How is God Calling Us?
The Very Reverend Canon Anne Sawyer, Interim Dean & Priest-in-Charge

It's hard to believe that I have been with you for nearly a third of the year. Having arrived in March, we have slid into mid-summer. I am grateful to all of you for the warm welcome and opportunities to become acquainted. I am grateful for the diversity that exists within the community of St. John’s, and I can hardly wait to celebrate the independence of Belize in Sept. There are many cultures and traditions to cherish.

To be expected, I have met beloved parishioners who are faithful and dedicated to the good work begun with the previous Deans. I have met beloved parishioners who have worshipped at St. John’s for decades, and recall the leadership of previous clergy. We have also welcomed a few fabulous new members who are finding home. This time of discernment is an exciting one as we listen and learn from each other, and you begin the process of calling a new Dean.

How is God is calling you, the people of St. John’s to be the Church for generations to come? Who will help discern God’s call and lead? All of us are called to be faithful, trusting in the Spirit ever-present in and among us.
This past chapter for me was spent tending to business, within and beyond the walls of our church, and learning more about this special place. This summer I hope we will take time to reconnect, nurture, and grow community by spending time together. Perhaps, we can have dinners in neighborhoods through the city, or enjoy an outing or two. Or we can bask in a good summer read. I welcome your ideas about how we can live, learn and grow in love.

A time ago, after returning from clergy conference and hearing writer and theologian Debie Thomas reflect on lament (defined as grief), hope and communion, I floated the idea of offering listening circles on grief and loss. I am wondering now if this is the right topic, or whether there are other topics to explore. I do believe that we would benefit from time listening to each other. Please stay tuned for more information on listening circles this summer. I hope you will join us.

Finally, it is my prayer that we can identify the activities of the past that you miss, dream about what has yet to be born, and offer these ministries for the fall. This is the time to dream big with trust that all things are possible with God. We have children among us who need time and attention; as well as a few of us older folk, and many in between. Let us be a community of faith who cares deeply for and loves one another – as Christ loved us. I treasure this time with you.
My siblings in Christ:

I join with all my colleagues at St. Paul’s Commons in Echo Park in wishing the people of God at St. John’s Cathedral a blessed summer. If your circumstances permit, may it be a time of rest and refreshment for each of you as well as prayerful discernment about what our God in Christ has in store for St. John’s.

As many of you know, your diocesan headquarters was once called the Cathedral Center of St. Paul, a homage to our former cathedral in downtown Los Angeles, badly damaged in an earthquake and eventually demolished. We changed our name in Echo Park, and moved the bishops’ chairs to your beautiful sanctuary, to enable St. John’s to step more confidently into its destiny as a cathedral church.

Together with your interim dean and priest in charge, the Very Rev. Anne Sawyer, and her colleagues in leadership, you now have the historic opportunity to imagine your own future. Visitors to St. John’s experience the welcoming comfort of a hometown parish while having the eyes of their hearts drawn to the far horizon by the breathtaking space and beautiful liturgy and music. So I pray your discernment will be local and universal at the same time. How can the parish best meet the needs of its members and the saints who will inherit it? How can the cathedral serve its neighbors throughout our far-flung, diverse diocese by being the best possible expression of Episcopal identity and values? In a secularizing time, how will St. John’s assume its rightful place in the civic and cultural life of our great city and region?

Transition and change are not always easy. I know it has been hard for some at St. John’s. Understanding our attachment to what we have lost is an integral part of discernment. So is continuing to give thanks for the blessings we still have. That is why I give thanks for each of you. I know you have had an opportunity to share what is on your hearts and minds with Dean Anne. She has my full support as well as my deep appreciation as she walks with you during these days of discernment.

I look forward to meeting with you soon as well. As your bishop, my office may be in Echo Park. But my heart — not to mention my chair! — is at St. John’s. May the spirit of the Risen Christ continue to be with us all as we journey together.
Summer marks a season of rest and renewal at St. John’s Cathedral. And while May and June have been blessedly cool, July, August, and September will bring the hot L.A. summer weather. Our choir is on their well-deserved hiatus until Michaelmas at the beginning of October; however, music continues week-to-week with our sung service at 10.00am. I invite you to raise your voice in song as we sing our faith through the beloved hymns and songs of our tradition during the Summer Sunday services.

Summer also marks a time of reflection and liturgical planning for me, personally. I spend these months poring over the lectionary readings and dreaming of musical possibilities for the next year. There is something a little odd about playing through Christmas music in July, but I relish the work of liturgical planning.

I started that work this past week and was particularly moved by words I’ve seen many times, but never heard in this particular way: “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” from Psalm 96. A few minutes later I was considering an unrelated anthem text I’ve sung and read many times, this time by the poet Robert Bridges (1844–1930):
Why is beauty important to us or to God? Admittedly, I’ve struggled with the meaning of this poem before, especially since the phrase “beauty is only skin-deep” resonates loudly in my upbringing. What is truly beauteous, and who is to say? Bridges certainly isn’t suggesting a temporal covetousness of superficial beauty. By intertwining the divine with the innate human attraction to beauty, Bridges requires of us to discern what is truly beauteous in the eyes of God, rather than the eyes of humankind. And refracted through the words of Psalm 96, in which we’re charged to “Sing to the Lord a new song,” holiness is the beauty we are to seek and adore.

I think about all that is holy here at St. John’s Cathedral – especially those eternal things: the faith of generations who preceded us, the sacramental faith we celebrate, and the gorgeous diversity of this special community. This is indeed a place set aside, to draw us out of the din of our daily existence and into the eternal truths of God. Every single one of you is an integral part of that beautiful tapestry, and I give thanks for you.

On behalf of the entire music ministry at St. John’s Cathedral, I want to thank each of you for your prayers and faithfulness. Your gracious support has sustained us through this season of transition for our cathedral church, and we will be here to support and uplift you through our worship together.

October, (and the return of the choir, services of compline, and the children of the cathedral choral academy) will be here before we know it. May you find renewal, peace, and beauty in our services these next months.
The Guibord Center and St. John’s Cathedral
Partnering to Create
“A House of Prayer for ALL People”

It sits there quietly in plain sight off to the left as one looks up to the altar. It’s hard to miss but the mind and eye, enchanted by the magnificence of the open triptych and the stunning inlay work that surrounds them, often skip right past the carved wooden structure without even registering it.

Once you look – really look - you’ll see that the very tall, dark structure just inside the railing is a throne of sorts. It’s called a cathedra or “The Bishop’s Chair”. Its presence there announces that the Bishop of Los Angeles chose to offer the people of St. John’s the honor and responsibility of transforming from being a local church that serves primarily its own congregation into becoming the “cathedral” or “The Bishop’s House” that includes representing the Diocese of Los Angeles in matters of welcome and worship that impact the entire diocese as well as the City. In 2007, the people of St. John’s Church prayerfully and joyfully accepted Bishop J. Jon Bruno's offer and became St. John’s Cathedral.

A cathedral is also commonly known as “A House of Prayer for ALL People.” That’s where Gwynne and The Guibord Center come in.

The Late Reverend Dr. Gwynne Guibord
Episcopal Priest and Leader

The late Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord was in the midst of a pause in a truly remarkable international career when Bishop Bruno recruited her to become ordained as an Episcopal priest and ultimately serve as his Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the Diocese of Los Angeles. While “ecumenical” refers to differences and similarities between various Christian denominations, “interfaith” means something quite different. In the late 1990s, when Gwynne began her career, “interfaith” meant only Christians and Jews learning about one another’s religions. Occasionally Muslims were invited to become part of the
dialogue. “Interfaith engagement” meant engaging in lengthy, formal conversations about theological similarities and differences around a dialogue table.

Gwynne brought an entirely new dimension to these dialogues and it changed everything.

Gwynne loved people. ALL people. As a follower of Jesus, she saw the sanctity entwined within the humanity of each person. She went beyond dialogues to invite people of all backgrounds and faiths to come to the table together to learn about one another as people, to share meals and triumphs and tragedies together as real friends and true colleagues.

She brought people throughout the diverse faith communities of Los Angeles and the world into St. John’s Cathedral to share the beauty and power of how they worship, to open hearts and minds, to share with us and each other the many diverse ways that God works in our lives.

When the funding collapsed for many crucial areas throughout the diocese including the interfaith ministry, Gwynne created The Guibord Center - Religion Inside Out. She reached out to all the colleagues with whom she’d built relationships through the years and then went searching throughout the communities here in Los Angeles to include those who had never been invited to the table before. Over thirty different faith communities responded and from that she build an advisory council as a network of friendship and guidance that has reshaped the concept of what people of faith can create together.

Over the years since then many of The Guibord Center’s major events have been held at St. John’s as a sign of welcome to people of all faiths. And just as importantly, if not more
The Guibord Center has arranged for the people of Los Angeles to be able to learn more about one another by being invited into many of the diverse houses of worship that surround us. These visits include not only experiencing one another’s worship services, they have also always included having a wonderful meal together and the opportunity to sit down and get to know one another. All of these programs have been filmed and made available for your viewing for free on the website. www.theguibordcenter.org

The Guibord Center continues to partner with St. John’s Cathedral to help it become truly “A House of Prayer for ALL People” and a place where people can experience within the Christianity of Jesus, respect and love for the sanctity of all people. Look for our upcoming events in print and social media. All are welcome.

Dr. Lo Sprague is the current President of The Guibord Center and a former warden of St. John’s Cathedral. She and Gwynne were together for over 40 years.

**Summer Services Schedule**

**Said Mass** | Sundays at 8:00 am  
Followed by coffee hour. (In-person Only)

**Sung Mass** | Sundays at 10:00 am  
Followed by coffee hour.  
(In-person and online.)

**Evening Prayer**  
Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6:30 pm  
via Facebook Live