

Renewal Leave 2023

“What makes your heart sing?” was the question posed by the Lilly Grant Proposal document in fall of 2021. The pandemic was still surging strong and though St. Andrew’s was learning creative ways to continue on mission and in ministry, the idea of turning my attention toward thinking about this question seemed like another realm of reality.

But with the help of a dedicated and persistent Renewal Leave Committee, that question was engaged and the result is a Parish and Clergy Renewal experience titled, “Invoking Wholeness.

Wholeness: through Contemplation will involve a *7-day guided Ignatian silent retreat* at a nearby Retreat Center and serve as a centering and starting place for the following weeks. Centering prayer, examen and lectio and visio divina will be incorporated into this time along with walking the trails at the retreat center.

Wholeness: Connection through Pilgrimage to Japan. When asked, “What makes your heart sing?” I immediately thought of taking a *pilgrimage to Japan with my family!* A pilgrimage is a journey that brings us toward our true selves and God. It seeks transformation and encounters with the sacred. Journeying to places of significance in my history of growing up in Japan (*Tokyo, Kyoto, Otsu, and Kobe*) as well as places of sacred significance in Japanese culture and heritage (*Kumano Kodo, Hiroshima, Miyajima and Sapporo*), will invoke wholeness through the sacred encounters of connection with people, place, land, and culture.

Wholeness: Connection by Resting on the Land will offer a welcome opportunity to engage with the flora, fauna, forest, meadow, and field in a way that the rhythms of my regular life do not easily offer.

Wholeness: through Connection with Extended Family involves *gathering with extended family members in places near and far.* We will enjoy nature, cook and eat together, play games, tell stories, read, rest, and just be together.

Wholeness: through Connection with Call and Creative Practice. *Richmond Hill Retreat Center in Richmond, Virginia* is on land where people have been praying long before the convent that later became a retreat center, existed. It is a place of significance in my call to the Episcopal priesthood and will serve as a touchstone for engaging in creative practice with an artist and writer in Richmond as well as renewing long-time friendships, from the 25 years we spent in Richmond.

Wholeness: through Creativity. Zentangle is a meditative art practice that became a part of my creative practice during the Pandemic. A *Zentangle course* is offered online and will be incorporated into my time away from the parish, while at home and visiting with family. The possibility of being outside to learn and practice Zentangle makes my heart sing!

I know that I will miss St. Andrew’s and it will be hard to disengage from the connection with the parish but my prayer is that going away for a season and “invoking wholeness” through that which is named above, will offer the parish a renewed and rested Rector for the next season of mission and ministry.