In the fifth Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Living article, Br. Curtis unfolds the life-long process of conversion, suggesting ways we can participate in our transformation through Christ.

Br. Eldridge celebrates seventy-five years of prayer in the Chapel with a look back through its history.

Br. David Allen reflects on his fifty years of monastic vocation, sharing the story of his first visits to SSJE.

The newest members of the Fellowship share their experiences of SSJE and their hopes for joining the FSJ.

Notice a different sound in the Chapel? Br. Mark Brown explains why.

In an interview, Br. Jonathan tells how some important changes to the Guesthouse will enhance the Brothers’ ministry of hospitality.

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We welcome hearing your thoughts on this issue of Cowley.
Visit www.SSJE.org/cowleymagazine to share comments, ask questions, or see Cowley in color.

Cover photo:
Suneeh, Shoshana, Nicole, Paris, and Br. Mark on July 17, when twenty-four “Kids4Peace Boston” participants and their adult entourage attended a festive Sunday morning Eucharist and reception on the final day of their two-week program. Prior to the kids’ visit to the Monastery, the twelve kids from Jerusalem, evenly divided between the three Abrahamic faiths, and twelve counterparts the same age (11-13) from the US, visited a local mosque for Friday prayers and a synagogue for a Sabbath service.

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Dear Members of the Fellowship of Saint John and other Friends

Geoffrey Tristram, SSJE

As I write this letter, we are in the process of moving back into the Monastery. Thanks be to God! Our staff has already moved back into the beautifully renovated undercroft, and over the next few weeks we Brothers will finally be coming home. St. Augustine wrote that “a monk out of the monastery is like a fish out of water,” and over this past year we have at times been 'gasper' to be back in our enclosure!

When I walk through the newly renovated Monastery from room to room, I am filled with a deep sense of thanksgiving to God for having entrusted us with this sacred space, and the single word that comes to me is the word transformation. Our Monastery has truly been transformed.

Perhaps the first significant outward sign of transformation is the construction of two lifts, as well as other structures to make the building more accessible. We are thrilled that those with mobility and other issues will now more easily be able to access our Chapel and other public spaces. In an interview in this Cowley, Br. Jonathan, the Guest Brother, talks about how these and other changes will enhance and inform the Brothers’ ministry of hospitality.

One of the greatest gifts which we offer to our guests is the gift of silence, and there is now a new quality of silence in the guestrooms, thanks to the new windows. Those of you who have stayed with us will be very glad to know that the bathrooms have been completely remodeled and that we have also installed air conditioning. Another change, which is visible from outside, is that we have glassed in one wing of the cloisters, thereby creating a beautiful new cloister walk between the Chapel and the refectory.

Br. James at work in the newly renovated undercroft offices for Brothers and staff.

At the very heart of our life, of course, is our Chapel. It stands geographically and also symbolically at the very center of the Monastery. This lovely building has also been transformed. The stained glass windows, made by Connick, have been professionally cleaned for the first time, and decades of grime and soot have been removed. They now shine like jewels, and the glass transforms the sunlight into pools of color against the granite and limestone walls.

This transformation of our Chapel and Monastery is in a very real sense an
outward expression of our own call to be transformed inwardly by God’s Holy Spirit. It is our hope and prayer that our renewed Monastery will be a place where all will feel welcomed, a place of renewal and transformation. This work of transformation, or conversion, is the subject of the long “Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Living” insert in this Cowley by Br. Curtis.

During this past year we Brothers have had the opportunity of getting to know some of the men who have been working on the building project. They have often expressed to us how special it is for them to be working on the Monastery. Some months ago, standing amidst the dust and rubble, one builder remarked to me, “There’s something about this place: it’s really blessed.” It struck me then that even though the Monastery is being outwardly transformed, the essence of the place remains unchanged, and that builder recognized it even amongst the rubble. Entering the Chapel one is struck by the renewed stone and light, but also by that familiar and timeless sense of being surrounded and held by the love of God and by the prayers of all those who have worshiped in this place over the decades and by the whole company of heaven. This is surely its essence and glory.

On September 13th we shall be reopening our Guesthouse, and on September 6th we begin our fall schedule of worship in the Chapel. Our Tuesday evening Eucharist will resume and will now be starting at 5:30 pm. On the first Tuesday of each month the Eucharist will be followed by a soup supper. Our Wednesday Eucharist will now be starting at 12:30 p.m. We are looking forward to our Service of Thanksgiving for the renovation and renewal of the Monastery on Saturday, September 17 at 11:00 a.m. This year, rather wonderfully, is also the 75th anniversary of the dedication of the Chapel. This service will give us an opportunity to thank all of you who have helped and supported us in so many ways in the renewal and renovation of our Monastery. It will above all be an occasion to give thanks to God for blessing us so richly, to give thanks to our faithful God who leads us into the future, and who says “Behold, I make all things new.”

Faithfully,

Geoffrey Tristram SSJE
Superior

Workmen, including project superintendent Dave Pollack, on the move in the Monastery Chapel.
As we celebrate the renewal of our Monastery and the rededication of the Conventual Church of Saint Mary and Saint John, its spiritual heart, and perhaps speculate how its liturgies might change in the 21st century, let us honor its history as well. The cornerstone of the Chapel was laid on the feast of the Assumption (August 15) 1936 with great pomp and fanfare, but it was not until May the following year that the Chapel was finished and ready for use. Members of the Society gathered for a Eucharist on Ascension Day, and the following day the Fellowship was invited to see it. What they saw was an impressive church barely furnished. Its interior lacked most of the fittings and embellishments it has today. Visitors commented on the brightness of its light, the paleness of its granite walls and the brilliant color of its magnificent rose window. However, financial hard times had necessitated that some of the windows intended for stained glass, particularly the windows of the apse and clerestory, be filled with opaque glass temporarily. Over the next decade as the Society found sponsors, the Charles Connick Studio of Boston, which had provided the rose window in the narthex and the rosary windows in the

1936: Laying the Cornerstone with great pomp and fanfare. Seventy-five years later, this cornerstone will be rededicated during the service of thanksgiving on September 17, 2011.
Lady Chapel, created a series of fourteen windows honoring Christian monastic founders, from Saint Antony to Richard Benson, to fill the clerestory. The windows in the apse, of Mary and John the Evangelist, were added in 1950.

The new Monastery’s second floor contained an organ loft, and an opening from it on the east side of the sanctuary awaited an organ. (This space remains empty. When the Society finally acquired an organ, it was installed in the antechapel.) The massive black and green marble high altar, a gift of the Fellowship of Saint John and the focus of the Chapel, lacked the shelter of the baldachino planned for it. With funds provided by two members of the Fellowship, this magnificent marble structure was added in 1940. The architect Ralph Adams Cram modeled it on an ancient one in the Basilica of Saint Mark in Venice. From the beginning both Saint John’s Chapel and the Lady Chapel contained altars, and in the crypt beneath there were nine alcove chapels, it being the custom before the reforms of Vatican II for all priests of monastic communities to celebrate the Eucharist every day. Until the monks were able to acquire stalls, benches, and desks, they used a motley assemblage of seating when they gathered for prayer within the grille. A gift from the Fellowship provided these in 1940.

I visited the Monastery for the first time in 1961. In those days there was a distinct separation between guests and monks at the liturgies. Guests were relegated to the antechapel. The Brothers chanted a sevenfold Office, and one of their number presided at the Eucharist.
most days. As was common practice at that time, the celebrant had his back to the congregation, and during my visit at least, was almost hidden by clouds of incense. For someone who had never encountered it before, worship at theMonastery was an awesome experience.

By the late 1960s it appeared that SSJE had reached its last days. As the number of monks living at the Monastery declined, they were forced to close the novitiate. There were not enough monks in the choir to chant the Office, and few came for retreats. The death of the American congregation of SSJE seemed imminent.

All of this began to change after Br. Paul Wessinger became the new Superior in 1972. Fired with enthusiasm by the spirit of renewal that was sweeping religious communities after the Second Vatican Council, Wessinger immediately began to make changes in the life of the community. He insisted that the Divine Office be sung. He reopened the novitiate, and soon the Society began to attract men eager to try the life. To provide spiritual nourishment for university students nearby, the new Superior instituted a Sunday service open to the public and a Tuesday evening Eucharist in the antechapel, with a portable altar in place outside the grille. The popularity of these offerings and the pressure of crowds caused him to open the grille and move the focus of the services to the high altar. At Wessinger’s insistence, SSJE opened the Guesthouse to women, and large numbers of them began to worship with the monks. The Anglo-Catholic liturgies lost their fussiness and became more welcoming and participatory.

Leaders of the Society who followed him in office built on Paul Wessinger’s reforms. Tom Shaw, the next Superior, created a bold and lively retreat program that filled the Guesthouse and enriched the liturgical life of the Chapel. Shaw also encouraged the monks to preach and teach. His homilies and those of Martin Smith and others attracted a new audience. It was during his tenure that the Society abolished the titles that separated ordained and lay Brothers. Henceforth all would be addressed as Brothers. One of the lasting accomplishments of Martin Smith’s leadership was the development of a new Rule of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, which attracted many to the Society and gave new life to the Fellowship of Saint John. His publications on prayer and reconciliation, and his gifted teaching, attracted many new friends to the Society. After his term as Superior, the Society experimented with liturgical dance – once.

By the time Curtis Almquist became Superior in 2000, the buildings were badly in need of structural rehabilitation and renovation. With his leadership the Society launched a campaign to raise funds for a program of restoration that would prepare the Monastery for life and worship in the 21st Century. This includes new heating, air conditioning and lighting systems for the Chapel, and a thorough cleaning of walls and windows. Soon after the election of Geoffrey Tristram as Superior, the Society stripped the buildings of their furnishings, moved to temporary housing, and the construction got underway. Now that that work is done and the monastic buildings have been restored to their splendor, we hope that they will be our spiritual home and foster our work of evangelism and hospitality for many years to come.
A Call to Monastic Life

A Retrospect at Fifty Years of Life Profession

David Allen, SSJE

About seven years before my profession in life vows, Saturday, July 1, 1961, I began to feel that I did not have a strong desire to marry, and that I might have a call to the monastic life. The awareness of that call began through reading magazine articles about the Religious Communities of the Episcopal Church. I had been in the process leading to seminary and ordination for about five years before that, but sometimes I wondered about what form of ministry I was being called to. Those articles, and contacts that I made with people who knew something about some of those communities, helped me to see that there were other forms of ministry beside the parish model. I had enjoyed the camaraderie of college fraternity life and had found something of the same sort of comradeship in the Navy during the three year break I made after graduation, before going on to seminary. Looking back I can see that in reality God was calling me through those articles and those contacts. The feeling of a monastic call began about mid-way through my three years of active duty in the U.S. Navy. Further clarity came during my first year of seminary at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP). The parish that I chose to attend during my last year in the navy and all three years of seminary was the Church of the Advent of Christ the King in San Francisco, which had been served by the Society of Saint John the Evangelist from 1921 to 1940. During the years I was an active worshiper there, many people who remembered the SSJE years shared their memories with me. This helped me to see that the SSJE was a community that combined both the contemplative aspects of monasticism and the active work of pastoral ministry.

I made my first inquirer’s visit to the SSJE during the spring vacation of that first year at CDSP. I flew from San Francisco to Chicago, where the plane was grounded by a blizzard. My journey by train the rest of the way to Boston through that snowstorm was an adventure in itself, as was my walk through about a foot of snow from Harvard Square to the back gate of the Monastery. Two novices who were shoveling snow let me in through the backdoor and the kitchen. A hot bath and tour of the Guesthouse helped me to settle in. My sleep that night was accompanied by dreams of Psalms and chants. The next day I began to feel very much at home. My feeling of being called to a monastic vocation was confirmed by a three day retreat based on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises later that week. Those exercises, and my prayer accompanying them, combined with how much I felt at home in the Monastery, gave me a strong feeling that I should not unnecessarily delay the beginning of trying my vocation. But I also realized that I should first complete my seminary studies and be ordained. On the plane flying back to San Francisco, I was filled with such euphoria at having made that decision that I wondered if my fellow
passengers noticed anything special about me.

A year or so later a well-meaning friend of mine in my home town of Spokane, Washington, inadvertently "spilled the beans" and told my parents and a few other people about my decision. My Episcopalian mother expressed anxiety, fearing that in the Monastery I would be cut off forever from my family and friends. But my Presbyterian father became very supportive after he had attended a Jesuit retreat with a neighbor. Along with my explanation of the work of the SSJE, and some supportive counsel from Episcopal clergy friends, my mother eventually also became very supportive, especially after meeting some members of the SSJE at the next Episcopal General Convention that she attended.

The month after my graduation from seminary, June 1958, was spent with my family in Spokane. During that time I was ordained deacon at my home parish, St. John's Cathedral by the retired bishop who had confirmed me. The Diocesan Bishop was in England for the Lambeth Conference. At the end of June I returned to San Francisco in order to serve as Deacon at the Church of the Advent on Pentecost Sunday. From there I went to Chicago for a week with friends, and then stopped off on my way to Cambridge at St. Gregory's Abbey, Three Rivers, Michigan, which was the first community to which I had written in 1954. My overnight visit there confirmed for me that I had made the right decision to enter the SSJE.

I arrived in Cambridge and became a postulant on July 11, 1958. I was eager to begin my new life. That night I had a minor shock when I lay down on the bed in the cell assigned to me and found that the mattress was hard. (The beds in the Guesthouse had springs and softer mattresses.) Life in the Monastery was more austere in those days than it became later on. But in spite of the hard bed I still felt very much at home in the Monastery. The others in the novitiate helped me to adapt to my new way of life very quickly. I was anxious to conform to the life I had entered. While I was a postulant I was usually called by my first name. My ordination as a priest was at St. John's Church, Bowdoin Street, Boston, and was a high point for me. I was ordained by Bp. Spence Burton, SSJE, a former Superior of the Society. After that I was addressed more formally as Father Allen. I was clothed as a novice on the eve of St. Scholastica, February 9, 1959 after a
month-long clothing retreat. In those days we were much more hierarchical. The other novices were all lay brothers so I became Senior Novice on the day I was clothed.

About halfway through my novitiate I began to let personality differences of other novices get to me and experienced my first vocational crisis. I had a talk with the Novice Master and I was considering asking for a chance to try a different community. He was going to be away for a week and asked me to wait until his return. A few days later, while riding the subway on my way to preside at the Eucharist for the Sisters of Saint Margaret, the thought came to me as I hung on the strap, “If I leave I am going to miss this!” In the meantime the Superior, who had been away, called me into his office to ask if it was true that I wanted to leave. I told him about my experience on the subway and that I really did want to stay. He told me that he was glad to hear that. He had been about to try to talk me into staying and said, “For some of us to persevere in the Religious Life may be essential to our salvation.” I think that from that time on I determined to persevere and go on to profession if I was elected when the time came.

In the fall of the second year of my novitiate the house of the Society in Chicago was closed, and the three monks who had been stationed there returned to Cambridge. The Superior and his Council decided that it was time for a change in some of the appointments of officers. One of those returning from Chicago became Assistant Superior, and one of the others became Novice Master. The Deputy Assistant Superior was being sent to our work in Japan, and the previous Novice Master took his place. This meant an adjustment for me to a different style of leadership and of receiving instruction. During that year I was occasionally asked to take on some leading of retreats for groups of young people. My role of Senior Novice also took on more meaning as new members came into the Novitiate.

In those days the statutes of the Society specified that priests over thirty years old were elected directly to life profession, whereas lay brothers and younger priests would have a period under temporary vows (now called initial vows). That put more responsibility upon me to determine whether I felt that I was truly called to offer myself for life vows. It was customary for life professions to occur just before the Annual
Chapter meeting, scheduled that year for July 3. So my novitiate was lengthened four months, including the month long pre-profession retreat. As I write this at Emery House I can visualize some of that retreat which was held here at Emery House. I was given a bound volume of the manuscript of meditations of one of the summer retreats the founder, Fr. Benson, had given in England in the 1870s, one on *Transfigured Love*. Along with that I also used a slim book by the French Jesuit, Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*. On warm sunny days I would spread a blanket on the lawn on the south side of Emery House where I could read and meditate in quiet seclusion.

I was given the choice of having the profession take place on Saturday at the Monastery or on Sunday at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Boston. Most of the life professions at that time had taken place at St. John’s Church, but I asked that it be held at the Monastery on the Saturday. I had asked about twenty guests to attend. One was a member of the Order of the Holy Cross who had been just ahead of me in seminary. In those days only the Holy Cross monk was allowed to sit in the choir of the Monastery Chapel. All of the other guests had to sit outside the grille in the antechapel. Only the male guests could join us in the refectory for the meal that followed the ceremony. The ceremony took place in the context of the Eucharist. It was an exciting moment for me. I knelt at the step of the Chancel before the Superior. When I took the vows my hands were between the hands of the Superior. The Assistant Superior held the book. The rest of the community was in the monastic choir. Things have changed very much since those days.

After eight months of working in the publications department of the Society, I was sent to Japan, first to be a relief for one of the other Americans there who was to be on furlough, and then when he asked to be released from the Society I stayed on in his place. On my way to Japan I visited the SSJE houses and other monastic communities in England, and spent three weeks in Sweden to attend my brother’s wedding before flying over the North Pole to Japan. My thirteen and a half years in Japan gave me experience in varied kinds of ministry and in learning both the language and culture of another country. I came to love Japan very much. The difficult decision made by...
the Chapter of the SSJE in Cambridge to close the work in Japan in 1975 was one of the hardest tests of my obedience that I have experienced. I prayed about it all that summer.

As hard as it was to leave Japan eventually I was able to find compensations in America. One of these was becoming involved in the Episcopal Asian American Ministry. When I was unable to find Japanese Ministry to do in the Boston area I helped to start the Boston Chinese Ministry at Saint Paul’s Cathedral, which is flourishing there. Except for a few recent problems with my own health I have been able to continue assisting with that ministry, and hope before long to resume that work.

Many significant changes have taken place in the SSJE and in the world in the past fifty years. We have seen term limits set on the service of the Superior; adoption of liturgical changes both by the example of the Vatican Council, and by the revision of the American Book of Common Prayer; a major rewriting of the SSJE Rule of Life; and a greater feeling of informality between the members of the Society. In 1976 women guests were admitted to our Guesthouses, and those who worship with us can sit with us in the choir. Distinctions between priests and lay brothers, except for sacramental ministry, were removed, and a standard habit was adopted. And most recent was the decision to go ahead with renovations to the Monastery now almost completed.

Challenges still face us in the world in which we live, but we can be encouraged by the words of our Founder that we should be “men of the moment.” As we look ahead to our 150th anniversary in five years, and look back over the past 145 years, we can see how the Society, sustained and supported by our vows, our ministries, and our dedication to the Beloved Disciple, Saint John the Evangelist, has been able to face the challenges of each era and move ahead from strength to strength in the service of God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

For more information on Br. David’s and SSJE’s ministries in Japan, see an article in Cowley Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 2001, on the Japanese Province from the inquiry of the first Japanese member in 1924 up through the 1950s, and another in Cowley Vol. 27, No. 3, Winter 2002, on David’s own involvement in the Japanese Province 1962-75.

Br. David Allen in the Chapel after the Palm Sunday liturgy, 2011.

Br. David during the ceremony of his profession in life vows.
The Brothers have begun a new daily series, “Brother, Give Us a Word,” that adapts an ancient monastic practice for today’s busy world.

Monasticism began when a few faithful men and women went into the desert to seek God and live a life of prayer. These Desert Fathers and Mothers, as they became known, were spiritual beacons whom others sought out for their wisdom in the ways of God. The seeker would approach and ask, “Father (Mother), give me a word.”

The Brothers of SSJE have adapted this ancient tradition for today, offering online a daily “word”—a short saying, a bit of wisdom from the tradition—to all who seek a deeper knowledge of God, a means of handing on what we ourselves have received.

We hope you’ll join us every day for a word, which we pray will help you to deepen your life with God.
I’m from the Diocese of Georgia, where I’m in the ordination process. I met the Brothers in the fall of 2008, when I entered Harvard Divinity School. I first began going to the Monastery for the Tuesday evening Eucharist, and then for spiritual direction. For over two years, my spiritual director and I met every month until this past May, when I moved away.

In hindsight, I realize just how much of my education and spiritual formation took place with the Brothers at the Monastery. At the very beginning of my time in spiritual direction, our conversations were mostly about the trepidation I felt entering into ministry, as well as identity issues with being a young woman and a priest. As we moved towards our final meeting, the conversations became more about affirming questions: how to live within ministry, what talks I need to have and what relationships I need to build within my new congregation, the importance of a rule of life.

Our conversations transformed as our time went along, which I think is quite beautiful. Most importantly, through my time in spiritual direction, I’ve come to realize how much I want to maintain the kind of self-awareness it cultivated, once I’m back in Georgia. I admit that I was a little afraid that, not having a Monastery next door, my spiritual life would suffer. That’s where the idea of joining the Fellowship came up.

The exercise of writing the rule of life has been such a gift to me because I know now that I want to be intentional and contemplative about the way I enter ministry. That desire alone — not to mention the tools to meet it — is a real gift that SSJE has given to me. I’ve taken away from the Brothers the knowledge that any ministry that is not contemplative can become manipulative. If ministry is not grounded in prayer, in relationship with God, in love for God and others, then the focus and the drive of a ministry gets unhinged. It can become focused on other, dangerous motives—like pleasing others or ego. Thanks to the Brothers, I now have the deep awareness that whatever I do in ministry needs to be grounded in the truth of love and service to God.

The Brothers have been to me a voice of comfort, a voice that says that the questions are okay and that they are not a detriment to faith. In fact, the Brothers don’t just tell us that it’s ok to have questions, they also give us the support to work through those questions.
Letters from the FSJ

Andrew G. Osmun

Around 2006, I was blessed to attend a Soul Care Retreat at Emery House. I was pretty well exhausted, and my spiritual life after thirty years of ordained ministry and church was dry. I was resistant to anything which might help — like retreats — but wanted renewal. While I was there, I was overwhelmed by a sense of God’s loving presence — I don’t really know how else to describe it. It felt like being welcomed home again to a place where I was safe, a place that was recognizable. I could participate in the liturgy, and it just fit.

The presence of SSJE, especially Emery House, in my life is pure grace. That’s really where my heart is now: I have needed a place of safety, of security, of support and discipline. I needed an external spiritual home that wasn’t my diocese, that wasn’t a parish. Having started as an ordinary ‘60s college student, then going through a charismatic renewal, and then to Anglican evangelicalism, as my spiritual life dried up, I ended up becoming pretty much spiritually lost. I had given up hope that my ministry and my life would be any different, and I was very mistrustful of any attempt to fix me. How often do we go through our entire lives with the idea of God’s love as just a concept or an intellectual identification, a statement of faith? Yet to experience God’s love as a personal reality is completely different.

To suddenly sense that you can actually be that person who is the prodigal son, whom the Father runs to and embraces — it’s a tremendous gift. I felt this at Emery House.

One of the images that I carry with me all the time is from John’s Gospel: “In my father’s house, there are many resting places [it used to be “mansions”]. If not, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” William Temple’s commentary on these lines from John suggests that the “mansions” Jesus promises us are like oases in the desert. As you travel across the desert, there are these places of rest, of shelter, of safety, security, and refreshment. That’s how I feel about SSJE: It’s an oasis, a resting place that God has given me in my life.

Gary W. Dozier

Several months ago, someone in my parish mentioned a retreat in Ipswich, MA, which Br. Eldridge Pendleton would be facilitating. I immediately decided that I would make time in my life to attend. I had not seen Br. Eldridge in many years and was looking forward to reconnecting. It was a wonderfully positive event for me, an oasis in the midst of a desert of nightmares — medical, professional, and personal. Br. Eldridge and I talked at lunch where he encouraged me to consider the Fellowship of SSJE. After receiving the information, it was clear
Perhaps, as Freud said, there is no such thing as a coincidence. Four years ago when I moved to the Boston area from DC, I ended up buying a home in Cambridge, not realizing it was a five-minute walk to the Monastery. I had been on a few retreats at the Monastery and Emery House before, always read Cowley avidly, and felt compatible with the Society’s spiritual and theological outlook, but I was very surprised, and pleased, to find myself practically on their doorstep. I began attending the Tuesday evening Eucharists, and they quickly assumed a central place in my worship life, as I felt drawn more deeply into the Society’s spirituality.

I enjoy the Tuesday sung Eucharists precisely because they aren’t Sunday Eucharists. They are less conventional and more inventive, and I feel no sense of attending out of obligation or convention. Also, their placement after 5 pm provides an important transition from the activities of the day to evening routines. They form a kind of hinge for me, joining two parts of my life. Arriving at the Chapel early allows me to meditate on what happened during the day, both the good and the bad, and to gain perspective on things I had become too wound up in. Of course, one can “unwind” anywhere, but doing it in the Lord’s house makes it easier and more fulfilling.

As a cradle Episcopalian, I’ve found many churches’ attempts to grow and change with the trends of society — like the loss of “smells and bells” except for festive days, and the milder, less visually appealing Mass — a bit disappointing. I had a marvelous day in Cambridge when I was received as a member of the Fellowship of SSJE, a ceremony replete with smells and bells and all the regalia of the day in the SSJE Chapel. My spirit was more than renewed.

I don’t have deep pockets, probably never will, but I have a good and decent heart, an active and able brain, fairly flexible hands, and a spirit that drives on thanks to the grace of God, the Trinity, my parish family, and the greater family of SSJE and the Fellowship. I am so grateful to Br. Eldridge for inspiring me to become a member of the Fellowship of SSJE. I hope to do justice to this opportunity.
gives me, I think, a truer perspective on events in my life.

I am now a communicant member of the Church of Saint Mary of the Harbor in Provincetown, but the Monastery has become a kind of “surrogate” parish for me in Cambridge. Since, so I discovered, I had been following the Fellowship’s rule anyway, it was a simple step for me to apply to become a member. Even if I lived far away, I know I would feel a connection to the Society, but the Fellowship helps me to experience that connection more concretely, more “officially,” like an *imprimatur*. It also invests me with a sense of responsibility to the Society, as I am now overtly linked to its life.

I hope that monastic experience itself will become more central to the life of the Episcopal Church — both corporately and individually — for the depth and richness of monasticism are sorely needed in our world today.

Bob Wilson

I’ve known the Brothers for over twenty years, since I first went on a directed retreat at Emery House. At the time, my wife Jean and I had four children (we hadn’t had the youngest yet), and life was very hectic. So I set off for this retreat with a stack of books to read. I have plans: I’m going to pray; I’m going to meditate; I’m going to read all these books. Well, I remember that I arrived late, and Jonathan Maury, who was the retreat leader, said to me, “Look, while you’re here, just do whatever God calls you to do, okay?” So I go off to my hermitage. Then I go off to the evening service, I come back and say a prayer, and then I go to bed. I didn’t wake up until two o’clock the next afternoon. I slept through everything. And so I realized what I needed: sleep. My time there gave me exactly what I needed. And that has always been my experience — whether on retreats at Emery House and the Monastery or on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Brothers. Everything I go seeking I don’t get, but everything I need, I get.

Since that very first visit, I’ve felt so connected to SSJE. It’s like family, like finding family: I’ve always had a very clear affinity to them and their way of life. They live everything that is most important: knowledge of God, service to God. It’s a way of life that I respect so deeply. And it’s a life that is deeply connected to mine, even across distance and time.

Right after that first retreat, I started saying Morning Prayer, and, at the end of the service, there’s the scriptural line “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” But I’m sitting there reading the service by myself. So I just figured: well, you know, I’m gathered together with the Brothers. And, every morning, I know that I am. Now with the podcasts and the sermons online, it’s even easier to share daily with them in prayer.

Being a member of the FSJ is a way for me to affirm that connection and my intention to live with gratitude or, as
Letters from the FSJ

the Brothers would say, to “live eucharistically.” The intentionality of keeping a rule of life helps me maintain that sense of gratitude through prayer. And it also encourages me to pray for the Brothers and maintain, even with the distance, that deep bond to them. I want to support them. I want them to know that there are people around the world who love and care for them. Think about it: think about how much ministry a handful of Brothers do from that Monastery. It’s awesome. It’s unbelievable. And so I want to help in the way I can: by supporting them in prayer and gratitude. 🕊

LTC Christopher M. Bridges, US Army

About four years ago, I came across an article on the Episcopal news site about how the Brothers were holding retreats for soldiers returning from the wars, to help them deal with their return experiences. The article had a link to the SSJE website, so that’s how I got to know them.

I’m in the military, and when I was in Korea, I was able to listen to the Brothers’ sermons over the Internet. After Korea, I had to go to Iraq, but we had enough Internet connectivity over there that I could listen to the sermons and keep up with the community in that way. While I was overseas, I would write them letters. They prayed for me, and, of course, I prayed for them. It’s been a very good comfort to me to have that connection. For a long time the connection was just a virtual one, and it was quite wonderful to get to know the Brothers through their preaching—they each have such different messages. Yet you can always tell that the preaching comes from that deep well of monastic experience that they share. I tend to listen to their sermons a few times because I might have missed something; each time I listen I hear something new in their messages. For instance, I once heard a sermon from Br. Curtis, in which he used the phrase, “We’ve all been broken and broken into.” I’ve used that phrase in conversation with many different people in the military. Those are the kind of things that stick with you from their sermons — insights that come out of the deep well of contemplation.

I see being a member of the Fellowship as my contribution to them as well, because I do believe in their ministry and what they’re doing. And the Fellowship gives me a little bit of a closer connection to them. It gives me a chance to continue to support them and their ministry—as well as to keep listening to their sermons and getting those nuggets that help me in my daily life. I think that’s probably the same hope as for a lot of people in the Fellowship. When I was there at the FSJ Day Eucharist, I had an opportunity to talk to a number of people. I asked one man I met how he got involved with the Brothers. He said, “I had been fifty years in spiritual darkness and I stumbled across them. That’s the reason I’m here today.” Fifty years. That’s become a touchstone point for me: People are looking for something that the
Brothers have, that the Brothers are trying to explain. Looking around the faces of the people gathered in the Chapel, I could see that they were receiving it. You could just see it on their faces.

Elizabeth Wright

Taking a three-day silent retreat at the Monastery in October 2008 changed my life. I knew very little about the Brothers at the time. I had just planned to sleep and read. I ended up going to all the services. I sat on the wooden bench, intimidated, feeling like an idiot, out of place, unused to the liturgy and staring at the marble floor, and I felt love. Leaving Sunday afternoon, I felt a joy I hadn’t felt before, ever, and even in Park Street station and the subway home — a deep connection to other people. Everyone amazed me.

Up to then, I hadn’t been able to respond to Christian worship anymore, not for any sustained amount of time. I’d go once or twice and then couldn’t go back. Prayer had become difficult. I had known it deeply when I was much younger, but for years I had only been turning to prayer in crisis and then dropping it.

When I first arrived for the retreat I remember reading the card in the room that asks us to pray for the next occupant. A beautiful thought but addressed to someone else. When I considered praying this alone in my room, I came up against, “Who do I think I’m kidding?”

What made the difference was an undeniable sense of feeling loved and accepted anyway. There was such a gentle, undemanding spirit in the Chapel. The silences healed. I could pray again. I’m grateful to whoever stayed in that room before me.

I got excited when I found out the Brothers had services every day. So I started going to Morning Prayer once a week, then twice a week. I kept adding days. Then I stayed for morning Eucharists. By the time the Monastery closed for renovations I was going there regularly. And to Saint Anne’s in Arlington. All of a sudden, I had this incredible appetite for everything. I got a speeding ticket one time, running late to morning prayer. I’ve never gotten a speeding ticket.

What happened that weekend: It was like the birdhouse I made once. I worked really hard on it, made it pretty; I was proud of it, put it in the backyard and waited. Even though I tried not to care, it was frustrating because there were never any birds in it. No birds ever came to the birdhouse; so I would touch it up, sand it some more, move it somewhere else. My prayer life was like that: I had tried to meditate as a regular thing so many different times. Prayer and meditation — I knew it was what I needed, but I didn’t stay with it. Then on my retreat, it was as if I looked in the birdhouse and there was a bird in it. And then the next time I looked, there were a lot of birds in it. It’s been like that for me at the Monastery: All of a sudden the birdhouse is alive.
Something was different. When we returned at long last to the Monastery Chapel for Holy Week preparations, we knew something was different. Could it be . . . could it be? Yes, it was! One of the most delightful surprises on returning to worship in the Monastery Chapel was discovering that the already wonderful acoustics had actually improved: a slightly longer reverberation, a somehow brighter, more colorful sound.

But how could this be? The only substantial work in the Chapel was the cleaning of the stone and stained glass. Apparently, decades of soot from old heating systems, dust, incense, candle smoke, and city grit had accumulated enough to slightly dampen the sound. The cleaning, from top to bottom, not only has brightened the granite and limestone walls, but literally uncovered the surface of the stone and brightened the room’s sound as well. Both the spoken and sung word resonate now with greater vibrancy, just as the stained glass windows sing with greater intensity. The sensory dimension of things is somehow more present, more immediate.

While it is true that “the church” is the people, the Body of Christ gathered, Christians in most times and places have taken great care to build suitable buildings. Church structures have been in most cases far more than mere shelter from the wind and rain and cold. The buildings, sometimes constructed at enormous cost, have been powerful statements of how we understand our identity as Christians.

At their best, our church buildings “resonate,” figuratively as well as literally. Who we are, and what we believe and value, resonate and amplify through the medium of our buildings. Or not. A congregation can be mismatched with its building, or grow apart from it. Its “voice” can be dampened or muffled or even choked off by a building.

We Brothers know we are richly blessed. Ralph Adams Cram, the Monastery’s architect, knew what he was doing. Timeless values sing out through the very stones. The restrained dignity of the Romanesque design sings of the dignity of the human beings (made in the image and likeness of God) who gather here, sings of the hope of the glory that shall be revealed. The solemn rhythm of the Chapel’s arches sings of the persistence and aspiration embodied in the religious life.

The very stones speak for us, singing to the world of who we are, whose we are, and what we hold dear. The stones and stucco and slates and tiles are our amplification system. And now — freshly renewed, restored, refurbished — with a little more resonance. A slightly longer reverberation. A somehow brighter, more colorful sound. Somehow more present.
When I was in seminary at Berkeley Divinity School, the Brothers came down for a quiet day with the seminar students. That was my first introduction to the Society of Saint John the Evangelist and the beginning of a life-giving relationship with the SSJE community.

People look at seminary and think it must be very tranquil and a wonderful place to go, study the Bible and pray. It is in many respects but in regard to discernment of vocation, it is not an easy place to be. It’s a murky and churning place—“Where can I best serve God? In the church? As a lay person? Have I correctly discerned a call to ordained ministry?”—and it gets tiring after a while.

During our quiet day the Brothers gave us spiritual exercises, different types of prayer, meditation, and reflections, which were essentially tools to use in navigating these murky, churning spiritual waters of discernment. For me, that day helped to clear and calm the waters, allowing me to breathe and begin to better discern where my vocation lay. That was a tremendous help as well as a gift of grace.

I feel a real sense of love and gratitude to the Brothers for giving me a place of refuge. The Monastery is a sacred place that I can retreat to, lean into, knowing that I will be welcomed and accepted by people of such deep hospitality and faith. I know that other people feel the same way. No matter where we are in our spiritual life or journey, we all need moments of affirmation and refreshment to help us navigate the churning waters of life. At the Monastery I can taste the living waters we are all so thirsty for.

— Susan Pinkerton
Q: What physical changes have been made to the buildings that will affect the way guests are welcomed?

The Chapel, Guesthouse, and public areas of the Monastery have been made fully accessible to those with special needs by the addition of improved hand-railings at all entrance stairs and a wheelchair lift at the Chapel entrance. Other lifts and ramps allow visitors to move about most areas without using stairs: to accessible restrooms; to the common room and conference rooms of the Guesthouse; to the conference space and offices in the undercroft; and to meals in the refectory through an inviting, all-year receiving room on the newly glassed-in cloister. Former “pass-through” areas are now within the monastic enclosure as originally intended. These changes will allow the Brothers to welcome guests more comfortably, alleviating the awkwardness often experienced through unclear boundaries between public and private space.

Further changes have been made in the Guesthouse to increase accessibility and enhance privacy for our resident guests. The first-floor guestrooms (including one designed for wheelchair use) are in close proximity to fully accessible bathrooms, allowing us to host at least two people with special needs at any given time. We’ve also made changes to the bathroom facilities on the upper floors: each bathroom entrance opens onto a small corridor leading to three fully-enclosed, individual units with toilet, lavatory sink, and shower. All these changes to physical spaces will aid both guests and Brothers in maintaining inner silence and their sense of presence before God.

Q: What is the theological significance of these physical changes?

We say in our SSJE Rule of Life, “The source of hospitality is the heart of God who yearns to unite every creature within one embrace.” The physical changes to the buildings serve as an outward sign of our call to live more deeply the truest kind of hospitality, to ourselves become a sacrament of God’s heart, to offer a welcome which shares in God’s intention and desire for each and every man, woman, and child as images and likeness of God. The Rule further teaches that, “Our faith must recognize the one who comes to us in the person of the guest, the stranger and the pilgrim. It is the Lord, who has identified himself with each of his sisters and brothers.” The renovations challenge us to expand our understanding of this each—to welcome all in Christ’s name and recognize Christ’s presence in each guest, regardless of gender, age, race, class, sexual orientation, or physical limitation. By
making these physical changes, we hope to better learn how to welcome each person equally, eliminating obstacles which might keep any from crossing our threshold and entering sacred space.

Q: How is hospitality characterized in the Gospel?

The Gospel message is a proclamation of God’s hospitality, of God’s intention to gather all people into one, of the divine desire for humanity to live in harmony with the whole creation, that all people may know how infinitely loved they are as children of God. Jesus is encountered in the Gospel narrative as guest and as host, in both roles implicit in the practice of hospitality. At the homes and occasions to which he is invited, the Lord comes as a guest to embody the healing, forgiving, and reconciling message of the Gospel. With his disciples, with multitudes in the wilderness, or teaching in synagogue and street, Jesus is present as host at table. From the table of God’s word or of created bounty, Jesus provides what is truly needful and offers himself as the Bread of Life. To any who come to him seeking it, Jesus provides sustenance, both without question or the making of any distinctions. He bids his disciples, as guest or host, to act as he does, and turns the work over to them.

In our ministry of hospitality to others, we Brothers are invited to share in this Gospel work. Always mindful that we ourselves are the Lord’s guests, we are hosts to others who join us at table, either in worship at the altar or at meals in the refectory. A renovation change made to this aspect of our ministry is the addition of a refectory and small kitchen on the lower level of the Guesthouse. With their own spaces in which to take breakfast in silence, both guests and Brothers can more readily feed on the fruits of morning worship and meditation.
God. Enclosure actually helps to create a ministry of hospitality in which we are intentional about the ways we engage with guests, allowing them also to be fully present to the love of God in solitude. Our honoring of boundaries in the practice of enclosure becomes a mutual gift between host and guest, enriching our times of engagement in fellowship.

The living of our monastic vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience also flows directly into the hospitality we seek to share. Our vows are a time-tested way of living the vows of baptism shared by all Christians. While with us, guests have an opportunity to befriend their “inner monastic.” On retreat, guests learn of their spiritual poverty as they allow God to provide for their needs, material and spiritual. In making themselves totally available to God in prayer and worship, retreatants experience the gift of celibacy, their “one-ness” before God. And as guests share with us in the rhythm of prayer and worship in silence, they learn to practice obedience, which is, in essence, to listen with open hearts to God.

The Rule teaches us that, “The gift of silence we seek to cherish is chiefly the silence of adoring love for the mystery of God which words cannot express. In silence we pass through the bounds of language to lose ourselves in wonder. In this silence we learn to revere ourselves also; since Christ dwells in us we too are mysteries that cannot be fathomed, before which we must be silent until the day we come to know as we are known.” The practice of silence opens a spiritual window through which we may each contemplate the unique nature of our redemption in Christ. So we invite our guests to join us in the Greater Silence,

Q: What is the connection between the Brothers’ enclosed and vowed life and the ministry of hospitality?

Monastic life has always been characterized by the creative tension between solitude and engagement reflected in the life and teaching of Jesus. In order to nurture both of these gifts in our life together in God, we Brothers maintain private enclosure space and hold it as essential to the life of prayer from which all of our individual and corporate ministries flow. The practice of enclosure, through appropriate personal and community boundaries, in turn teaches us how to offer guests similar spaces of security and privacy in which to meet God.
the twelve night hours when we refrain from conversation, and the only words spoken are those of corporate worship. Through solitude and silence, we invite guests to move into that “new day” when they will fully know themselves as the beautiful mysteries which they are before God. Such silent solitude nurtures in us greater mutual transparency and compassion, by connecting us to that primacy of the love of God which is the foundation of all life.

We hope that people who come to the Monastery will experience how God invites us all into regular patterns in our daily lives, including the rhythm of engagement and silence, community and solitude.

Q: Does any particular personal experience in your life shape the way you step again into the role of Guest Brother?

When I first visited the Monastery, I experienced the trepidation which I remembered from my childhood experience of beginning school. All seemed so new and unknown. But my reception as a guest was so warm and welcoming that I was soon at ease, with a sense of being “at home.” As I again take up the ministry of Guest Brother, I feel blessed by the opportunity to offer others what was offered to me when I came here those thirty years ago—a welcome and inclusion which becomes an occasion for celebrating the new life we have in

Beautifully restored iron work adorns the lift into the Monastery, allowing guests to access all the common areas — refectory, Chapel, and cloister walk — on one level.
Christ. This doesn’t necessarily mean speaking of things “religious.” But it does mean being open to the initiation of a new and unique relationship which reflects the boundless hospitality of God.

Q: We’ve talked a lot about how the Brothers hope to offer hospitality. What do the Brothers receive by welcoming guests?

When we have guests on retreat in the house, I often experience the depth of intention and love in their practice of prayer as pure grace. The quality of the silence which we Brothers practice together is, in many ways, deeper and more intense—and more relaxed—when we have guests who are seeking God alongside us. Even alone in our own cells and other places of prayer, we are strengthened by solidarity with our guests. In this awareness, I experience anew the wondrous interplay of solitude and community, of enclosure and welcome, which undergirds and renews our vocation. Our guests enrich our common life in ways which they will likely never know, simply by choosing to accept Christ’s invitation to be with us for a time.

Each of us Brothers was drawn to become a member of the Society in a particular way but for the same reason: We were called to experience the love of Christ here, in the life we share with one another in community and through the presence of our guests. Christ who dwells in our guests comes to meet Christ who dwells in us. There is a reciprocal grace in the welcome offered, for it is Christ who both speaks and receives it. Hospitality is true mutuality in the Spirit. As we usher our guests into silence and prayer through the ministry of hospitality, they become instrumental for our journey into and final welcome home by God.

An archival shot of visitors to the Monastery Chapel. The fashion in hats may have shifted, but the Community’s hope to welcome all in the name of God continues unchanged.

Come and See Weekend
Ever wondered if God could be calling you?
October 27-30, 2011 • May 3-6, 2012

We welcome men interested in learning about a vocation to SSJE to join us for a “Come and See” weekend at the Monastery. For more information, please visit our website at www.SSJE.org/brother.
The Brothers are delighted to begin welcoming guests back to the renovated Guesthouse, starting **Tuesday, September 13**.

To book a retreat, please contact Tom Marsan, Guesthouse Manager at (617) 876-3037 extension 10 or e-mail guesthouse@ssje.org.

And register now for a series of five workshops celebrating the gifts that God offers us, held at the Monastery on Saturday mornings, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Participants are invited to stay and join the Brothers for the Midday Office at 12:30 p.m. following the workshop.) The suggested fee for each of these Saturday morning workshops is $40 ($20 for students).

**The Gift of Intimacy with God**  
Br. David Vryhof, SSJE  
October 22, 2011

**The Gift of Meditative Prayer**  
Br. Geoffrey Tristram, SSJE  
November 19, 2011

**The Gift of Gratitude**  
Br. David Vryhof, SSJE  
January 21, 2012

**The Gift of Forgiveness**  
Br. Kevin Hackett, SSJE  
March 17, 2012

**The Gift of Sabbath Rest**  
Br. Mark Brown, SSJE  
April 21, 2012

Visit www.SSJE.org/guest to learn more about retreats and workshops at the Monastery and Emery House.
On July 1, our Br. David Allen celebrated the 50th anniversary of his life profession. Br. David came to the Monastery as a deacon in 1958 and was ordained a year later to the priesthood. Following his novitiate he was sent to Japan for thirteen years, serving at Saint John’s House in Tokyo and then at Saint Michael’s monastery in Oyama, both houses of our Society. He returned to the U.S. in 1975, and has served since that time at a spiritual director, retreat leader, and confessor at our Monastery in Cambridge and at Emery House. We congratulate David on his anniversary and thank God for the witness of his years of faithful service.

A nearly standing-room-only crowd joined the Brothers on Sunday, July 17 in welcoming Jewish, Muslim and Christian kids to the Monastery Chapel. Twenty-four Kids4Peace Boston participants and their adult entourage attended a festive Sunday morning Eucharist and reception on the final day of their two-week program. Kids4Peace Boston is the newest local chapter in the international and interfaith Kids4Peace organization. Founded by Dr. Henry Carse at St. George’s College, Jerusalem, Kids4Peace

Br. James Koester served as chaplain for a “Palestine of Jesus” course offered by Saint George’s College in Jerusalem from May 31 to June 13. Following the course, he spent a week with Coptic Christians in Cairo.

Br. Curtis Almquist led a pre-ordination retreat at Emery House for men and women from the Diocese of Massachusetts about to be ordained as deacons and priests, June 14-16.

Br. David Allen with an ikebana flower arrangement given in honor of the 50th anniversary of his profession in life vows.

Br. James with Dianne Smith of Martha’s Vineyard in the Armenian quarter of the old city of Jerusalem. Photo by Rod Jepson.

Dianne Smith, Charlene Arzigian, Brother James, Jeff Jones, Spencer Reece, Polly Jones, and Peter Antoci on the Palestine of Jesus course. Photo by Rod Jepson.
During their July 17 visit to the Monastery, visitors from Kids4Peace delighted the congregation with a reading from Genesis in Hebrew, a reading from 1 Corinthians in Arabic, and just before departing, a few verses of a rousing Kids4Peace camp song (in Hebrew, Arabic, and English).

Gathers groups of kids from the Jerusalem and Ramallah area for several months of meetings in preparation for a two week visit to the United States in the summer. Twelve kids from Jerusalem, evenly divided between the three Abrahamic faiths, meet twelve counterparts the same age (11-13) from the US for the summer portion of the program, comprised of a week at a summer camp in New Hampshire and a week spent in the Boston area. Prior to the kids’ visit to the Monastery, they visited a local mosque for Friday prayers and a synagogue for a Sabbath service. Kids from our “extended family” delighted the congregation with a reading from Genesis in Hebrew, a reading from 1 Corinthians in Arabic, and just before departing, a few verses of a rousing Kids4Peace camp song (in Hebrew, Arabic, and English). Find out more about Kids4Peace and other local chapters at www.kids4peaceboston.org and www.kids4peaceusa.org.

Br. Geoffrey Tristram traveled to the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, August 22 and 23. He led a Quiet Day for the members of the faculty of the School of Theology and then a retreat for the students of the School of Theology. The retreats marked the beginning of the new academic year.

Light pours through the Saint John window beside the altar, painting the stone.
2011 Report of the Bishop Visitor  
The Society of Saint John the Evangelist

May 2011

Dear Friends of SSJE,

It is a great joy and honor to serve, once again, as Bishop Visitor of the Society. Having known the Community and its members in various seasons both of my life and theirs, I am happy to report that the Society is in excellent spiritual and fiscal health. The renovated buildings will be occupied by a community that has used this time of disruption to good purpose in terms of deepening its communal life and fraternal relationships. During this time, the support and friendship offered by so many members of the Fellowship and beyond has been a singular gift and blessing.

The Challenge of Renewal
The community has risen to the challenge of this time of disruption. The Brothers have used time this year to plan for their return to the Monastery and the revival of their ministry. When the Monastery reopens the Brothers will be providing, beyond their regular cycle of services, a set of workshops and on a monthly basis there will be a Tuesday Eucharist evening with an added talk and supper following. The Brothers will be extending their outreach to young adults both in the Boston area and by accepting requests to visit seminaries. At Emery House the Brothers are now working with Mass. Audubon, Essex County Greenbelt Association and the Trustees of Reservation on conservation and agriculture plans and ways to enhance their retreat ministry in West Newbury.

Proceeding with the Building Renovations
With encouragement from the Society’s Financial and Building and Grounds Advisors, the renovation of the Monastery in Cambridge commenced in the summer of 2010. Work is nearing completion, resulting in vastly enhanced handicapped accessibility and the replacement of various outdated systems, such as plumbing, ventilation, heating, and electrical with more efficient, environmentally friendly ones. Certainly unanticipated problems arose along the way, not the least being heavy snowfalls and the unforeseen need to replace the Monastery sewage pipes. Fortunately, significant contingencies had been developed in the original construction budget, which along with the incredible generosity of our Friends who gave additional gifts and pledges, will enable the core project to be successfully completed. There are a number of related restoration projects, such as the cloister and Guesthouse gardens, which will require more time and funds. Neither SSJE’s endowment draw nor the Annual Fund was used to fund this capital expenditure. The STONE & Light Capital Campaign has successfully raised over $11 million to date to address the core project.

Living within the Means of a Balanced Budget
In the last fiscal year (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011), SSJE had a not-quite-balanced budget. Projected operating expenses of $1.8 million are supported by:

- Gifts to the Annual Fund - 38%
- Emery House guest income - 6%
- Other Sources - 15%
- Spending from Endowment – 39% (with a 5% draw in FY2011)
- Renovation Contingency Fund for the Annual Fund – 2%
There were far fewer new gifts to SSJE this year, as could be expected. A Renovation Contingency Fund for the Annual Fund was created and the Brothers tapped this fund to balance the budget and keep the endowment draw at 5%. The Endowment portfolio has recovered to the level just prior to the global financial crisis. The Financial Advisors note that although this is great news, SSJE is still challenged by the need to fund depreciation of the Monastery and Emery House properties.

A Grateful Renewal
The scale of the renovation challenge, rather than daunting the Brothers, has strengthened them and their ministry. This year a completely renewed Monastery will be re-opened in Cambridge with a vibrant ministry. This is a remarkable event in 2011. This modern miracle is made possible by the continuing kindness from many people like yourself.

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold, III
Presiding Bishop, retired

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For more information, please contact:
Mr. Jamie Coats,
Director, Friends of SSJE
617-876-3037 x57
friends@ssje.org
Geoffrey Tristram

Triumph of the City - Edward Glaeser
This is a very enjoyable reflection on cities and how they have and continue to ‘magnify humanity’s strengths.’ This really is a tour de force on urban life, and Glaeser, who is a Harvard professor, manages to translate complex economics into fascinating and fun insights about the wisdom of city life.

Atheist Delusions - David Bentley Hart
This book won the Michael Ramsey prize this year, and is a history lesson for ‘the fashionable enemies of Christianity.’ Bentley Hart is a profound Orthodox theologian, and here he provides a much needed and sometimes hilarious corrective to modern atheist mythology.

Catecismo de la Iglesia Catolica
I am slowly working my way through this catechism in Spanish, as a way of trying to polish up my Spanish! I bought the book in Mexico and it’s a challenge to work through it slowly. It is in four parts: systematic, sacramental, moral, and ascetical (prayer) theology. If it gets to be too much I’ll likely buy a copy in English!

Mark Brown

Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World - John O’Donohue
A kind of modern classic, a “phenomenology of friendship” in the words of the author.

Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years - Diarmaid MacCulloch
A wide-ranging, thorough-going history of the church (still on my list from last summer!).

The Butterfly’s Burden - Mahmoud Darwish
Poems in Arabic and English by the unofficial poet laureate of Palestine.

Yalla Nihki Arabi, Book Two - Omar Othman
Folk tales in Jerusalem colloquial Arabic.

Flour: Spectacular Recipes from Boston’s Flour Bakery and Café - Joanne Chang
The latest addition to my collection of cookbooks (my secret vice).

Eldridge Pendleton

The Hare with Amber Eyes - Edmund DeWaahl
DeWaahl, a descendant of a wealthy Jewish family of Viennese bankers, who were either killed, or scattered by the Holocaust, spends a year traveling across Europe delving into the past to uncover their story. It is a fascinating and beautifully written story of discovery.
True Resurrection - H.A. Williams, a monk of the Community of the Resurrection

In this deeply moving book Williams records his own experience of the ultimate Christian triumph, the divine transformation of despair into glory, of bankruptcy into limitless riches, of true wilderness into what Christians call resurrection. Resurrection is not limited to the hereafter, it can happen here and now.

True Wilderness - H.A. Williams, C.R.

This is a series of sermons of undeviating honesty about the human experience of Christian living, based on his personal experience.

Field of Compassion - Judy Cannato

A transforming vision of spirituality that examines the intricate connectedness of the physical and spiritual worlds, a phenomenon Cannato calls “the field of compassion.” This is exciting reading.

Pursuing the Mystery: Worship and Daily Life as Presences of God - George Guiver

Guiver believes we need to recover the element of mystery in liturgical worship and daily life. He offers a look at the development of Christian liturgy since its beginning and suggestions for developing corporate worship in the new century.

Tom Shaw

The Love of My Youth - Mary Gordon

She is my all time favorite contemporary author. This is her latest novel, set in Rome, wise and beautifully written.

The Arabs: A History - Eugene Rogan

A tome but worth reading to understand what is happening in the middle east.

On First Principles - Origen

Part of my ongoing study of third and fourth century theologians.

A Singular Woman - Janny Scott

A biography of President Obama’s mother, Ann Dunham. She was a courageous and unusual woman.

Curtis Almquist

In Pursuit of Silence - George Prochnik

Silence is a dwindling commodity in the western world, and is such a powerful channel for hearing, healing, and savoring.

Animals Make Us Human - Temple Grandin

Grandin, a scientist who is autistic, challenges traditional assumptions about animals, and offers fascinating, often counter-intuitive insight about their happiness and our own.

Christianity, the First Three Thousand Years - Diarmaid MacCulloch

This tome offers brilliant scholarship with the writing style of a good mystery about the stage set for Jesus and the ensuing millennia for his followers.
Cutting for Stone - Abraham Verghese  
This gripping novel about twin brothers born in Ethiopia from a secret love affair between a beautiful nun and brilliant surgeon is tragic, transfixing, and full of hope.

Abandonment to the Divine Providence - Jean Pierre de Caussade  
This 18th century spiritual classic (still in print), about the sacrament of the present moment, wants to be read slowly.

David Vryhof  
The Omnivore’s Dilemma - Michael Pollan  
Pollan’s thesis is that what we choose to eat and choose not to eat will determine the future of our planet.

Born to Run - Christopher McDougall  
McDougall visits the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico, a tribe of the world’s greatest distance runners, to learn their secrets. The Tarahumara are capable of running hundreds of miles without rest.

The Practice of Presence - Patty de Llosa  
This book explores how we can come alive to the present moment, drawing on wisdom derived from five spiritual paths.

The Gift of Thanks - Margaret Visser  
Anthropologist Margaret Visser explores the words, emotions and rituals of gratitude.

A Prayer for Owen Meany - John Irving  
One of my favorite novels, it makes me laugh and cry.

Kevin Hackett  
Forgiveness: Following Jesus into Radical Loving - Paula Huston  
A challenging take on a subject that is a constant challenge for me.

Warm Bread and Honey Cake: Home Baking from Around the World - Gaitri PAGRACH-CHANDRA  
A lavishly illustrated cookbook/encyclopedia of everything from daily bread to dessert. Yum.

Home: A Short History of Private Life - Bill Bryson  
A humorous and entertaining ramble through an ordinary home, answering questions like why do we have closets, why do some forks have three tines and others have four, and what is the difference between a sofa and a Chesterfield.

Cairo: The City Victorious - Max Rodenbeck  
A vibrant “biography” of one of the world’s oldest (5,000 years!) and most exciting cities.

Ardent Spirits: Leaving Home, Coming Back - Reynolds Price  
A poignant memoir of the early and college years of one of America’s great writers.
**David Allen**

*The Gift of Years: Growing Old Gracefully* - Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

I bought this book a year ago, but resisted it until this past winter after I had some health problems, and have found it very useful.

*The Red Door: An Inspector Ian Rutledge Mystery* - Charles Todd

When I was in Seminary about 55 years ago my spiritual director recommended good mysteries as “light spiritual reading” to help one avoid “Spiritual Indigestion.” I have read previous books by the same author (actually a mother and son team). They are Americans, but write with great accuracy about post WWI England and a Detective Inspector who has come through that war with the ghost of one of his enlisted men as his constant companion, frequently offering his own comments.

**Luke Ditewig**

*Genesis: The Story We Haven’t Heard* - Paul Borgman

With an English professor as guide, classic Bible stories find fuller meaning as part of a grand narrative.

*Reset: Iran, Turkey and America’s Future* - Stephen Kinzer

A thoughtful alternative approach to the Middle East with engaging historical summary and comparison.

*Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* - Richard J. Mouw

A call to live with both gentleness and conviction amid many with whom we strongly disagree and whom we often dislike.

*Stealing Fatima* - Frank X. Gaspar

A priest welcoming a stranger into his home sparks this non-murder mystery set on Cape Cod.
Update your contact details:
to update or remove your name from list
see postcard inside.