

July will join the rest of 2021 as an interesting month. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to be winding down here in Brazoria and Matagorda Counties; but a variant virus seems to be winding up in other places. With the government loosening a mask-wearing standard for people who have been vaccinated, people are comfortably gathering in larger groups. However, others who have not been vaccinated still walk around unmasked. The implications of these events will show up in July. My prayers are that this will not be another wave but just a puddle on the walk to recovery.

Aside from those concerns, July will be an interesting time for St. Peter and St. John. Our Intern Laura and her small family will be returning to Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Vicar Laura has been a blessing to St. Peter and ministered to them through the depths of the COVID-19 crisis and some very difficult congregational events. Her time as an intern is special because she shared it with us, but also during a time a global pandemic is running its course. She joins her generation of students as one of distinction. She will be missed, just as Cassie is missed. The upside of being a Teaching Congregation is meeting new people to bless your faith journey. The downside is you have to say goodbye to the intern and lovingly let them go. But thank God, even the downside has a blessing. You have God bring a new day to greet with a grateful heart. In our case, we get to welcome a new intern; an intern who brings new gifts, talents, and energy. What they all have in common is the eagerness to serve God at St. Peter and St. John.

At St. John, we continue our winter storm recovery. St. John will be getting floors for the church and then it can begin to put the church back together a little more. It all may seem overwhelming but every darkness eventually has light cast upon it; just like a new day.

I thank God for life one more day. It is a new chance to try again. I use this hope to pray that people will remember that Sunday morning worship service was a part of the Pre-Pandemic life. I know that the world has changed and people have become accustomed to other activities, but I want you to read 1 Corinthians 12. Pay attention to verses 25-26. Here is the passage from The Message: *“The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don’t, the parts we see and the parts we don’t. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.”* The prayer I have in my heart is actually a statement. It is this: you are missed and your presence is

needed. There is a congregational need to hear toddlers fussing and seeing teenagers texting in the pews. The word of God reaches all ears, we just don't see it. St. Peter is diminished without you. St. John is diminished without you. *"If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing."* The Body of Christ is hurting without you. Before the pandemic, we didn't just praise God together, but shared each other's burdens, and mourned together. Now more than ever, we need you to come back and be the Family of God so we can heal together.

I'll close with a Psalm that makes me rejoice: *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."* Psalm 30:5. I rejoice because I know that the Holy Spirit has a lot in store for St. Peter and St. John. I rejoice because I am the pastor of both congregations and the Holy Spirit continues to inspire me and energize me. The future of both congregations belongs to God. We are God's hands and feet on earth. *"If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance."* Come and See all that God has in store for US.