



Beyond the Pews Vestry Papers May 2022

How the Pandemic Cured my ASA Obsession

By Alissa Newton

This used to be my ritual every Sunday after worship: Finish chatting with congregants at coffee hour, walk back to the office, pick up the slip from the greeters with that service's attendance numbers and write that number in the red record book. I often had my own guess as to what the number would be. The little hit of adrenaline that came when it was larger than the week before always felt good. Of course the reverse was also true. On sparsely attended days, I hated writing down that number.

My name is Alissa, and I used to be obsessed with Average Sunday Attendance, or as we professional church nerds call it, ASA. I am a parish priest and congregational development consultant. Working with congregations is a passion of mine, one I live out through my work as Canon for Congregational Development in my diocese, through working with hundreds of congregations in my years of directing and training for the College for Congregational Development and through side gigs with individual congregations. "Numbers never tell the whole story," I am fond of saying to my clients, CCD participants and my own Bishop's Committee. "But they do tell part of it. The numbers aren't nothing!" I am here to confess to you that before March of 2020, I lived like the numbers were everything.

Following the numbers

I have served as vicar of St. Columba's in Kent, Washington for the past eight years. Prior to March 2020 I loved tracking my congregation's attendance patterns so much that I kept my own spreadsheet. It included notes about how many kids were in attendance and how many newcomers had showed up. I scanned for patterns and compared Sundays year to year to discover trends. Over the years I felt as if my obsessive attention was rewarded. For the most part, before the pandemic, St. Columba's numbers grew. Summers were always lighter, but every summer had higher attendance than the last.

There was the time it snowed on Christmas Eve and cut our numbers in half, but that was extraordinary. Anyway, I told myself, Christmas Eve isn't a Sunday. About three years in, our ASA leveled off. I couldn't sleep, sure that the dip in numbers meant all the energy, joy and vitality I cherished in my congregation was about to crash to an end. My mentor told me to relax. "Look," she said, "sometimes a parish needs to spend a couple of months in their pajamas. It can't be grow-grow-grow all the time."

She was right. The numbers started going up again, my congregation kept being its lovely self, and I started sleeping through the night.

Then March 2020 hit. I remember the last week that people were in church. We had decided to get a jump on things, knowing that some of our folks were staying home. I had a parishioner streaming the service to Facebook, using my cell phone. Attendance was sparse – down by a third from where we'd been trending. Then the next week they were all gone.

We chose to livestream our Sunday service each week with a small and dedicated team. If you were to look at our record book you would see that for a long time I kept writing in numbers. Seven. Seven. Seven. I engaged in diocesan conversations with other clergy, trying to figure out what to track. Was it live views only? Clicks? Comments? That eyeball thing that comes up on Facebook when you are officially viewing?

None of it was the same. Sometime in the fall of 2020, we just stopped writing it down.

After the shock of preaching to a camera in a mostly empty room wore off, grief set in. It wasn't all about the numbers. But I realized that the numbers had come to be the primary way in which I measured the vitality of my congregation. I knew that we were still a church, still vital, still connected and caring for each other, because the numbers went up. Parish ministry is charged with anxiety and uncertainty in the best of times, and I have never had the experience of being a parish priest in the best of times. I came to rely on the numbers as an anchor in the choppy sea of pastoring during this weird and wild season in the mainline church. Without them I was adrift.

Lag and lead

In the world of congregational development there are lots of ways to measure development and growth. Some of these metrics are “lag” metrics and others are “lead” metrics.¹ Lag metrics are concrete measurements that show you something true about the past: How many people attended; what percentage of pledges were paid; how many years the HVAC system lasted before it busted and couldn't be put back together again. Lead metrics are the things that you do to create the lag metrics, and they can be harder to figure out. The lead metric for a HVAC that lasts 35 years instead of 25 years might be professional maintenance, done regularly. The lead metrics on paid pledges might be a stewardship season that is firmly connected to spirituality, or instituting a culture of year round stewardship and financial transparency or simply introducing pledge cards for the first time.

When it comes to attendance the lead metrics seem to vary widely from congregation to congregation, depending on that particular faith community's context, culture, history and countless other variables. You can generate basic questions like: *Is your building inviting? Do your congregants know how to talk about the transforming power of God they experience in church? Does your website accurately reflect the feel and ethos of your place?* The answers to these questions and others are the lead metrics that produce attendance, at least in part. But there are other, less controllable dynamics also at play – things like who is moving in and out of your neighborhood, or whether or not there is a global pandemic.

The problem with lag metrics is that they can't predict the future and rarely prepare you for it. The problem with lead metrics, at least for me, was that they didn't feel concrete, at least until the pandemic took my favorite lag metric away.

The most important metric

As a bit of fun during the 2021 Epiphany season, St. Columba's parishioners decided to "flamingo" each other. We bought four flocks of plastic pink flamingoes and stuck them in four different congregant's lawns, with instructions to take pictures and then go secretly flamingo another parishioner.

Unsuspecting members of our community would awaken or come home to bright pink birds in the midst of the dark grey Pacific Northwest winter. Folks loved it. Some created a flamingo box for apartment dwellers who didn't have a lawn. Elders did it and took selfies, families with kids did it and posted videos. Many pets were roped in to pose for pictures. My congregation loved this way of having fun and staying connected while still safely distanced. It was a lead metric – an opportunity for fun and connection that was seized upon by the whole community.

I watched the selfies and sneak attack flamingo videos pour in and realized I'd been wrong about which metric mattered most. It wasn't how many people watched online worship, or how many returned in person once that was possible again. It was never the number that got written down in the book. The most important metric was how my people loved each other.

Before the pandemic that love was most visible when we were together, a thing that happened most often on Sunday mornings. During the pandemic we found other ways to connect and love on each other – buddy groups that checked in regularly, zoom baby showers, younger parishioners taking over the food bank when it wasn't safe for retirees to do it, drive up radio church in the parking lot on Christmas Eve. And the flamingos, of course. These lead metrics, which had been so difficult for me to grasp and see before the pandemic were now all we had. It was more than enough.

We've been back to worshipping inside on Sunday mornings for almost a year now. I did start writing numbers in the book again. The numbers aren't nothing, but I am much more deeply aware that those numbers are a representation of the deep connection, love and hope that is birthed and renewed in my congregation. They are not the only representation, however. And it is the love, not the number, that needs to be nurtured.

The pandemic took so many things from me as a pastor and priest. I could list them, but if you're reading this, you are a congregational leader and you know. You took those hits, too. But here is the gift this awful time of loneliness and distance has given me: I can see past the numbers now. I'm free to see the people and the love: The Body of Christ in action.

¹ For a deeper discussion of this metric dynamic, see the book "Faithful Metrics" by Peggy Brooks.

The Reverend Canon Alissa Newton is the Vicar of St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Kent, Washington, Canon for Congregational Development in the Diocese of Olympia, and the co-author of Vital Christian Community: Twelve Characteristics of Healthy Congregations, set to be released by Church Publishing this fall.

Resources:

- [Beyond Average Sunday Attendance \(ASA\)](#), by Tim Schenck, an ECF Vital Practices blog, October 18, 2013

- [Beyond ASA](#), by Alan Bentrup, an ECF Vital Practices blog, February 26, 2019
- [Looking to the Future: Possible Trends that May Affect the Church](#), by Robert B. Townes, IV, an ECF Vital Practices blog, March 15, 2022
- [Hybrid Church - A Way Forward for Church Leaders](#), by Tim Schenck, Vestry Papers, January 2022

Church By The Pond

By Nancy Jacobs

In June 2011, Church By The Pond began its ministry to the people of Hartford, Connecticut, in Bushnell Park. An outgrowth of Christ Cathedral's Church Street Eats, a cooperative program that provides food and clothing to those in need, this congregation has gathered in the park to pray through heat, rain, snow and even a world-wide pandemic. Many in our congregation are uncomfortable with formal church settings. Some need a smaller community gathered in prayer. Quite a few of our lay leaders and steadiest congregants would be overwhelmed in a traditional church setting.

At Church By The Pond they experience the freedom to pray, to participate, to join others and hear God's word on their own terms. Over the years we have been blessed to be led by nearly 40 pastors, priests and bishops from churches nearby and from as far away as Aberdeen and Orkney, Scotland! Our congregants appreciate the respect and loving kindness they receive from both our infrequent and frequent clergy. One day a priest may welcome the congregation with "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," while another shares the Lord's Prayer in Spanish. The gospel reflections relate to those struggling in Hartford in this time.

Our congregants come from a wide array of situations. Some are unhoused, some have experienced homelessness, some have struggled with interpersonal relationships, some with domestic abuse and with substance abuse. We have many who spend too much time alone and cherish being part of a church community. Some of us are simply happy to participate in an extra day of prayer in a lovely park setting.

Throughout the years, we have heard personal stories of growth, forgiveness and struggle. We have been blessed many times with the good news that one of our unhoused congregants has found housing. It is a gift to know that they will not spend another night in danger and in the cold or heat. We invite them to return to us, as they are our congregation wherever they reside. Most often, if their housing is a bus ride away, they do return. We have also celebrated the unemployed who have found work. We have welcomed those released from prison. We have helped some connect with agencies that will better serve their needs. Once people are housed, we connect them with food pantries in their town or city.

Our congregants join together in good times and bad. We have celebrated their milestones in sobriety, and we have attended memorial services and shared prayers for those we have lost. Several stay in the local loop and offer information about special dinners, free bicycle events, clothing giveaways, and other events that serve our community.

When a young woman, struggling early in her pregnancy and harassed by her abusive ex-husband joined us, we prayed with her and helped her make the decision to leave Connecticut. She returned home, where she was welcomed by her mother. Although we miss her, we continue to pray for her and her daughter. On another occasion, a congregant had an urgent request for a train to take him to an

approved placement in a rehab facility. The cathedral's dean, Miguelina Howell, provided the train ticket, and he is on the road toward healthy living.

And yet, in the midst of such hardships, we have heard from those who are struggling to pray – not for themselves, but for victims of hurricanes, of gun violence, of war. We have given thanks for improved health, for jobs, for new homes, for friends and families, for reconciliation with loved ones, and we have prayed for the families of those we have lost.

I began praying steadily and serving as a lay leader at Church By The Pond in 2014. Drawn in by a sense of peace in the midst of chaos in the busy park, by the fellowship amongst the congregants and the ministry of priests from throughout the state, I quickly saw that this community was special. I have always felt blessed to serve in this ministry.

That blessing was multiplied as COVID altered our way of life and our way of sharing prayer. With serious precautions we were able to safely gather with God's people in beautiful Bushnell Park. As time went on, we transitioned from a brief prayer before lunch to a lengthier service of prayer without Holy Communion. Throughout the pandemic we prayed for our frontline workers, particularly in the health care fields.

As 2021 began, we celebrated the improvements in our way of life and shared our vaccine status. We were able to connect or schedule members of our group to vaccine clinics in Hartford and frequently celebrated those who had received the vaccine. Efforts throughout our state have helped lead to our full celebration of Holy Eucharist at this point in time. At a time when most church doors remained closed, Church By The Pond's lack of doors has proved to be a true blessing.

***Nancy Jacobs** is a life-long Episcopalian and member of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Connecticut, where she was baptized and participated in Sunday school and youth groups. After completing college, she taught junior high school and high school social studies in New Hampshire for 12 years, returning to Connecticut to work alongside her parents in a family-owned retail and contracting paint business. When the business closed in 2007, she retired and has since served as a volunteer at Christ Church Cathedral, Hands On Hartford, The Bushnell Center for Performing Arts, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford and Trinity Academy, Hartford. During the pandemic she has also supported nonpartisan voting rights and various political candidates. She enjoys reading, tennis and the theater, as well as traveling with friends, which she hopes to resume as soon as possible.*

Resources:

- [Neighbor to Neighbor](#), by Margaret Tjimos Goldberg, Bobbi Eggers and Sue Bodson, Vestry Papers, March 2020
- [What could being church look like, post COVID-19?](#), by Chantal McKinney, Vestry Papers, March 2020
- [Jesus Was Right There, in the Bounce House](#), by Bob Leopold, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 3, 2013
- [Surfing and Spirituality](#), by Scott Claassen, Vestry Papers, March 2020

Church by the Pond – Iglesia Junto a la Laguna

Por Nancy Jacobs

En junio de 2011, Church By The Pond comenzó su ministerio para la gente de Hartford, Connecticut, en Bushnell Park. Esta feligresía, que es una consecuencia de Church Street Eats de la Catedral de Cristo, un programa cooperativo que proporciona alimentos y ropa a los necesitados, se ha reunido en el parque para rezar independientemente del calor, la lluvia, la nieve e incluso una pandemia mundial. Muchos en nuestra feligresía se sienten incómodos con los entornos eclesiásticos formales. Algunos necesitan una comunidad más pequeña reunida en oración. Muchos de nuestros líderes laicos y feligreses más estables se sentirían abrumados en un entorno eclesiástico tradicional.

En Church By The Pond experimentan la libertad de rezar, de participar, de unirse a otros y de oír la palabra de Dios en sus propios términos. A lo largo de los años hemos tenido la bendición de ser dirigidos por casi 40 pastores, sacerdotes y obispos de iglesias cercanas y de lugares tan lejanos como Aberdeen y Orkney, Escocia. Nuestros feligreses aprecian el respeto y la amabilidad que reciben tanto de nuestro clero infrecuente como del frecuente. Un día un sacerdote puede dar la bienvenida a la feligresía con "Oh Come All Ye Faithful (Oh, venid todos los fieles)", mientras que otro comparte el Padrenuestro en español. Las reflexiones del Evangelio se refieren a los que luchan en Hartford en estos tiempos.

Nuestros feligreses proceden de una gran variedad de situaciones. Algunos están sin techo, otros han experimentado la falta de hogar, otros han luchado con relaciones interpersonales, otros con el maltrato intrafamiliar y con el abuso de sustancias. Tenemos muchos que pasan demasiado tiempo solos y aprecian formar parte de una comunidad eclesial. Algunos simplemente se alegran de participar en un día más de oración en medio de un parque hermoso.

A lo largo de los años, hemos oído historias personales de crecimiento, perdón y lucha. Hemos sido bendecidos muchas veces con la buena nueva de que uno de nuestros feligreses sin vivienda encontró una. Es un don saber que no pasarán otra noche en peligro y con frío o calor. Les invitamos a que vuelvan con nosotros, ya que son nuestra feligresía dondequiera que residan. La mayoría de las veces, si su vivienda está a un viaje en autobús, regresan. También hemos celebrado a los desempleados que encontraron trabajo. Acogimos a los que salieron de la cárcel. Ayudamos a algunos a ponerse en contacto con las agencias que mejor atenderán sus necesidades. Una vez que las personas están alojadas, las ponemos en contacto con las despensas de alimentos de su pueblo o ciudad.

Nuestros feligreses se unen en los buenos y en los malos momentos. Hemos celebrado sus hitos de sobriedad y asistido a servicios funerarios, y hemos compartido oraciones por aquellos que hemos perdido. Varios permanecen en el circuito local y ofrecen información sobre cenas especiales, eventos de bicicletas gratuitas, regalos de ropa y otros eventos que sirven a nuestra comunidad.

Cuando una mujer joven, con problemas al principio de su embarazo y acosada por su ex marido que la maltrataba se unió a nosotros, rezamos con ella y la ayudamos a tomar la decisión de irse de

Connecticut. Regresó a su casa, donde fue acogida por su madre. Aunque la echamos de menos, seguimos rezando por ella y por su hija. En otra ocasión, un feligrés tenía una petición urgente de un tren que lo llevara a un centro de rehabilitación aprobado. La decana de la catedral, Miguelina Howell, le proporcionó el billete de tren, y ya está en el camino hacia una vida sana.

Y sin embargo, en medio de tales dificultades, hemos oído a quienes se esfuerzan por rezar, no por ellos mismos, sino por las víctimas de los huracanes, de la violencia armada, de la guerra. Hemos dado gracias por la mejora de la salud, por los puestos de trabajo, por los nuevos hogares, por los amigos y las familias, por la reconciliación con los seres queridos, y hemos rezado por las familias de los que hemos perdido.

Empecé a rezar de forma constante y a servir como líder laica en Church By The Pond en 2014. Atraída por una sensación de paz en medio del caos del parque muy concurrido, por el compañerismo entre los feligreses y por el ministerio de los sacerdotes de todo el estado, rápidamente vi que esta comunidad era especial. Siempre me he sentido bendecida por servir en este ministerio.

Esa bendición se multiplicó cuando la COVID alteró nuestra forma de vida y nuestra manera de compartir la oración. Con serias precauciones pudimos reunirnos de forma segura con el pueblo de Dios en el hermoso parque Bushnell. Con el paso del tiempo, pasamos de una breve oración antes de la comida a un servicio más largo de oración sin la Sagrada Comunión. A lo largo de la pandemia, rezamos por nuestros trabajadores de primera línea, especialmente en el ámbito de la atención sanitaria.

Al comenzar el año 2021, celebramos las mejoras en nuestro modo de vida y compartimos nuestro estado de vacunación. Pudimos conectar o programar a los miembros de nuestro grupo a las clínicas de vacunación en Hartford y celebramos con frecuencia a los que habían recibido la vacuna. Los esfuerzos realizados en todo nuestro estado han contribuido a que celebremos plenamente la Santa Eucaristía en este momento. En una época en la que la mayoría de las puertas de las iglesias permanecían cerradas, la falta de puertas de Church By The Pond demostró ser una verdadera bendición.

Nancy Jacobs ha sido episcopal de toda su vida y miembro de la Catedral de la Iglesia de Cristo en Hartford, Connecticut, donde fue bautizada y participó en la escuela dominical y en los grupos de jóvenes. Después de terminar la universidad, fue profesora de estudios sociales de secundaria en New Hampshire durante 12 años y regresó a Connecticut para trabajar junto a sus padres en un negocio familiar de venta de pinturas al por menor y de contratación. Cuando el negocio cerró en 2007, se jubiló y desde entonces ha trabajado como voluntaria en la Catedral de la Iglesia de Cristo, en Hands On Hartford, en el Centro Bushnell de Artes Dramáticas, en los Voluntarios de Alfabetización del Gran Hartford y en la Academia Trinity de Hartford. Durante la pandemia también apoyó el derecho al voto no partidista y a varios candidatos políticos. Disfrutó de la lectura, el tenis y el teatro, así como de los viajes con amigos, que espera retomar lo antes posible.

Recursos:

- [El amor incondicional de Dios](#), por Alex Montes-Vela, Vestry Papers, julio de 2015

- [En la Calle con el Gran Jesús](#), por Anna Olson, un blog de ECF Vital Practices, 1 octubre 2013
- [Oración y acción en una pandemia](#), por Yesenia (Jessie) Alejandro, Vestry Papers, septiembre de 2020

Church Without Walls

By Janet Waggoner

“Church without walls” isn’t a theoretical discussion in our diocese. It’s our reality.

In my mind, the notion of “church without walls” has two meanings. The first, and most important, is that of a church where all are welcome, where there is no impediment to the full participation of any/all people. The second meaning is a church that is not hemmed in by any preconceived notions about what church “is” or what church “should be.”

Over the past 12 years, only three of the congregations of the Episcopal Church in North Texas (formerly the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth) have continuously had possession of and worshipped in a church building. All the other congregations of our diocese have been dispossessed of land, buildings and funds. And while these congregations’ worship spaces might have changed, they missed not a beat in their outreach and mission work.

Here’s what happened. In November 2008, the then bishop and many diocesan leaders left the Episcopal Church but claimed Episcopal Church property – more than \$100 million worth of property. In early 2009, a lawsuit was filed to regain Episcopal Church property, litigation that stretched out for 12 long years.

At that time, Episcopalians from 14 congregations were forced out of their church homes and had to find new places to worship. Over time, all found new places to worship – some rented space, others bought or built a building.

As the Episcopal remnant regathered itself, elected a bishop and began rebuilding the diocese, a collective decision soon emerged to focus on God’s love and welcome for all. A determination to thrive, not just survive, and to focus on what we had to give to others, rather than dwell on what we had lost, was given birth by increasingly confident lay leaders and then nurtured by clergy and a succession of provisional bishops.

In February 2021, the Supreme Court of the United States declined to hear our appeal, which meant the decision of the Texas Supreme Court became final. The resources of the diocese and the congregations were awarded to the deposed Episcopal bishop and his followers in the Anglican Church of North America.

This meant six more of our congregations were newly dispossessed of their buildings, funds and possessions.

These new losses have been exceedingly difficult. But what faithful Episcopalians learned in 2008 and relearned in 2021 is saving us once again – the best way to deal with such enormous losses is to turn toward love and away from anger and loss, to turn toward our neighbors, our communities and focus on what we have, not the material things we have lost.

Make no mistake, buildings can be useful. (When the Texas sun brings the temperature to 95 degrees before 10:00 am Sunday worship, it's helpful to have air conditioning, too!) And I understand the passionate connection many of us have to our church buildings. Friends and family members – sometimes multiple generations of family members – have been baptized, confirmed, married and buried, surrounded by stone and wood and stained glass. In our experience of these sacraments, time and place become interwoven with eternity. Every time we set foot in the place where transformation happened, we feel transformed again. Our senses come alive, responding to memory and anticipating possibility.

The buildings which have housed our congregations did not come with a sense of the sacred built in. What sanctifies any space is regular encounter with the presence and power of our loving, liberating, life-giving God.

Being forced out of their buildings has given congregations the opportunity to discern what kind of buildings they need *now* for the ministries to which they are currently called. Some congregations have built or purchased a church building that looks quite traditional and is used primarily for worship. Other congregations are worshipping in a store-front, college classroom or school chapel. Still other congregations are nesting in with a congregation of another denomination, using their facilities on a temporary or more permanent basis. And in every case, the worship itself – no matter what building it takes place in – forms and feeds the love out of which their successful and varied outreach ministries grow.

Our congregations have continued the mission and ministries to which they are called without missing a beat. The 4Saints Episcopal Food Pantry, a joint ministry of five of our congregations, continued serving clients in the neighborhood without missing a day of service. All Saints', Fort Worth, shifted the site of their Sunday worship services to a local Episcopal school without missing a Sunday. St. Christopher, Fort Worth, ramped up their ongoing Laundry Love ministry, and St. Mary's, Hillsboro, did the same with their food ministry to local schools.

New people continue to find us, drawn by the consistent message of unconditional love – a very countercultural message in this part of the world, dominated by messages of judgment and exclusion.

This, then, is what has allowed the congregations and ministries of the Episcopal Church in North Texas to thrive in spite of the loss of beloved buildings – an understanding that the church is primarily constructed of relationships, not bricks and mortar, that *the church is the people*.

When the Spirit of God is at work among us and God's people are present, we have everything we need: we *are* the Church.

The Rev. Dr. Janet Waggoner is Canon to the Ordinary in the Episcopal Church in North Texas. She served on the Task Force for Church Planting and Congregational Redevelopment from 2015-2018 and as its Chair from 2018-2021. She enjoys quilting, hiking, writing and photography; she is the mother of two teenagers.

Resources:

- [The Art of Organizing](#), by Francisco Garcia, Vestry Papers, March 2020
- [The Church Goes to Virtual Burning Man](#), by Brian Baker, Vestry Papers, March 2021
- [A New Gathering for Asian Pacific American Spirituality](#), by Yein Kim, Vestry Papers, March 2021
- [Bible & Brew](#), by Landon Moore, Vestry Papers, March 2021

The Ultimate 'Online' Church

By Sean Steele

At the end of February, a group of 23 people, lay and ordained, gathered together for what was perhaps the first ever Anglican liturgy inside the Metaverse. A collaboration between [TryTank](#) and [St. Isidore Episcopal Church](#) in Spring, Texas, this missional community, named Web3 Abbey, met for five consecutive Mondays. Its carefully curated online liturgy included music, prayer, scripture reading and discussion, a confession and benediction.

The community then gathered to learn, share stories and refine the communal experience. In the vlog below, the Rev. Sean Steele takes us on a guided tour of Web3 Abbey's online worship experience and shares insight into the benefits and the challenges of building a community in a virtual world.

Web3 Abbey begins gathering again on a regular basis starting this month. If you are interested in learning more or participating in Web3 Abbey, please send an email to web3abbey@gmail.com.

[Watch the vlog here.](#)

The Rev. Sean Steele is Vicar and founding Church Planter of St. Isidore Episcopal, a 5-year-old community in Spring, Texas. Sean is always on the lookout for people left out by how we traditionally gather as Church. He received a BBA-Finance from the University of Texas (2001), an MA in Theology from Creighton University (2005), an MDiv from The Seminary of the Southwest (2012), and is a fully trained Mediator (2007), Licensed Daring Way Facilitator (2014) and ICF Coach (2018). Sean and his wife Rebecca have been together for almost 20 years, and they have three children – Margo, Sebastian, and Eleanor – and a Labradoodle named Indiana Jones. Sean loves all things related to athletics, particularly basketball, and is an avid Longhorn fan.

Resources:

-
- [The Church Goes to Virtual Burning Man](#), by Brian Baker, Vestry Papers, March 2021
 - [Annual Meetings Go Virtual](#), by Greg Syler, Vestry Papers, January 2021
 - [Hybrid Church - A Way Forward for Church Leaders](#), by Tim Schenck, Vestry Papers, January 2022
 - [Pandemic Learnings](#), by Audra Abt, Vestry Papers, May 2021