

Connections

Quarterly Newsletter

May 2026



St. David's
Episcopal Church
Southfield

From the Editor...



"We got a new toaster and one more thing," Ellen Boyes said to Fr. Chris as she led him down the hallway to the parish kitchen after he returned from his

Sabbatical last summer. Not knowing what to expect, Fr. Chris dutifully kept his eyes down and focused on the floor until Ellen said he could look. "Are you ready?" she asked, and when Fr. Chris looked up he saw a completely renovated space...much more than new a countertop appliance.

I loved writing about this scene with Ellen in last November's newsletter. For me, it was a snapshot into the person Ellen was. She was so happy that the parish kitchen could be renovated...and looking forward to surprising Fr. Chris. I heard her talk about the old and new colors of the kitchen walls. I felt how delighted she was to sew the new kitchen window curtains. I agreed when she hoped the kitchen counters would stay uncluttered and clean.

Ray and I last talked with Ellen on Easter after the service as she sat in her usual pew. Now when I pass that pew during Communion I'll still hear Ellen singing a descant to the hymn as she often did. When I see the kitchen curtains I'll feel the homey warmth she brought to St. David's.

And when I use the new toaster in the parish kitchen, I'll offer a "toast" to Ellen... who surprised us all by leaving too soon.

Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz

Senior Warden Ellen Boyes Passes

**Maureen Mahar
To Serve As
New Senior Warden**

Senior Warden Ellen Boyes, longtime parishioner and soprano soloist, died on April 18th after a brief illness. She was 66.

Ellen had been diagnosed with cancer several weeks before her death. She passed peacefully with those dearest to her by her side.

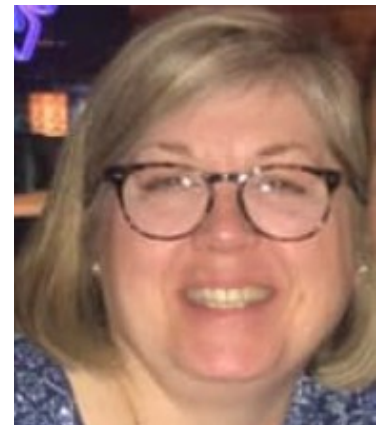
Serving a record four times as Senior Warden at St. David's, Ellen also graced the parish with her soprano solos, and, for a time, led the choir and served as an interim parish music director. She was also an active member of the parish Altar Guild and the Plarn Group, which makes plastic sleeping mats for the homeless.

Ellen was instrumental in overseeing the renovation of the parish kitchen while Fr. Chris and his family were away on Sabbatical this summer. She also helped update the cozy nook in the Women's Room, where she reupholstered the bench and donated the rocking chair, end table, clock, waste basket, and planter. The area serves as a private space for nursing moms or for brides and bridesmaids to prepare before the ceremony.

Parishioner Maureen Mahar has agreed to step in as Senior Warden until December 31st.

The Very Rev. Chris Yaw will conduct a Requiem Eucharist for Ellen Boyes on Sunday, May 31, at 10 a.m. in the St. David's Sanctuary, 16200 Twelve Mile Road, Southfield. Visitation in the Narthex starting at 9 a.m. will precede the service.

In Memoriam



**Ellen Boyes
June 22, 1959—April 18, 2026**

From the Rector...

ANOTHER TAKE ON 'DOUBTING THOMAS'

So what was "Doubting Thomas" doubting?

Seriously. We've been gaslighting this man for two thousand years without looking at the actual math of the room.

Remember, it's the evening of the Resurrection. The disciples are gathered in a room. But they aren't celebrating. The text says the doors are locked because they are terrified. Everyone is there...except Thomas.

Now ask yourself: Why wasn't Thomas there? Was he at home crying? Probably not. He was likely out in the streets, getting food, living his life. Thomas wasn't the scared one. He was the only one brave enough to leave the house!

So Jesus shows up. He breathes the Holy Spirit on the ten



Fr. Chris Yaw

disciples. He gives them a "Go" mission. Massive power. World-changing authority. Right?

Fast forward eight days later. The disciples see Thomas and say "We saw the Lord! We have the Holy Spirit!"

But look at the scene. They are still in that same room. The doors are still locked. They are still cowering.

Thomas looks at them and basically says, "I'll believe it when I see it."

We think he's talking about Jesus' scars. But what if he's talking about theirs?

He's looking at ten guys claiming to have the power of God but who are still too chicken to unlock the front door. Thomas didn't doubt the Resurrection; he doubted the witnesses. He refused to believe in a "miracle" that produced zero change in the people who claimed to experience it.

Maybe Thomas isn't a warning about having too little faith. Maybe he's a warning to those of us who claim to follow Jesus but still live like we're locked in a basement.

And I'll see you Sunday.



The tally of unwanted firearms destroyed by St. David's Disarmory Ministries as of **April 26, 2026**. The ministry is located at 2312 Greenfield Road, in Berkeley. For more information or to volunteer to help with this ministry, please visit the website at disarmory.org.



Former U.S. Rep. Andy Levin Offers Insights On Current Affairs



Levin, who has represented local constituents in Congress, speaks during the Connection Hour on Feb. 1. Levin also shared his views with parishioners at the 9 a.m. discussion. (Photo: Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz)

From The Senior Warden



**Maureen
Mahar**

A great deal has happened since our last newsletter. I will try to bring everyone up-to-date with what your vestry has been doing. As a reminder, the minutes and strategic plan are posted on the vestry bulletin board in the hallway. Please feel free to review at any time.

Most importantly, we have lost our beloved Senior Warden, Ellen Boyes. With her illness causing a great deal of uncertainty, the vestry voted at our April meeting to install me as interim Senior Warden. This was to ensure continuity of service to our community. Unfortunately, Ellen passed, so I will continue to serve in this capacity until the end of the year. As this is my last year on the vestry, another leader will be chosen at the January meeting.

We have also had a couple other changes to the vestry. Wayne Atfield has joined the vestry to fill a vacancy, and we will be discussing adding an additional member to meet the nine-person requirement in our bylaws.

Over the last three months, we have had some excellent speakers at both the 9 a.m. meeting and the 11:30 a.m. coffee hour after church, including the documents we need when we're ill and after we've passed. Future topics will include security and safety.

As mentioned in our parish weekly emails, we are looking for ways to raise funds to offset our budget shortfalls during the coming months. Look for these opportunities to support your parish community. Also, if you have any ideas for fundraising, please reach out to any vestry member and share your thoughts. We are always looking for new ways to connect with our parishioners and come together to uplift our church family.

One major issue we have been working on is repairing or replacing the parking lot. We have been getting bids and will be discussing our options to fund this project. We will share more about this once we determine our next course of action.

St. David's has been serving our community for a long time and as we grow and evolve, our parishioners continue to shape our mission. We have welcomed many new faces over the years, and each person has brought with them something we need to be a vital source of comfort and support for our community. I look forward to serving as Senior Warden and hope that each of you will continue to look to St. David's as a place where you find community, hope, and commitment. Thank you.

Property Commission Members for 2026: Daniel Bair, Wayne Atfield, and Hampton Hanable.

Here is a summary of happenings at St. David's since the last Junior Warden's Report in February:

Kudos to Howard Rush for his contribution for the new conference room table. It replaced the former table, which had begun to delaminate its top layer.

The Atrium front doors, near the Sanctuary entrance, were repaired by Howard Commercial Door Company in February. The initial estimate to trim the top of the doors was \$500. After review and rework, Howard charged \$150, stating the actual repair was easier than the proposed rework.

Williams Sound Company was asked for an estimate to add or replace the Sanctuary assisted hearing FM devices for those who need them. We currently have only three units. To buy seven more units would cost about \$1100 and give us 10 working units. Rechargeable NiCad batteries would be included with the purchase. There has been no further discussion on whether there is a real need for additional units

since it's unclear if those who are hard-of-hearing would ask for assistance.

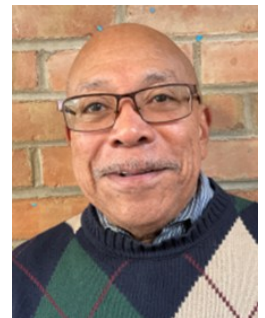
Our kitchen now has a new exhaust fan installed atop the roof and is fully operational.

Kudos to Ray Litwinowicz, who contacted Control Solutions, the original developer of the boiler operation software. In summary, their technician reprogrammed the blue control modules to follow revised program instructions and to follow the thermostat settings upon demand.

The Property Commission now has three quotes from several paving companies for repaving the asphalt lots and driveways around our property: \$238,000, \$272,000, and \$254,000. Also, sidewalk replacement for our church would average an additional \$12,000. These quotes do not include any engineering costs should the City of Southfield require an engineering study before submitting the project for approval.

Our law service is now in the second year of a three-year contract with Teddy's Lawn Care Service. The contract is for the years 2025-2027.

From The Junior Warden



**Hampton
Hanable, Jr.**

New In The Pews

As we know, St. David's is a very welcoming community that prides itself on accepting all without judging. Many newcomers value this belief as an important reason for attending our services and becoming parishioners. However, there are churches that do not.

Adwoa (pronounced AH-zhu-ah) Tandoh experienced this with a church she had previously attended. One day, a minister informed her that they would not be accepting her because she identified herself with the LGBTQ community and that her beliefs did not align with theirs. Obviously, this caused great concern and anxiety for her to try and overcome.

"I put on a white dress and decided to attend a service in the first week of July," Adwoa said. "I didn't know that it would be outside and that everyone would be dressed so casually." Adwoa credited two parishioners for encouraging her to continue her spiritual journey.

"I spoke with Helen Thompson, and she assured me that St. David's would accept me; that we believe in marriage equality and that I am welcome here. In addition, I enjoy

John Hawkes

Connections Columnist



Church. She describes herself as a "Pastor's kid" since her parents ministered in the Assembly of God faith. "In college, I started to discover who I am and got away for a bit. I avoided church for a while, but I wanted to be a Christian. I felt a sense of belonging when I came here. I like the musicality of the service. I've never been to a church that sings The Lord's Prayer."

Adwoa was born and raised in Southfield. At one-and-a-half, her family traveled to Ghana for a vacation. Shortly thereafter, 9/11 happened. Travel restrictions resulted in a two-year stay. Later, she graduated from Birmingham's Roeper School and then attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, receiving a bachelor's degree in economics. After working in Kansas City for almost ten years, Adwoa enrolled at the University of Virginia and obtained her MBA in business administration.

singing, so I asked Ellen Boyes how to audition for the choir. 'Just show up,' was her reply."

This is Adwoa's first experience in the Episcopal

In addition to singing, Adwoa is an avid traveler, having visited six continents before the age of 30 (with no plans to go to Antarctica). This passion encouraged her to start her own business: Atlas by Adwoa LLC. According to her web-



Adwoa Tandoh

site, it is "A Boutique travel consultancy helping you design your perfect vacation." On the site, she chronicles how planning the honeymoon for one of her best friends led to "my first stint as a travel advisor."

Regarding our parish, Adwoa said, "I feel blessed to be here and thank you all for being so welcoming."

We welcome Adwoa Tandoh to St. David's!

Parish Campus Earns Second Food Composting Bin



A worker empties the interior of the food composting bin located near the east driveway of the St. David's parish campus on Feb. 18. The worker, assisting the Make Food Not Waste program, is readying the bin for more organic "donations" from St. David's parishioners and others who support the program. The first bin has been filling up so quickly before the weekly pickup that the food recycling program is allowing the St. David's Parish Campus to host a second bin. It will be located near the west driveway close to the shed. (Photo: Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz)

Goodbye, Sweet Friend

We sat on Ellen's awning covered porch listening to the rain gently fall. I couldn't help but notice how the rain echoed our falling tears over the last week. Not constant. Heavier at times. Softer at times. But always in the forecast.

We had told Ellen we would be happy to do the spring clean-up in her yard. At the time, we had pictured that she might be sitting in her living room doing some recovery and we would probably have a little visit and some laughs after the work.

I have known of Ellen and her family as long, or probably longer, than I've been married (forty-six years). The Rushes were part of the St. David's family starting in the '60s and over the years I've heard many stories of various people and the fellowship they shared and enjoyed.

Notice I said, "I had *known of* Ellen." I didn't really know Ellen until recently. But it feels like I've known her a lifetime. That was Ellen. That's how she was. Definitely a people person. A warm, friendly, nurturing, sweet song bird. With Howard and I returning to St. David's almost three years ago, Ellen helped make me feel like I belonged. I felt like she was just as much my friend as she was Howard's—even though they have a longer history.

Ah yes. Howard and Ellen. One of the stories from their adolescent

Cindy
Weeder
Rush

Connections
Columnist



years was when they were both running for president of the youth group. Whoever didn't make it as president would automatically be vice-president. Well, Howard won by a very slim margin. Howard recalls Ellen wanting a recount! It may or may not have happened, but as Howard says, it didn't matter because Ellen just went ahead and ACTED like she was in charge and president anyway. She didn't need the popular vote to make it "official." I love you for that, Ellen!

When Howard's father died, I thought I wanted to sing at his memorial. Not that I have the voice to do a solo, but just to honor him. But I couldn't do it. Too emotional. So Ellen did it. Then, she told me she sang at her grandmother's funeral! I couldn't believe it. But that was the strength and devotion that Ellen had and was able to give.

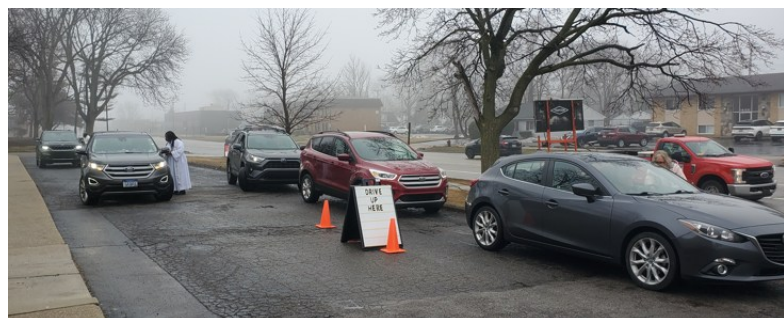
Since I'm in the choir nine months out of the year, it has left Howard as a choir widower. But along with Judy Walsh, Ellen has kept him

company in the pew. I jokingly refer to them as his sister-wives. It's going to be quite a while before a new normal is in place.

Since Ellen's death we've been trying to reckon our feelings of profound loss. Unlike many of you, our re-acquaintance has been recent and comparatively brief. But she made a deep impact on both of us. We aren't family. We don't have the same leaves and branches. But the roots are definitely there. The seeds their parents planted years ago in their church life are still bearing fruit today in the sweetest of friendships.

Ellen died on Saturday, April 18th. By God's grace, Howard, Judy and I (and sister Susan) were able to be with Ellen just a few hours before she passed. It was hard but we are grateful to Susan for receiving us. We were able to say goodbye and tell Ellen each in our own way what she meant to us and how we loved her. Felicity and Joseph Thompson visited at the same time, and Felicity led us in prayer. Finally, we listened to the Celtic Laud together. The family that Ellen loved so much, who we all heard about with unbounding pride, was by Ellen's side through it all. Please keep them in your prayers.

(Cindy Weeder Rush's story was first published on Facebook. We appreciate her permission to reprint it here.)



Annual Drive-Thru Ashes Ministry Touches Souls In Our Community

More than 720 cars came through our Twelve Mile Road driveway on Ash Wednesday, where St. David's ministers prayed with drivers and placed ashes on their foreheads to mark the beginning of Lent.
(Photo: Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz)

Food Pantry Offers Vital Help For Many In Community

“Most of the neighbors in need who benefit from the Food Pantry live within five miles of St. David’s,” said Amy Prather, parish administrator and Food Pantry Coordinator. “About 95 percent live in Oakland County, especially in Southfield, Berkeley, and Beverly Hills.”

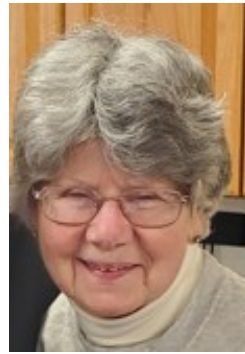
Kathy Graham, a lead pantry volunteer, said 50 to 70 percent of those using the Food Pantry are seniors. “We don’t get a lot of families with kids,” she said, because food assistance and meals for kids are often provided through the schools.

The Food Pantry began in earnest several years ago during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, it has grown and changed the procedures for how to help neighbors in need.

The Pantry is open from 9 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Forty per-



Amy Prather



Kathy Graham

cent of financial support comes from Lighthouse of Oakland County, St. David’s provides another 30 percent, and community donations add another 30 percent.

The pantry runs on volunteer help. Parishioner Rita Spiller volunteers on Mondays. “I enjoy interacting with people,” Spiller said. She was touched to learn that a woman who had been helped in her hour of need now donates food regularly to the Pantry. “St. David’s had

helped her,” Spiller said, “so now she donates here instead of somewhere else, often picking up food from Romulus and bringing it here.”

If you’d like to volunteer at the Pantry, please contact Amy Prather in the parish office or talk with Kathy Graham to fill out a volunteer form. Volunteers help stock food, register on the computer those who come in, and help bag food that’s been donated.

Volunteer schedules are flexible, Prather said. The Pantry would appreciate extra help on Mondays and Fridays. Volunteers can choose to serve as substitutes for regular volunteers, or come in once a week or once a month.

For more information on volunteering, you may also call the parish office at 248.557.5430.

More Happenings At St. David’s...



LET THEM EAT CAKE:
(Left) The Ernst Family celebrates Jan’s 80th Birthday in the Parish Hall on Feb. 15th.

LET THEM FOLD PALMS:
(Right) Altar Guild members and helpful volunteers meet on March 28th to fold palms into crosses for distribution on Palm Sunday. Shh...don’t tell anyone it was fun eating snacks and figuring out the best techniques for creating origami-like works of art.

(Photos: Cindy Hampel-Litwinowicz)

