and shrubs.” Adding a range of plant types in your yard, from short grasses to towering trees, helps create habitats for many types of insects, birds, and other wildlife.

### 8. Preserve biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, big and small. From humans to the tiny organisms we can’t see, biodiversity is the interconnection between all living things.

When you grow native plants, you’re preserving the natural connections shared between the organisms in your yard. The organisms in an ecosystem depend on each other for survival, and your native plants play a vital role by providing food and shelter for insects and wildlife.

### 9. Reduce water runoff

When rain falls from the sky, the water needs to go *somewhere*. The soil soaks up some of the water and replenishes the groundwater. But most of the water flows into storm drains as runoff. Runoff is often polluted by fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and all sorts of chemicals we find on our roads, driveways, parking lots, and lawns.

By growing a rain garden made of native plants, you can help minimize the effects of runoff. Rain gardens help capture and filter stormwater runoff before it escapes into the waterways. As the water seeps into the ground, the native plants’ deep roots help filter the pollutants from the water.

### 10. Low-maintenance alternative to turfgrass

Most lawns grow non-native turf grasses. It’s no wonder we spend so much time fertilizing and maintaining grass — it needs our help to survive unfamiliar territory. Henrickson notes that freedom from the weekly mowing routine is something homeowners often consider as they weigh the pros and cons of native vs. non-native species.

Lawns also require heavy maintenance equipment, many of which are gas-powered and harmful to the environment. Transforming a portion of your yard into a native plant sanctuary or meadow garden will help lower your use of toxic chemicals and gas-powered tools. By reducing the use of your gas-powered tools, you can minimize air pollution and help protect the planet.

### 11. Save you money

If it hasn’t been made clear to you already, native plants help you save money. Their superb survival skills mean you don’t have to throw money around for fertilizer and pesticides. You also save money on maintaining lawn equipment for mowing traditional turfgrass. And your water bill may go down, too.

### 12. Provide beauty

We couldn’t make a list of native plant benefits without including their beauty. Showcasing a variety of textures, heights, and colors, native plants are a stunning visual in the yard.

Filling your landscape with splashes of color, aroma, and visually exciting plants gives your neighbors and house-guests a positive impression of your home before they even step through the door.

Information from [lawnlove.com](http://lawnlove.com)

**Editor’s note: St. Aidan’s Creation Care Landscape Project includes native plantings!**

**ST. AIDAN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**STAG & STAFF**

Outreach Project  
Women of the Wisconsin Diocese



## MISSION

SCI upholds our enduring legacy of serving and protecting the personal and professional lives of mariners and seafarers with unwavering compassion and dedication. We are committed to partnering with the maritime industry to ensure dignity within the workplace, and the safety of vessel operations and maritime environments. Through our efforts, we strive to foster a safer, more respectful, and sustainable maritime community, both internationally and domestically.



**Christmas at Sea**  
THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

As a Christmas at Sea (CAS) volunteer, you are joining an inclusive, supportive community that represents the oldest and longest continuously-running charter knitting program in the U.S. CAS delivers the highest volume of knitted gifts to international seafarers of any non-profit, and we are the only chaplaincy delivering knit gifts to the thousands of professional U.S. mariners at work aboard towboats, harbor tugs, and dredges on the Mississippi River system and the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterways. With our limited staff, we are only able to accomplish these impressive numbers because of the active support of our knitters, crocheters, seamstresses, packers, and donors. "The hallmark of our program is personalization. We never purchase knits from the store. Every gift is hand-made, and for international seafarers, most arrive in a hand-sewn ditty bag. Knitted gifts to U.S. mariners on boats are delivered in boxes containing handcrafted Christmas cards often created by school children." — **Joanne Bartosik, Christmas at Sea Manager**

## Seafarer's Scarf



**About this Pattern:** The original seafarer scarf worn the world over!

**Note:** The first and last 14 inches of the scarf are knit in garter stitch.

The 18 inches of k4, p4 ribbing in the middle make a narrow-looking neck. This makes the scarf more dense and warmer around the neck without adding extra bulk.

**Tip:** Slip the first stitch of each row purlwise to keep the edges tidy.



Cast on 32 stitches.

Knit even for 14".

\*K4, p4, repeat from \* across row for 18".

Knit even for 14".

**Finishing:** Bind off loosely. Weave in ends.

**Finished Measurements:**  
Approximately 6.5" x 46"

**Materials:** Approximately 300 yards of worsted weight yarn

US size 6 or 7 needles, or size needed to get gauge

Tapestry needle

Gauge: 20 sts & 36 rows = 4 inches square in garter stitch

CAS is a seamless program- we welcome packages year-round. Donations received after December 15<sup>th</sup> are usually rolled over into the following year.

**Bring scarves to the Diocesan Convention October 2025 or mail.**

Address for the mailing:  
**Christmas at Sea  
International Seafarers' Center  
Seamen's Church Institute  
118 Export St.  
Port Newark, NJ 07114**

Main telephone: 973.589.5828

# We do not live to ourselves



*Community vital for body, mind and spirit*

ON EASTER SUNDAY, I DROVE a hundred miles to celebrate the Eucharist with a small congregation in a small town that had no priest. And though I live in a part of the country that likes to joke that anything within 300 miles is local, I cannot say it was a pleasant journey -- the wind was high, and my car is small enough to feel every gust.

What I found when I arrived, however, made every mile worthwhile -- a small, beautiful old church and a tiny congregation that most obviously was a community in the true sense of the word: close-bonded, accepting, members caring for one another and yet welcoming the newcomer and the stranger. It reminded me of other congregations I have known, other congregations that have also somehow tapped into a deeper reality than a Sunday-morning association, a closeness more profound and even more mysterious than friendship. We celebrated our Eucharist. Afterward we ate and talked and told our stories -- that abiding hallmark of humanity which is holy and necessary and also a sacrament.

I couldn't have had a better Easter.

The experience has stayed with me through the days after, through this glowing and sacred time that lies between the dawnlight of Resurrection and the Pentecostal fire. What is this thing, I have asked, that Turner called "communitas" and Williams called "co-inherence" and that the church -- more simply and more mysteriously -- calls the "Body of Christ" and in

which we live so completely that we often fail to notice it at all? Is this the shape of the kingdom of God, already here, already surrounding us,



*pilgrim songs*

Anne McConney

waiting only for us to recognize it and claim it and by our claiming make it visible?

We do not live to ourselves. Each one of us spends his or her entire lifetime embedded in the great matrix of life on planet Earth. Each one of us lives in total dependence on others. No infant survives without the care of other human beings; even as adults we are aware that -- much as we may like to read about such adventures -- few of us would survive a Robinson Crusoe experience and, if we did, it would be with the all-consuming goal of reunion with our fellows. ~

As with the body, so it is with the mind. We are intellectually nourished and nurtured by others; if we were not, we would be doomed, cut off from language and learning, living by what has been called "the ferocity of instinct" and by whatever small degree of immediate experience we might achieve in hard, brutal and markedly shorter lives.

And as it is with the body and mind, so I think it is with the spirit. We humans seem to be relentlessly spiritual beings; of all human societies there are few -- perhaps none -- that have not developed the theologies, the rituals, the various religious trappings with which humankind

sacramentalizes its numinous knowledge of something beyond itself.

What I am trying, perhaps rather ineptly, to say is that, just as human nurturing, human culture and human knowledge have multiplied and deepened, so has human spirituality, always becoming more profound and more complex. The *communitas*,

*coinherence*, kingdom of God (call it what you will) has always been with us, has always enfolded us in the richness of God's love, but our understanding of it has grown over the years, the centuries, the millennia.

Like any other kind of growth, however, a large part of the process is abandonment. We add new wisdom and leave behind that which once served us but which is no longer adequate. The great mystics of the great religious traditions have always known and taught this. The way forward is what T.S. Eliot (paraphrasing Saint John of the Cross) called "the way of dispossession," the place where "what you do not know is the only thing you know."

Only when we are willing to step beyond what we think we know can we begin to discover the infinite mysteries of being and the infinite potentials of divine and human love. Only when we have the faith to explore a *communitas* in which every soul is a unique and essential part of the whole and a reality in which only love is endless will we find that the kingdom was always there, waiting for us with the eternal patience of God.

*The Rev. Anne McConney of Omaha, Neb., is a regular columnist for Episcopal Life.*