

KEYNOTES

June 2021



The Quarterly Newsletter of St. Peter's Church, Lithgow

A Tree Falls in Lithgow

It was Friday afternoon, April 30. The winds were significantly stronger than usual and, as I did yard work, I thought to myself, "Maybe I shouldn't be outside?" I was near the old maple tree to the left of the church and noticed that it was making a creaking sound that I had never heard before.



Editor's note: The Narthex (entrance to the church) was separated from the main building and the roof sustained minor damage. The insurance engineers are currently deciding how to approach the repairs; meanwhile, the front entrance is closed off and parishioners are asked to enter through the Sacristy.

My brother-in-law was visiting and had parked in the drive right next to the maple. Fearing that a tree might come down at any moment, I suggested that he move his car, and decided to move ours as well.

About a minute or two after moving all the vehicles, we heard a crack and turned to see the tree crashing down. The entire family witnessed it. It seemed to fall directly toward the church and suddenly veer off, just at the last moment. We are extremely lucky—and very grateful that the tree only caused minor damage.

*Mike Licis
Sexton*



Photos by Jake Dell

From the Vicar's Desk



Can knowledge be known?

A premise of Greek philosophy is that nothing can be known unless everything can be known. Why? Because the “falsifying fact” may lie hidden in the unknown. Hence, all knowledge is theoretical.

This is the basis for the scientific method. The purpose of science is to falsify itself. Theories are accepted until they are disproven. The upshot is that nothing can be known for sure that is valid for all times and in all places.

Dogma is the opposite of science. It is revealed truth and universal. Its logic is that of Geometry: start with a given, and reason a proof from there. Dogma is not popular today. I suspect that's because you can never get behind the given. Why is the given

en the given? Because it's the given. Can I change it? No. Why? Because you can't.

Dogmatic reasoning is circular reasoning, which is a logical fallacy. (Seems the answer to the question, “Can knowledge be known?” might be “No!”)

But even the rules of logic assume *that there is such a thing as logic*. Likewise, the Christian is, I believe, on solid ground asserting *that there is such a thing as knowing*. We are made to know. We are knowing creatures.

Christian thought may still be circular, but if the given is true, then our knowledge is sound, and we need fear no as-yet-unknown falsifying fact.

What is the Christian given? The Word of God Himself. God's word does not tell us all there *is* to know, but all that we *need* to know to know *that* we know.

Faith is knowledge you can be confident in.

Jacob W. Dell
The Rev. Jacob W. Dell

A Trip to the Kayes' Lotus Pond

I have been living in the Parshall's cottage on Deep Hollow Road just across from the church since last summer and enjoy having Lithgow's beautiful landscapes and natural plant material just outside the front door. Everything I see on my walks inspires me.

The watercolor painting below is of Bindy and Stephen Kaye's Lotus Pond.

9 in. x 12 in.

Materials:

Watercolor and an ink I made from Shaggy Mane Mushrooms (*Coprinus Comatus*) I found in front of the Kayes' Music Barn on Deep Hollow.

Ink Recipe:

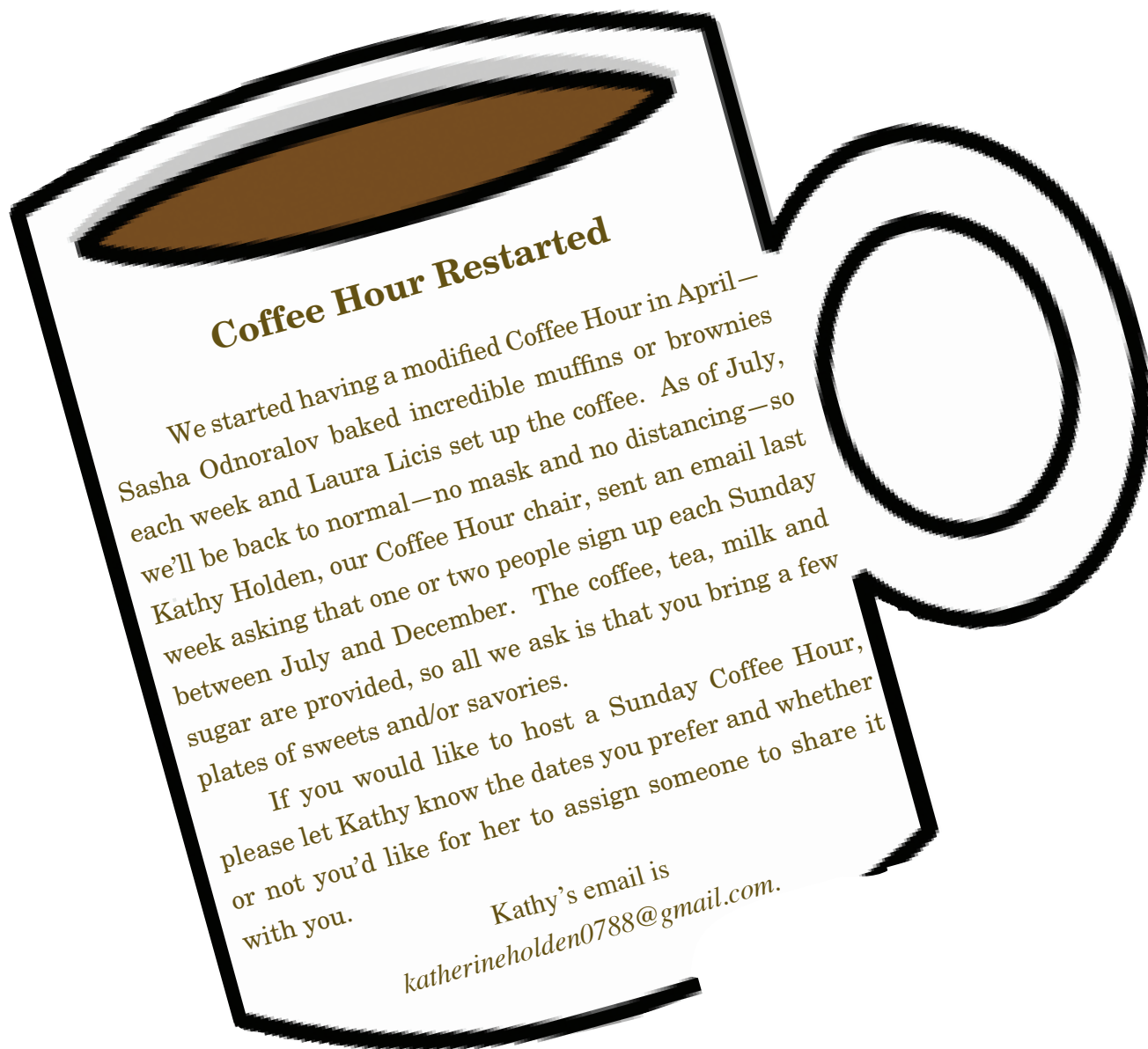
Place mushrooms in a container overnight, strain off and save the liquid ink. Throw away the debris.

I use a brush and the ink to paint, but an old-fashioned dip pen works for writing and calligraphy.

It is wonderful being in a charming hamlet with lovely neighbors all around and St. Peter's Church just across a dirt road.

Deborah Webster





Farewell to Amy Duncan

We are sorry to tell you that, after many years, Amy Duncan has decided to retire from her job as caretaker for St. Peter's youngest parishioners. Every week—since she was 13 years old!—Amy watched over St. Peter's infants and toddlers during the 9:30 service. She did this with care and compassion and we will miss her greatly.

This means, of course, that we are looking for someone to fill Amy's shoes. We ask that her replacement spend two hours each Sunday (9:15-11:15) in the Parish Hall nursery. (Amy has agreed to show her replacement the ropes.) The position, which will start in August, pays \$__ a week, paid at the end of each month.

If you know of anyone (teenagers on up) who would be willing to take this on, please let us know at stpeterschurch@optonline.net.

Friends Indeed

Last summer one of our spaniels, Lone Star, had a litter of puppies by way of a scheduled c-section. Immediately, the situation started to unravel. Lone Star herself was in good shape, but she was not producing enough milk.

My husband Kevin and I breed and trial English Springer Spaniels and are “old hands” at birthing puppies, but by the first night we knew these puppies were in trouble. Just like other mammals, milk from the mother is critical the first day.

The next morning there were two dead puppies. We had started with thirteen.

Years back I “whipped in” to the Millbrook Hunt and Sandanona Harehounds, where I learned everything I know about hunting and kennel life, in particular health issues with hounds. Once I walked into the kitchen at the foxhound kennels where I encountered a group of people hand feeding puppies. This was my introduction to what a massive project it is to raise a litter by hand feeding, an overwhelming proposition.

Puppies eat and sleep 24 hours a day, needing to be fed about every two hours, for about four weeks, a schedule Kevin and I could not keep up by ourselves!

I broadcasted an email to a select group of friends I thought might be inclined to help feed puppies. Thankfully, there was an enthusiastic response!

There were friends who came on weekends, some a couple of days a week, a hard core who came every day, and a friend who said we didn’t want her anywhere near our puppies, but would cook us dinner.

A schedule of sorts was set up. Kevin did the graveyard shift, friends came during the day at about two-hour intervals, and I filled in.

Esbilac, a milk replacer, was bought in bulk and was administered by way of a syringe (minus



Lone Star's puppies at 1 week

Anne Gillis

the needle). The puppies were so tiny that regular shot syringes were too big initially and we improvised with various smaller syringes. Kevin did the math for how much the puppies needed to consume every 24 hours.

Our wonderful friends had to learn how to operate a syringe while hanging on to a squirming puppy. Early on the puppies were difficult patients—they did not necessarily want to eat on

schedule and were often cranky and tired, meaning that it could take up to an hour to feed the litter. (I thought later that part of the problem was that we were feeding dying puppies; in the end I buried seven puppies in the garden.)

The puppy feeders developed a vested interest in the project. They would arrive and ask “How’s Spot?” and I would have to say Spot had not made it through the night.

There was a small group of people, three from St. Peter’s (Anne Gillis, Catherine Howard (whose father had had his own pack of Beagles) and Barbara Peelor (who has adopted several of our Springers), who became regulars, feeding every day, week in and week out. They could note progress or lack thereof, sensing changes, spending extra time with the puppies. When the puppies started to eat more, there was a welcome call for bigger syringes!

Finally the day came when I could get the puppies to drink out of a flat pan. They padded and slipped across the pan and then licked each other clean. This was a breakthrough for Kevin and me, but not for the puppy feeders: they were despondent at losing their job interacting with the puppies and briefly visiting with us.

This near-disastrous episode in the kennel during the Covid summer turned into a unique and meaningful experience for us all, keeping the canine Grim Reaper at bay. The puppies, as tiny as they were, took on a large presence, bringing this group of friends together during a time of separation.

Betsey Battistoni

Easter 2021



photos by Lillian Corbin

Roberto's Story

The news came as a shock to the family. It was unexpected, although, given the circumstances, perhaps it should not have been. Angela's cousin, Roberto, died last Sunday – one more victim of COVID-19.

Roberto had been hospitalized for four weeks and on a respirator for the last three. Given the lack of hospital beds in Fortaleza, the city in the north-east of Brazil where he lived, he had been forced to wait for admission. Initially his situation seemed to be improving. The last photo of him showed him sitting up in his bed, smiling, despite the rubber tubes in his nostrils, making the sign of a heart with his two hands. There was hope in the family that he would pull through. But then the sad news came that he was gone.

He was in his early seventies, but otherwise in good health. He had none of the pre-existing conditions often associated with death from the virus. He was tall, good looking, congenial and considered by all to be the leader of his branch of the family. He had two brothers and a sister and was the father of three grown children and had several grandchildren. His wife, who like him had been hospitalized with COVID-19, was released the day before he died. She never got to see him.

My last three articles for *Keynotes* have all been about the unexpected joys that I have discovered during the pandemic - spending more time in Millbrook, having our two sons and new daughter-in-law stay with us, playing golf and developing a deeper friendship with an old acquaintance, visiting a museum with virtually no one in it but me. These were my direct experiences of the pandemic. Aside from having to wear a mask and not being able to travel, things have not been so bad.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I used to check the graphs each day of the number of new cases and deaths in NY State, making comparisons between counties and taking some comfort in the relatively low numbers in Dutchess County. The unbelievably high numbers in New York City were almost unfathomable, so we stayed well away from it. But then the curve began to flatten and decline,

and like all of us, I took some comfort and began to venture out again from the safe haven of our home. Then, as the curve rose again, I became more cautious and began to feel less optimistic. Now with the advent of the vaccines, and the renewed downward slope, it looks like the end may finally be in sight.

Yet the graphs are all statistics. The death of Angela's cousin was not.

I am sure that we are not alone in our community in having someone close to us who has suffered with COVID-19 or even died from it. The pandemic is a little like a war in which you may not have actually been a combatant, but everyone knew someone who was, and many knew someone who never came back.

My brother-in-law in Rio goes to the corner bar near his apartment every day to buy a take-out sandwich for lunch. There was often an older man there who went at the same time. Unlike my brother-in-law, the older man refused to wear a mask and complained about the restrictions being imposed by the government during the pandemic; he was skeptical about their true necessity or worth. One day, the older man came to the bar coughing and looking sick. My brother-in-law asked him how he was and suggested that maybe he should get tested. He replied grumpily that it was nothing – just a cold – he did not believe in the virus anyway – it

was all a hoax. For several days afterwards the older man did not appear, until one day my brother-in-law asked the owner of the bar where he was.

"You didn't hear?" the owner replied. "He died last week of COVID-19."

Here in Millbrook, I feel that we have been very fortunate to live in what has been a virtually COVID-19 free zone. For that, we must all be thankful. But, as the pandemic now seems to finally be coming to an end, at least here in New York, we must remember all those who are not so fortunate as us, whether in Rio, Fortaleza or the thousands of other places around the globe where the virus remains. And pray for them, and for those who have been taken by COVID-19, like Roberto and the older man in the bar. And hope everywhere it may be over soon.

Thomas W. Keese



Roberto

Landing at St. Peter's

What a beautiful acknowledgment of God's love and presence Nastia expressed in the March "Keynotes"! Inspired by her words, I thought I would take the opportunity as a new member of the vestry to share my response and other reflections. Nastia reminds us to pause in awe: "a breath in, a breath out." It seems to me that we humans have a spiritual need to carry on God's work. A pause encourages us to embrace God's guidance, to find where we could best serve Him with love. I worry that distractions from this most important work are too easy to come by. Current fads and sound-bites can grab our attention and sow mistrust, calling us to point fingers, lay blame, stir anger, and feel guilt. This is in contrast to our gentle, humble God, who inspires love and peace. He calls us to appreciate the many blessings around us, to forgive, to be kind, so our spiritual need to serve God is not exploited into negativity, but rather encouraged in the way of a loving God.

I have found that various Bible verses strike me in different ways at different moments. I have at times noted meaningful verses, only later to wonder why I found them so enlightening. I do believe we hear the right message when we need to. Recently John 8:47: "Whoever belongs to God hears what God says" struck my heart. I am reminded to be still in order to hear Him.

I feel very fortunate to have landed at St. Peter's. A meeting I attended before COVID-19 arrived easily demonstrated that people at St. Peter's live out their faith. For me, a meeting can highlight character, and I was impressed by the attendees' clarity of purpose, selflessness, kindness, intelligence, and humor. A winning combination! Since my arrival, many people have gone out of their way to welcome me, and I have been delighted to discover a wide variety of cultures

present, both domestic and international, at "our little church on the dirt road."

I grew up Presbyterian in St. Louis, Missouri, and after a hiatus living overseas I joined Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, Connecticut and then, most recently, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Every time I move, I admit, I indulge in church-shopping. Finding a church home is not necessarily easy, yet identifying where I feel most comfortable worshipping is important. Not only do I wish to grow spiritually and to feel God's presence in church, I wish for fellowship with other parishioners with whom I share interests.

We moved to Millbrook in September 2017 and attended our first service at St. Peter's on October 1. A big white tent and a festive atmosphere on a beautiful day greeted us. What a surprise! I had never heard of St. Francis and the Blessing of the Animals. Our hearts immediately warmed.

Fortunately, my husband grew up in the Episcopal church in Pasadena, California, so switching allegiances was barely a stretch, although the Episcopal style worship in the Sunday services was unfamiliar to me. This past year being online with the fully printed order-of-worship, has saved me some embarrassment, but I much prefer being present in church and I look forward to my vaccinations' efficacy.

Considering Nastia's "a breath in, a breath out," I recommend a short daily devotional, "God Calling," written in 1932 by two anonymous "listeners." It is edited by A.J. Russell, and can be found on Amazon. It provides moments of positive reflection.

I thank Nancy Vanderlee and the choir for welcoming a novice, and I look forward to serving St. Peter's on the vestry. Thank you all and blessings to you!

Lise Chase

Deadlines for Keynotes

August 20

November 20

February 20

May 20

Please send submissions to: acgillis@optonline.net

How Did the Snake Entice Eve?

Was it simply good messaging?

Our Vicar has eloquently spoken about Adam and Eve and the rebirth of Jesus. He has cautioned us about the “evil” that exists in the world today. Have you asked yourself *how did the Snake entice Eve to eat the apple despite Gods’ warnings?* Was Mr. Snake hocking apples like a street vendor and hungry Eve thought “to hell with Adam”! Or did diabolical Mr. Snake say, “Hey baby, if you take a bite out of my big red, juicy apple I’ll take you to paradise!”? Did the Snake simply employ more effective messaging than God to seduce Eve?

Step 1 in the Vicar’s Pastoral Care Plan is to *Seek to Determine the Truth*. Having spent three decades on Wall Street, I can share insight on the importance of establishing disciplined, repeatable processes to tease out the truth. During the 1980s and 1990s I spearheaded strategic technology at the New York Stock Exchange; I excelled at snake wrangling and implementing best practices to decrease time to market and improve quality..

Outside my old office on the corner of Wall and Broad Street is a bronze snake disguised as a girl. The subliminal messaging of “Fearless Girl” opposing the Charging Bull of Wall Street is undeniable. Fearless Girl entices girls to eat the forbidden apple to break the glass ceiling in paradise. First, analyze message sent vs received. Next, understand alignment in terms of modified behavior. The truth is embedded in the answers.

Message SENT: Conquer. Designed by an advertising agency, the statue of the Fearless Girl depicts a Latina girl with her hands on her hips staring up “opposing” the Charging Bull of Wall



Street. She projects defiance and strength—the attributes that *she* believes are necessary for women to succeed.

Fearless Girl inspired the #MeToo movement, which encourages women to condemn men for “inappropriate behavior.”

Message RECEIVED: Men are prey. The origin of the Wall Street Bull dates to Greek mythology: The King of the Gods, Zeus routinely transformed into a Bull. Bulls symbolize strength, perseverance, and courage, not *misogyny*. The Bull and Bear have symbolized rising and falling markets for a century. Men *see* Fearless Girl as a posing matador because she is a matador. And, like a matador, her goal is to *subdue, immobilize, and kill* ALL men (for whom the Bull is a proxy). Men *hear* that women are predators, and we are prey.



Change in BEHAVIOR—based on message RECEIVED: Flight. The #MeToo Medusa statue is a grown-up Fearless Girl. The statue, installed outside of City Hall in New York City, depicts the monster Medusa slaying valiant Perseus (not vice versa), yet *she is demoralized, not victorious*. Medusa brings to



Life the idea of Fearless Girl as an evil snake – in mythology Medusa’s hair *is* snakes. In the Greek mythology Perseus immobilizes Medusa by using his shield as a mirror—she turned *herself* into stone.

Self-preservation often drives people to change behavior—many men have chosen “flight.” Many refuse to mentor, travel, or meet alone with *all* women. Increasingly, women are banished to administrative positions in lieu of core business leadership roles. Trust is a prerequisite to earning opportunities; *trust has been shattered!* Covid has driven many women out of the workforce; reentry will be harder without a shared responsibility.

How does Fearless Girl measure success?

Was the message *sent* aligned with the message *received*? Did she produce the *intended results*? Fearless Girl and #MeToo ignored—*either duplicitous by design or by mistake*-- men as stakeholders. Regardless of intent, Fearless Girl is the de facto *gryphon--the mythological guardian--* of the glass ceiling; she *created* a defensible position for men to isolate ALL women.

Successful women do not earn respect by being wicked or malevolent. Our environment was competitive, yet men set us up to succeed, not fail. Our records of success were rewarded, and we were grateful. We immobilized venomous snakes through charm, self-assurance, and trustworthiness not contempt. We relied on humility, perseverance, and humor to solve complex problems and cultivate allies. Whether a coincidence or causal, the successful women I have known had strong Judeo-Christian upbringings.

President Lincoln said to Congress “...***the dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate for the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise—with the occasion. As our case is new, so must we think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves and we shall be able to save our country.***”

The Vicar reminded me that President Lincoln was indeed a scholar of the scriptures. Perhaps the Vicar’s call to action to “disenthrall” begins by *actively listening* to divergent points of view. If we muster courage to “think and act anew,” we may restore a mindset of integrity—***incorruptible, sound, and complete***—and unite.

The truth matters regardless of your faith. Perhaps if Eve stuck with God’s more pedantic messaging, we would not be as divided. The Vicar was right: *determining to seek the truth* is a personal choice. Finding courage to “act anew” is fraught with peril and unintended consequences. If “redemption” begins on earth, then our most expedient course of action may be to rely on Judeo-Christian values to help us dig deeper and *choose wisely*.

Lois Zarembo

Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

Benjamin
Franklin



Editorials, Op-Ed and Letters

To the Editor:

Re: Keynotes, March 2021

March 25, 2021

Dear Keynoters,

Your new issue kept me glued to the end. Just remembering old friends represented in this newsletter was a treat—down memory lane—kept me jumping from one experience to another.

Our move to new lodgings—small, one floor, 1.5 acres, many big, old trees, and a variety of small gardens to keep me out of mischief.

We finally got vaccinated through the daughter of a close friend—you know, it’s not what you know, but who you know. Can’t wait until our favorite venues re-open: church and restaurants and music but, foremost, people.

Love and hugs to all at St. Peter’s.

Nan & Doc

Nan Goodman
9203 Granada Hills Drive
Austin, TX 78737



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, June 20

11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Father's Day Hymn Sing & BBQ

on the church lawn

696 Deep Hollow Road • Millbrook, NY 12545

A letter from Nastia:

Dear friends,

My first year at Union is in the books. Wow! The end of the semester turned out to be a little challenging, but the faculty were gracious and fellow students supportive. Together and with grace, we made it to the finish line. I am now taking a couple of months off to rest and get ready to transition to New York for the next season. So exciting! I have yet to sign up for classes, but most of them (if not all) should be in person. And Saint Hilda's and Saint Hugh's is still looking forward to having me on staff for a year! Once I get my passport and visa, the tickets, and the second dose of vaccine, I should be all set to fly across the Atlantic by mid-August. Can hardly wait till I get to Millbrook and reconnect with so many of you.

Thank you for helping make this year happen!

May all of us feel well, liberated, and loved,
Nastia

A Very Wet Memorial Day in the Cemetery

When we saw the forecast for Memorial Day (100% chance of rain), we thought perhaps 10 or 12 would show up to hear T. Nolan's nephew, Col. Scott Nolan (Ret.), speak. But either Col. Nolan's reputation preceded him, or parishioners were drawn by the fact that, for the first time in over a year, we could be maskless and close together—almost 90 dripping souls arrived.

Col. Nolan gave a wonderful talk, starting off with some historical facts about Memorial Day celebrations, information that was news to most of his audience. The service was followed by lemonade, ginger cookies and brownies, served by Lois Mander and Lea Cornell.



Julie Turino greeted arrivals & checked to be sure all had been vaccinated.



Jake Dell at the makeshift altar



*The speaker:
Col. Scott Nolan (Ret.)*

Phil Balshi



Lisa & Ian Plimsoll arriving

Photos by
Lillian Corbin,
except where
indicated



*Lois Mander
& Lea Cornell
ready to serve
lemonade &
ginger cookies*



Phil Balshi

*David Parshall offers a thank-you
gift to Col. Nolan.*



St. Peter's Church, Lithgow
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Prayer and art are passionate acts of will. One wants to transcend and enhance the will's normal possibilities. Art like prayer is a hand outstretched in the darkness, seeking for some touch of grace which will transform it into a hand that bestows gifts. Prayer means casting oneself into the miraculous rainbow that stretches between becoming and dying, to be utterly consumed in it, in order to bring its infinite radiance to bed in the frail little cradle of one's own existence.

Franz Kafka

submitted by Nastia Khlopina