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## **From the Clergy Associate**

### ***Rain, Blessings, and Gratitude***

Rain... We have had a great deal of rain this summer... As I write this, my kitchen door is open and I am watching the rain fall on my Black-eyed Susans and listening to the sparrows and finches chattering away as they flit around up in the dry rafters of my carport. A Jesuit who served as a mentor for me in my early 20's used to say that rain is a sign of blessing. And hurricanes aside, I like to stick with that notion of rain...

The rain we have experienced this spring and summer has brought its own blessings to me and my family. My regular annual mammogram in the spring showed some small areas of concern, and a biopsy and further test results confirmed that these small spots were, indeed, cancerous. I am very grateful that this was detected so early. And grateful to report that I have a wonderful breast surgeon who performed my lumpectomy and continues to be a fabulous medical team leader and tremendous support to me and my family.

The results of my lumpectomy were excellent: clear margins around the tissue removed and clear lymph nodes indicating that my cancer had not spread. Due to my particular type of breast cancer (HER2-positive), however, I will be undergoing chemotherapy and radiation. Again, I am very grateful for the fact that all of this can—and will—be successfully treated. I am also very grateful for the strong women who have walked this road before me and have served as amazing role models.

I will be receiving a total of 6 chemotherapy treatments: one every 3 weeks, beginning on Monday, August 26. If all stays on schedule, my final chemotherapy treatment will be on Monday, December 9. I will probably not begin my radiation until mid-January. My radiation treatments should be fairly cut-and-dry: Monday–Friday for 6-7 weeks. Probably wrapping up just as Lent is beginning—perfect timing!

As John and I have discussed, my plan is to continue with my regular responsibilities here at St. Elizabeth's, adapting my schedule as needed. It is truly a blessing to know that there are so many of you who are always so generous in offering your assistance in our ministries here, and I promise to ask when I need assistance with anything. I cannot convey to you how grateful my mother has always been over these past few years that I serve in such a vibrant parish with parishioners and staff

who are so warm and generous—especially with their time and talent, and the rest of my family and I share in that great gratitude for you all.

And the rain continues...

With blessings and great gratitude for you all...

The Rev. Joan F. Conley  
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