

On the mind of Vestry Member Eleanor Flach...

Sometimes, the hardest part of participating in an Outreach program is just showing up! After a recent CHIPS (Children of Incarcerated Parents) event at Incarnation, Diana Archer of the Osborne Association inspired me to volunteer for a bus program that Osborne and the NY State Department of Corrections (DOC) were coordinating to facilitate visits of family members to their loved ones incarcerated in the State prison system. The program provides free, comfortable transportation, with visitor manifests submitted to DOC in advance to streamline and facilitate the visitation process.

Initially the call for volunteers was to act as “Greeters” at the Brooklyn and the Bronx bus departure locations – being a welcoming face to check in the people who had signed up for the trip, verifying identification and conducting a casual inspection of clothing to ensure compliance with DOC requirements. It was anticipated that Greeters could ultimately “graduate” to riding the buses with the families... now on hold because there are not enough seats on the buses due to popularity of the program. As a former Public Defender and a CHIP volunteer, the opportunity to be part of this program was a blessing!

Being accepted as a Greeter was no simple matter. The position required Zoom training, a thorough background check, and a Certificate of Completion of an online Sexual Harassment training program. Subsequently, Osborne informed me of my acceptance into the program.

THEN I received a volunteer schedule...I could be in Brooklyn at 4:45 a.m. for a 5:00 a.m. bus loading OR I could go to Brooklyn on a Friday or Saturday at 9:00 p.m. for a 10:00 p.m. bus departure for an overnight trip to upstate prisons! I am neither an early morning nor a late evening person...but I had signed on. To date, I have volunteered once for each shift.

On a dark and cold morning, when my alarm went off at 3:45 a.m. to meet an Uber, I seriously questioned myself and my future commitment to the program. But the ride down the FDR and over the Brooklyn Bridge was serene and beautiful. When the Uber arrived on Court Street, the sweet driver was hesitant to leave me on a dark, deserted street and kept his car running until I told him that there was a man setting up a coffee cart in the park across the street. At 5:00 a.m. another volunteer (James from Chelsea) arrived at the same time that I received a text from the Osborne employee (coming via Uber from Yonkers) that she would be late and could we please start checking in the people who had started to arrive. James and I had a list and an idea of what we were to do. IDs were verified; birth certificates were reviewed; and no one had prohibited clothing. The sleepy children and their caregivers happily boarded the bus. Jessica from Osborne, a cheerful future Yonkers police officer, arrived for a predeparture meeting with her volunteers and boarded the bus for the ride to the Bronx pick up location. James volunteered to take my train with me to the east side to make sure that I arrived home safely. The trip I had so dreaded at 3:45 a.m. had become a joyful and spiritually fulfilling experience.

Almost as hard as the 3:45 a.m. wake-up call was the alarm to remind me to leave at 8:15 p.m. this past Friday for the subway to Brooklyn, knowing that I would not be home before 10:30 p.m. Once again James and I were the two volunteers and, while waiting for Jessica and the attendees, we exchanged a few life stories (our mothers grew up in the same New England town). Jessica shared with us her post college plans in between bus rider check-ins. The women on the evening bus were mostly young and there were no children. We don't discuss who they are visiting or other personal matters unless the information is volunteered. The mood was generally upbeat and cheerful...one young woman was telling me how much better it was to take a comfortable free bus with a bathroom and rest stops in lieu of the paid van she had used in the past. Another woman was upset that the two drivers kept the first two seats empty. A few years ago, the bus she had been riding upstate had flipped over causing serious injuries. She had a psychological need to sit where she could watch the road. All exhibited proper IDs and no one was wearing logos or other prohibited items. The bus left on time with only one no-show, and James and I headed for our respective trains. Once again, my initial reluctance was replaced by joy and gratitude.

I am signed up for the Friday night shift this week. When the morning is lighter and I don't feel that I need an Uber I will take the morning shift. Showing up will continue to be hard...but being there will be rewarding.

Eleanor

BIBLE STUDY

Sunday, May 3, 10:00 to 10:40 a.m. Seminarian Romy John Abraham begins a three-part series on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. This Pauline epistle sets out a theological vision of God's plan to unite all creation in Christ and exhorts the church to embody that unity through reconciliation across ethnic boundaries and holy conduct in everyday relationships. Please join us in learning about Paul's practical wisdom for our lives today.

DALTON CHORALE SPRING CONCERT

Tuesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m. The Dalton Chorale performs Duruflé's Requiem, plus works by Pärt and Lauridsen. The Dalton Chorale is a mixed choir of some fifty voices, founded in New York in 1991 to give members the opportunity to sing significant sacred and secular music. Pieces are by well-known and less well-known composers, from the 17th century to the present day. Originally drawn from alumni, parents, and faculty from Dalton School, the members of the Chorale are now a diverse ensemble of serious amateurs who grow in ability under the excellent musical direction of Claudia Dumschat, Music Director at Church of the Transfiguration. Tickets are \$35 at the door or \$30 in advance. Go to daltonchorale.org to purchase yours and learn more.

SUMMER BOOK READ

Sundays, June 7 – 28, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. The Rev. Adrian Dannhauser will lead a four-part book study on *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* by the Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, Bishop of Washington. Bishop Budde drew nationwide attention after addressing President Trump in her sermon during the inaugural prayer service at the National Cathedral in DC last year.

We are happy to offer a separate Zoom version of this book study provided there is sufficient interest. Email Adrian at adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org if you would like to participate, and she will work to find a day and time that works for most.

SPRING STEWARDSHIP – GIVING FOR GOD'S HOLY PURPOSES

Jesus called disciples to follow him, to learn from him, and to work alongside him for God's holy purposes. Together they bore witness to God's reign of justice, mercy and peace, making manifest in tangible ways God's light and love. Do you have a practice of regular giving for the spread of God's kingdom?

To date, **60** households have pledged to give a total of **\$248,922** in 2026. We invite you to join them and help us reach our goal of \$275,000. Fill out a Commitment Card at the back of the church or pledge online by scanning the QR code below.



Let's deepen our journey together with Jesus as we move into Eastertide. Thank you for your commitment to the life we share in Christ.

Please note that any recurring online gifts made in 2025 do not roll over and must be set up anew in 2026. Go to churchoftheincarnation.org/donate to set up your recurring donation today.

EVERY WEEK AT INCARNATION

Sunday Bible Study: Bible Study is held in the Parish House from 10:00 to 10:40 a.m.

Sunday School for Children: During the 11:00 a.m. service, children ages 3 to 9 (pre-K through 4th grade) depart the service with their teacher for Sunday School in the Parish House. Learn more about Family Ministries at Incarnation, including offerings for older children, on the church website.

Wednesday Holy Eucharist: Join us each Wednesday at 12:15 p.m. for this Rite I spoken service of Holy Eucharist, which includes a brief homily, organ music, and healing prayer with holy oil.

Thursday Candlelight Communion: Join us each Thursday at 6:15 p.m. for Candlelight Communion, a service of Holy Eucharist that incorporates chant and silence as well as elements of contemporary worship. This service is informal and contemplative, with music led by a cantor and a brief reflection by one of the clergy. You can also stream this service at [youtube.com/channeloftheincarnation](https://www.youtube.com/channeloftheincarnation).

Daily Office: Services of Morning Prayer and Compline are held via Zoom. To view the weekly schedule, go to [churchoftheincarnation.org/worship](https://www.churchoftheincarnation.org/worship).