



# Living Waters

## Renewal for our Second Century

ALL SOULS PARISH

*March 2022*

In September 2021, Patrick and I went to Oregon to celebrate the life of The Rev Lawrence Ferguson. He was the Rector for many years at St. Mark's the Evangelist Episcopal Church where both of our families attended when we were kids. Walking into the Nave was such a powerful experience. I remember childhood Christmas Eve services with candles glowing in the window sills and the giant Christmas tree that had been cut down in the nearby forests and decorated with red birds and red ribbons. I could smell Easter mornings with the children's flower cross decorated with lilacs, daffodils and whatever else was blooming at the time in the yard. After an intense moment of nostalgia, I began to look around. New stained-glass windows had been installed, the light fixtures were new and the old furnishings- pews, needlepoint kneelers at the altar, the organ my mom helped raise money for decades ago- were still there and lovingly maintained. After the service in the parish hall, I saw new carpet and paint. Back in the sacristy, we found the record of my mom's memorial service five years before and the record of my infant baptism decades ago. After years of loss and pain around the deaths of my parents, I found life and love in a physical space protected and shielded from the elements of decay. The church I knew as a child was still there and lovingly maintained. The current members were ensuring the healthy transition of that sacred space to the next generation. What a gift!

I believe that we are all dust and that to dust we will return. But I also believe that what we do and how we live those brief moments in between is vitally important. Online worship has brought to stark relief how important physical sacred spaces are to holding and nurturing thin places where we can encounter the Spirit, rest from strain, rejuvenate our hearts and re-engage our community. The care of these physical spaces where we encounter ourselves and one another is not only important for this moment but for future generations who will inhabit the corner of Cedar and Spruce.

This is why I am committed to the Living Waters Capital Campaign. It may seem like an odd thing- to commit our hard-earned dollars to a building and place that is not our own. We don't own this place we call All Souls Parish any more than we own the Episcopal Church or our individual spirituality. But perhaps that is exactly why it is so important. We are responsible for the care, growth and maintenance of this place for the next generation to inherit. We have the opportunity to lift up and pass forward a great gift to those who will follow in our spiritual footsteps.

Jennifer Akiyama