

Candidates for Vestry Election

to be held at the All Souls Parish Annual Meeting, February 5, 2012



Dan Acland

I started attending All Souls in the fall of 2002, the same time I started grad school at Cal. My arrival at All Souls coincided with my matriculation not because Cal had brought me to Berkeley from far away (that happened as an undergrad), but because the stress of going back to school after a decade of running my own business, combined with a rather traumatic adventure in not getting what I wanted in love—again—had brought me to my knees. All Souls lifted me up and slowly, slowly, slowly taught me a spiritual way of life that feeds me and fills me.

Seven years later I had a master's degree in Public Policy, a PhD in Economics, and a little bit more free time. I joined the Altar Guild. My life in the sacristy, helping with what I call "gilding the altar", has begun to show me what "church family" can really mean. I also really like the fact that it all happens out of sight. Those of you who remember me announcing the new recycling program by interrupting Phil (his idea) in the role of a Marine drill sergeant, may or may not be surprised to know that it is a blessed relief for me to be offstage sometimes.

I am now working at Cal, teaching in the two departments from which I hold degrees, and as my new job begins to settle down (fingers crossed) I have tried to discern how to participate more fully in the life of our Church. I have stepped into the role of acolyte trainer, in which I have thus far received more training than I've given. And now comes the opportunity to run for the Vestry. I was deeply moved when a member of the nominating committee told me that I had been approached not because of my academic training, but because they thought I might bring a spiritual perspective to Vestry discussions. If elected, I might succeed or fail at bringing a spiritual perspective, but I know that I cannot fail to be enormously enriched by the opportunity to try.



Jim Armstrong

In 2008, as Janet and I were preparing to move from Massachusetts to California, one of our first concerns was to find a new Episcopal parish in or near our new home in Oakland. An internet search led us to the All Souls website, describing an enticing variety of activities that we thought could be a good fit for us. Janet moved here that summer; I joined her in September after finishing a summer of work on Cape Cod. My first Sunday at All Souls happened to be Fr Phil's first Sunday as Rector. What an introduction! The energy, warmth, and enthusiasm of the day caught us up immediately, but what sealed the deal was seeing the procession of kids at the Peace. That's when we knew that we had found the parish of our dreams.

Since that initial Eucharist both Janet and I have gotten deeply involved in the life of All Souls. For me, this has included the Choir and the "Music at All Souls" concerts, the Wednesday Chapel Eucharist, Spaghetti Again, appointment to the Vestry's Small Groups Task Force, service as a Stephen Minister, and most recently election as a parish representative to the Alameda Deanery and delegate to the Diocesan Convention. I have come to appreciate more and more the fascinating mix of people who come here, the rich variety of our liturgies, the superb sermons preached by Phil and other clergy, and above all the inclusiveness that marks everything we do. As an openly gay man, a devoted spouse, and the proud grandfather of nine children, I have felt accepted and loved beyond measure.

I'm a (somewhat) retired musician, serving on the faculties of Cornell University, Connecticut College, and Colby College before becoming Director of Music and Organist at Christ Church, Cambridge, MA. Over the years I've taught music history, administered the affairs of college music departments and church music programs, managed concert series, recruited professional associates, and helped plan and execute major construction projects at the institutions where I've worked. I know the Episcopal Church from the inside out, and I've served three times on parish discernment committees. My current musical activities include frequent substitute gigs in a variety of churches, playing recitals, and serving in various capacities on the board of the San Francisco Chapter, American Guild of Organists. Other interests include local history and genealogy, liberal politics, LGBT rights, fine arts, and all forms of classical music. It's an honor to be asked to stand for election to the Vestry this year, and I would love to be involved in any way in helping the parish realize our common vision of the future.



Nancy Austin

In the late 1990s, I visited All Souls and recognized the spiritual home that had eluded me since I left the Lutheran church as a teenager. In this community, I found an unconditional welcome, a diversity of people and ideas, and open-minded inquiry into spiritual belief and faith.

Over the years, my involvement here has included service on the communications committee, vestry (2001-03) including junior and senior warden positions, building committee for the remodel of the sanctuary and courtyard, search committee (2007-08) that brought Fr. Phil to All Souls, finance, stewardship, vocations, and Alameda deanery.

Throughout, I have participated in worship as a lay Eucharistic minister and greeter. In the past year, I particularly valued the opportunity to partner with Gillian Sweeney in with the Confirm Not Conform program and to be part of a discernment committee for a seminarian. For a number of years, I met monthly with a small group of All Souls women for spiritual inquiry and fellowship, an experience that deepened my understanding of prayer and how Christian faith is manifest in the lives of others.

These many ways of participating in the community have enriched my relationships to others, here and outside of the church. My tendency is toward contemplation but every kind of service here has brought with it a rich combination of giving and learning.

The changes in leadership and refocusing of mission that I have witnessed at All Souls have kept this community vibrant and flourishing. The current growth in families speaks to an emphasis on looking to the future and shaping the church not only to for those present, but for those who will come next. The purchase of the priory building presents an important opportunity for our parish to further discern our mission and the best use of that property. Will it best serve those who are here, those who will come later, or those who will never be a part of this community but who our faith calls us to welcome and assist? From my past experiences in leadership and membership here, I have great confidence that this community—with faith, prayer, and trust in God's will—can make meaningful decisions and implement them.

In December, I retired from my 22-year career as designer and creative director at Ten Speed Press and now begin freelance work. I look forward to this time of personal transition and, if elected, to offering my experience, skills, and faith in service to the parish as a vestry member.



Kelsey Mayo

I first found All Souls in the winter of 2009, a few months after moving to Berkeley from Jackson, Mississippi. An afternoon walk happened to take me past the church, and I returned for worship the following Sunday. The warm and genuine welcome I received from many that morning rivaled any Southern hospitality I was used to, and the strong preaching, joyous music, and vibrant community pointed to a place full of God's love and the spirit: a community I wanted to be a part of.

In the following years, I have helped out with Sunday school, attended a mission trip to Salinas, and enjoyed singing and listening to music with the Music for the Soul small group. I've also enjoyed building relationships with many people who have shaped my own spiritual practice and relationship with God, both through their advice and example.

Outside of All Souls, I am a PhD student in the Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program at Boalt, where I teach, research, and write on matters of K-12 education reform and policy. Before coming to graduate school at Cal, I taught high school Latin, English, and Public Speaking.

The All Souls community has been a great blessing to me. If elected to the Vestry, I would strive to serve in a way that honors the magnitude and grace of this blessing.



Sharon Roberts

One Sunday in 1974, when my husband David was in Washington DC, and without his knowledge, I dressed up our seven and nine year old daughters, Jordan and Paige, and took us off to All Souls, a place I was keenly aware of and attracted to but wary of what I would find there. Having been raised in a culture of restricted opportunities for women and raising our daughters in a time of intense change around the roles of women, I was unsure of what a male dominated church would have to say to me and to two young girls growing up in a world of wider possibilities. But I will never forget the impact that Sunday had on the unexpressed longing to return to the worship life of our youth that both David and I were experiencing.

That Sunday morning Nancy Hinks welcomed us warmly and escorted us to the Sunday School classes. Fr. Bill Clancey's sermon, focused on making existential Christian choices while living in the complexities of the secular world, went straight to the heart of my professional life, and the beauty of the music just went straight to my heart, ineffable prayer. Being at All Souls felt like returning home. That night David called from DC and said, "You won't believe where I went today, the National Cathedral." And I said, "You won't believe where I went today." That Sunday began a life-time journey for us and continues for me this day.

I believe whole-heartedly that "All Souls are Mine" and am profoundly grateful to be in a church that continually strives to live the meaning of those words in full community. I loved Fr. Phil's comment on the necessity of the church to hold periodic rummage sales, to examine what institutional practices impede the full expression of Christian love and which help us to come to a deeper knowledge of Christ and enable us to function as His hands in the world. The willingness to reexamine how we live our faith life together and to accept and explore change with grace seems to me to be the life blood of a vital faith community.

From the acceptance of the ordination of women, to the inclusion of all souls who seek Christ, the incorporation of children into the full life of the parish, the physical remodeling of the church and unfolding of renewed liturgical practice and music to reflect the practice and theology of the prayer book, the establishment of Stephen Ministry and the Help Desk, parent support for raising a Christian family, meals for the marginalized, small groups: in so many ways All Souls has sought to be a growing, nurturing community, changing to make the good news accessible in new ways to all of us, church and exploring.

With David's death I came to experience the fullness of our Christian life in this parish as it has grown over the years. Kristin walked and prayed with us hour by hour to the end. She and Christopher helped us plan a memorial service my family and I will always hold in our hearts, one that was accessible to all who attended. Friend after friend in the parish offered support with food, presence, and kind messages: I will never forget Maggie Cooke's phone call as we sat by David's bedside or the delightful walk with Kevin James at the Marina sharing school stories, Phoebe Dixon's chocolate chip cookies. And so many others—I learned in my bones what it means to be blessed.

In my professional life I was a secondary educator—teacher, program manager, administrator. In my time at All Souls I have served on the vestry twice, been junior warden, senior warden, served on the altar guild and search committees, helped to organize greeters, and am currently serving as a Stephen leader. I love living and working in a diverse, inclusive community, secular and religious, that sees as its mission reaching out, welcoming, and supporting all people, all souls. The job of the vestry is to reflect and pray on the mission of the church and then manage resources and programs to bring the mission ever closer to realizing that "All Souls are mine" saith the Lord. In this time of new possibility and change, I would like to contribute to that mission.



Kim Wong

I am blessed to have been a member of this congregation for almost 12 years and have felt like this has been a second home to me and my family. I am a preschool director by profession and my husband and I were first drawn to All Souls among many other things because of its family-friendly atmosphere, even before the birth of our daughter Anikka.

During my time here, I have served on the vestry and as Senior Warden during the search for the last rector. I have also been actively involved as a Sunday School door person and teacher, a Meals and Rides team leader, and have served on many committees including Children and Youth, Stewardship, Budget, Greeters and Newcomers, Personnel, and Playground.

Because I have always worked in nonprofit organizations, I feel that my skills are a good match for a spot on the vestry. I am used to getting things done on a shoestring budget and working with many different types of people on a wide variety of tasks. I am very interested in exploring what will be done with the new property and especially how to improve and expand upon our services for children and youth.