



LOGOS

The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1:5

From the Rector: Between Soap Opera and Fairy Tale

Somewhere between the happily ever after of fairy tales and the happily never after of soap operas lies real life. In fairy tales, the hero and heroine pass through trials and tribulations on the way to never ending bliss; in soap operas today's honeymoon becomes tomorrow's unfaithfulness and next week's divorce. Life is neither impossibly good nor impossibly bad. It simply is what it is. There is tragedy and there is triumph and, as a friend says, most things turn out all right.

Life is also unpredictable, unlike fairy tales and soap operas. According to a bumper sticker, life is "what happens when you make other plans." Life is not in our control, no matter how much we would like to think it is. We cannot really "do" anything about life except show up for it each day and live it as it comes. That reality is often hard to accept and many of us spend much of our lives trying to make life "come out right." We know that if we have this or that, we will be happy. Or if we could only make another person or persons—or ourselves for that matter—behave a certain way then life would be just rosy. Or, on the other side, we can be determined to see life in a cynical, bitter way—and be continually surprised by the good side it offers.

Life is a gift to us from God. God created us and put us here in this world. Like us, the world is subject to decay, to sin and death, so bad things happen. But it is also subject, like us, to the grace of God, so good things happen too. We cannot change life, but we do have choices to make while we live. We can choose what to put into life, and we can choose how to react to life.

One way we can live life well is to choose hope over expectations. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* says that our serenity is inversely proportional to our expectations. The more we expect, the more likely we are to be disappointed in something. We expect our children to be like us and they are not. We expect to be healthy and we are not. We expect to win the lottery despite the odds and we do not. And so on and so on. Expectations are very powerful. Failed expectations can make life seem a very sour and depressing experience because so many things we want do not ever happen. Our culture is full of expectations, though, particularly in election years. Promises are made and intentions stated firmly and with vigor.

Expectations are different from hope. Hope is what we have if we know what God's promises are and believe them. The psalmists had hope that God would again and again redeem them or redeem Israel from trouble. We live in hope of abundant life in Christ now and in the life to come. Whether expectations are met depends on the fickleness of life. Hopes are based on the faithfulness of Christ, no matter what is going on in our lives or in the world.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington • The Rev. Ann Barker, Rector • September 2008
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We can also live a good life by choosing service over self-centeredness. (Note that even the fairy tales and soap operas show us this—the heroes and heroines in fairy tales are kind to others and rescue people, while most soap opera characters tend to jump from impulse to impulse, not to say bed to bed.) Self-centeredness is about being totally focused on what we want and what we need with no regard for the community. Usually, this is our idea of what will make us happy or powerful or well-regarded. We can be self-centered about very small things, like spending money on the perfect outfit when our family needs the money for other things, or very large things, such as making the most profit for our business, regardless of how little we pay workers and how lax safety standards are.

Service is about holding regard for the community, including ourselves. It is not being an endless doormat. Service is about taking the community—whether it is family, neighborhood or world—into account when we are considering taking action in some direction. In God’s economy, it is about being filled by God and using the abundant overflow to bless others. Service is something that is possible for all of us. No matter how sick or tired or incapacitated in whatever way we may be, we can always be of service, because service includes giving and receiving. Service includes prayer. Service includes offering ourselves into the world whether we are conscious of doing so or not. Babies are unconscious of being of service in the world but they are simply by being themselves. It is heartbreakingly difficult to know oneself to be sliding into Alzheimer’s but even more heartbreaking when one thinks one is of no use anymore. One does not have to be conscious of serving to serve. Receiving care is serving someone by allowing them to help.

We can also choose commitment over cynicism. It is easy to bemoan the fact that so many people—especially church-goers—are hypocritical. It is much harder to be a church-goer, to know that we don’t always behave as we believe, and to commit again to the Great Commandments. It is easier to judge others for not getting something right than it is to know we don’t always get it right and keep trying to do what God would have us do. It is easier to doubt everything than it is to trust anything, especially when our trust has been violated over and over.

God invites us each day of our lives to recommit ourselves to God, to give service in the world and to hope in God’s eternal reign. These can all be done each day, no matter what the day brings us, how we feel or what is going on in the world. We cannot create a happily ever after fairy tale and we hopefully do not want to live life in a soap opera, but we can always offer God our commitment, our willingness to serve and our hope. May God’s grace move us to do so each and every day.

Ann†

Plan Now for Shrine Mont Weekend October 3–5

by Faye Pritchard

Shrine Mont has long been a place apart for us of St. John’s, a place where we can find the time to meet some of our deepest needs—for reflection, recreation, prayer, community, meditation, and just plain rest.

This year our St. John’s retreat at Shrine Mont will run from dinner on Friday, October 3 through lunch on Sunday, October 5. Come and choose to participate in those activities that refresh you most.

You may choose to join in the more formal program where we will explore how to become an even closer St. John’s community. Or you may choose time with a prayer circle or time in a space set apart for silent meditation. Or you may choose to hike the mountain, or play tennis and horseshoes, or browse in the bookstore. Or just talk with friends. Or just rest. Or any or all of the above. And, of course, we always take time to “party”, too.

Also, this year, the Shrine Mont staff has heard our concerns about better accommodations for those among us who have physical handicaps. They have given us a cabin that has a ramp and large handicap-accessible showers and bathrooms.

So come one, come all, and join us October 3–5, when the weather should still be warm and the mountains beautiful and inviting. Please contact Bill or Faye Pritchard on 703-931-2168 or at pritchardh2o@aol.com for more information or to sign up. The cost per adult, including a room for two nights and six meals, is \$140. Financial help is available. And there is plenty of room for all.

Fall Means New Beginnings

As summer turns to fall our traditional vacation time comes to an end. At St. John's many activities which took a "summer vacation" begin again in September. This year is no different.

- The choir begins weekly practice again Thursday, September 4 at 7:30. Lynn Robinson and the rest of the choir would love to have you come join them.
- The Youth Group's first activity of the fall is a mini-golf outing on September 13—don't miss that one! And don't miss an evening of a movie, games, and activities October 11 or the planned day trip to Luray Caverns November 8.
- Christian Formation resumes each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. beginning September 7. The following articles tell more about what to expect for both adults and children.

Adult Education Topics Range Far and Wide

On Sunday, August 3, folks interested in adult education proposed several topics for the coming year. We will kick off the year with a study of various theological topics based on the book *Theology: The Basics* by Alister McGrath. We'll cover topics including Faith, God, Creation, Jesus, salvation, Trinity, Church, sacraments and heaven. We hope to hear from Anna about her summer mission trip to the Native American reservation in North Dakota and find a speaker who can tell us about the Lambeth Conference and its effects on the Anglican Communion.

Liturgical topics suggested include some discussion of how and why we do certain things in the liturgy and what the rubrics in the Eucharist signify for us. Doing a study on the relationship between Islam, Judaism and Christianity was suggested as an historical topic, as was how religious fervor in the time before Christ contributed to Christianity. Celtic Christianity is a topic of interest, as well as the history of Christianity in China.

We previously had an art-based course involving pictures of Jesus from different cultures; we may look at iconography or a similar course on Mary as she is pictured by different peoples.

Other topics of interest include setting boundaries as Christians, a discussion of the Apostles Creed based on a book by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and a look at why we choose differences to separate us when our human bodies are all the same.

It sounds like an interesting year, whatever topics we end up with. Please join us at 9:00 on Sunday mornings beginning September 7 for good discussions and good learning.

Children's Education Looks at Learning and Outreach

by Diane Henderson

Some of the St. John's parents met August 3 to discuss the programs we currently have in place for our children, and how we may want to modify and improve them. At the invitation of Sheryl Pardo, we had the added benefit of being outside on a lovely Sunday afternoon at the Pardo community pool. While the kids played, parents came up with some ideas that we hope to further explore as the fall education program draws nearer.

We discussed using a "rotation" type curriculum this year, which would permit time for each lesson to be covered several times in different ways, offering a "hands on" approach to teaching the messages we hope our kids are learning. We have agreed that finding ways to incorporate these lessons into our children's everyday lives is the most effective way of showing them how to live the messages they hear about in Sunday School. We hope to incorporate some outreach activities for the kids that give them the opportunity to apply some of what they have learned.

We also discussed the fast approaching Christmas Pageant. We believe we have a good script in place, with the addition of a few surprises this year!

There were many ideas about Vacation Bible School. There seems to be an overall feeling that our VBS program could be improved upon. We have come up with some suggestions, and will have a follow-up meeting to see if our program next summer might be revised to offer a more meaningful experience for the children.

As always, those of us involved in the Children's Program at St. John's welcome any ideas you may have. Perhaps you could drop in one Sunday and talk to the kids about a topic you feel they would be interested in. There may be an activity that you would like to share with them. And of course, we can always use as many hands as possible to help with the Christmas Pageant. We will update you as our program continues to grow and develop.

Parish News

Congratulations

To Dennis Eckhout and LuAnne Kuelzer, who were married on July 26

Thank you

To Del Hunt, who broke down the dead tree limbs that had fallen in the yard and been taken down, and John Restall who sawed them into firewood.

To all those who helped to make Vacation Bible School a success: the Rev. Catherine Campbell (music), Norka Antelo (director), Valeria Antelo (teaching), Carrie Harbin (crafts), Stacy O'Connor, Caitlin O'Connor, Connor Nelson and Grace Montgomery (recreation); Sheryl Pardo (snacks); Stephanie Beavin (dinner and activity help), Diane Henderson (activity help), Lynn Robinson (dinner), Leslie Mead (dinner) and anyone else who helped in this yearly outreach effort

To Maddie Harbin, Galen Henderson and Lizzie Miller for creating our VBS bulletin board

To Bill Pritchard, who is working on getting our steeple fixed, and Bill Thomson, who is coordinating some efforts to trim our trees

To Lorraine Underwood, who has done a wonderful job as editor of the LOGOS since May 2004

Rest in Peace

Judy Christopher, Lynn's mother, who entered the life of the Resurrection in July

Mark Voigtsberger, Virginia Pearson's brother, who entered the Life of the Resurrection on August 7, 2008

LOGOS

The LOGOS is published nine times a year in February, March, April, May, July, September, October, November, and December near the beginning of the month.

Dave Dunlap, LOGOS Editor

Jane Edwards, LOGOS Editor and Page Layout

Email Dave at dave_dunlap@yahoo.com (preferred) or leave info in newsletter box in the office.

The next deadline is Friday, September 19 at 10:00 am.

A Letter To St. John's from Sue Hardman

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I cease not to give thanks to our Lord for your love and ministry in the world today.

I wanted to write to you all so that you may know our current situation. Rob and I, after much prayer and discernment, have decided to leave the Episcopal Church. This is a very hard decision, in part, because of your love for us and your faithfulness in support of my ministry. I want you to know that being ordained at St. John's is one of the most memorial events of my life. Our time with you was wonderful. Your caring and love have strengthened me and encouraged me for these past years and I am so thankful for all of you.

In March of this year I was offered the position of Assistant at Christ the Redeemer Church in Centreville. As I felt that it is the place the Lord is calling me to minister, after many hours of prayer, Rob and I decided to take the position. So that you will know, Christ the Redeemer church has left the diocese and is in conflict with the Episcopal Church. This fact made our decision even more difficult, because we are leaving the Church which we love.

Additionally, as you know I am very conservative theologically and at this time I find that the Episcopal Church is much more liberal theologically than I am comfortable with. I know that many of you worship and join in community within this church because of the church's very broad views. However, I find that to be a difficult place for me and often find myself in conflict with my brothers and sisters in Christ. As I believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, for me to continue to serve in a Church that does not believe the same became very difficult. I understand that others think differently than I do and I respect their opinions. However, I believe that, as a priest, it must teach and preach what I believe. We all must serve where God is calling each of us, even if it means leaving what we love.

It is my prayer that soon we can again join in fellowship together. Rob and I love you all and miss you. I hope that our decision does not affect our friendship and our love for each other. May the good Lord continue to bless and keep you.

Faithfully,
Sue and Rob Hardman

Survey To Assess Churches' Ability to Change

My name is Suzannah Rohman and I am the associate rector of St. George's Episcopal Church here in Arlington. I have been working toward my Doctor of Ministry degree from Seabury Western Seminary in Chicago for the past two years. This is a distance degree program that requires the participants to take part in three residencies over the course of two years. In June I completed my third and final residency.

The final step for me in this program will be to write my thesis, and for this I will need your help. I have decided to look at the issue of adaptive versus technical change in churches. Technical change is the kind of change required when we have a problem for which we already know the answer. For example, if the boiler has broken down, we know that the solution is to either hire a technician to repair it or to replace it. However, if the boiler has broken down and we have no money to pay for its repair or replacement we face an adaptive change. Do we have to learn to live without heat? Do we have to develop new ways that are outside of our normal ways of functioning to raise the money? Adaptive change is change that results from a problem for which we do not yet have the answer.

It is my hypothesis that most members of Episcopal congregations recognize that their congregations are facing challenges, and they know what those challenges are. But, while most of these challenges require adaptive change to solve them, most members of congregations propose technical solutions to these challenges.

In order to test my hypothesis, and discuss its implications should it be proven correct, I am attempting to conduct a survey of the seven English-speaking Episcopal congregations in Arlington County. So far I have received permission from your congregation, St. John's. St. Mary's is putting it before its vestry this week. St. George's vestry has also agreed to participate and I hope to hear from the other four soon.

What does this mean for you? In the second week of September you will receive by e-mail or mail a short survey that should take you no more than fifteen minutes to fill out. The surveys are completely anonymous. In mid-October I will have the results of the survey, and will share those results with you. I will have the ability to separate the results out by congregation. So I will also provide St. John's with your individual results.

Thank you in advance for making my research possible. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by e-mail: srohman@saintgeorgeschurch.org or phone: 703-525-8286.

An Update on David Bako

by Lynn Christopher

We have more of a connection to the Sudan in Africa than stories we hear on the news.

In 1998 and 1999, our seminarian was David Bako, from southern Sudan. He was saved from the streets by people in the church, and he has given his life to the church in return. David came to attend the Virginia Theological Seminary and preached to us of the challenges of a different way of life, in a place where people walked for hours to listen to all-day sermons. We heard stories of his six children, and once his wife even visited.

I am proud of the help St. John's gave toward educating his eldest daughter Clementina, sending her to safety at a school in Uganda from the war-torn area around Juba. She has finished secondary schooling, works for

the United Nations World Food Programme while she seeks a university scholarship, and plans to be married in September.

St John's didn't stop there. We also helped support a goat project. So many men have been killed in the fighting that many congregations are mostly women and children. Raising goats gives them not only food, but livestock to trade for clothing and other necessities.

Now David is recovering from a terrible motorbike accident, and feels he would be safer in a car as he continues his work as a priest and educational administrator. If you would like to contribute toward a car, checks may be made out to St. John's with a designation for David Bako. The diocese will forward the funds to our brother in Christ.

Support St. John's With Your Safeway Card

Look in your purse or billfold. Chances are you have a Safeway card that is scanned when you shop. Did you know that card can also benefit St. John's? If you register your Safeway card with the Escrip program, up to three percent of your Safeway purchases will come to St. John's in the form of cash.

If you are saying "I already did that," *don't stop reading!* If you already linked your Safeway card to St. John's that designation is expiring, and you need to renew it. Here's what to do.

Get your Safeway card, since you will need your card number. Then fire up your computer and go to www.escrip.com. If you already have registered your Safeway card, click in the panel in the lower left of the screen to "Renew your commitment to Safeway Stores now!" and follow the prompts.

If you have never registered your Safeway card, click on the panel on the right of the screen where it says "Sign up—It's Free!" and follow the prompts. When you are asked to see if your group is enrolled, search by ZIP code 22204, then click on St. John's in the list. Then follow the prompts to finish registering.

After that, just do your shopping—and St. John's will benefit!

Gospel Lessons for September

September 7, Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 18:15–20

Our Gospel presents teaching about how to deal with sin and grievances within the Christian community. The early churches did not have established codes and regulations and had to fashion their own ways of dealing with such matters. Here every effort is made to bring the sinful member to repentance. Failing this, the individual is to be treated as outside the church. Such decisions are understood to be ratified in heaven and by Christ's presence even in the smallest of Christian gatherings.

September 14, Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 18:21–35

In this Gospel lesson Jesus bids his disciples to offer a forgiveness which is for all practical purposes unlimited, and he tells a parable about a man who, although forgiven much, still himself had no mercy. Jesus has extended to all manner of people God's amazingly generous offer of acceptance into the kingdom. Those who have been so forgiven must show mercy to others. Their own forgiveness may otherwise be revoked.

September 21, Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 20:1–16

Our Gospel is the story of the laborers in the vineyard who are all paid the same wage despite their different hours of work. Like most parables this story can have

many meanings, as have been given to it in the life of the church. On one level it suggests that nobody can presume on God's grace, which God often offers to those who may seem the least deserving. The parable deliberately flies in the face of normal human expectations. It offers a clue pointing to God's extraordinary evenhandedness in dealing with people quite apart from human ideas about their merit. Jesus may have told it in defense of his own sharing in the lives of the outcast.

September 28, Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 21:28–32

In the Gospel Jesus tells a parable of two sons who obeyed their father differently, and he indicates that it is the same with those who apparently are obedient and disobedient in this age. Both John the Baptist and Jesus offered their message of repentance and the hope of the reign of God to all. It was the religious outcasts who most genuinely responded. Then and now it is not a popular idea to suggest that such persons have priority over those who are established in their religion. Action is the test of obedience.

Lesson introductions are used by permission and adapted from *Introducing the Lessons of the Church Year* by the Rt. Rev. Frederick H. Borsch, retired bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles. The guide was published by Trinity Press International, Philadelphia.

St. John's Calendar

September

- Mon 1 Labor Day (office closed)
- Tue 2 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed 3 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 4 Morning Guild, 10:00 a.m.
Choir Practice resumes, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 7 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00
- Tue 9 Vestry Meeting, 7:00
- Wed 10 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 11 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 13 Youth Group Putt-Putt (mini-golf) outing,
Time TBA
- Sun 14 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.
- Wed 17 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 18 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Fri 19 Deadline to submit to LOGOS, 10:00 a.m.
- Sat 20 Men's Fellowship, 8:00 a.m., in the undercroft
- Sun 21 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.
- Wed 24 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 25 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 28 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.

October

- Wed 1 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 2 Morning Guild, 10:00 a.m.
Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Fri 3 Shrine Mont Weekend (through Sun. 5)
- Sun 5 Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Blessing of the Animals, 5:00 p.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.
- Tue 7 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed 8 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 9 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 11 Youth Group Meeting—movie, games, &
activities in the undercroft, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun 12 Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.
- Mon 13 Columbus Day (observed), Office Closed
- Tue 14 Vestry Meeting, 7:00
- Wed 15 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 16 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 18 Men's Fellowship, 8:00 a.m., in the undercroft
- Sun 19 Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00–10:00 p.m.
- Wed 22 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 23 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 26 Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:00 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:00 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6:00 p.m.
- Wed 29 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 30 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.

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Next deadline is Friday, September 19 at 10:00 a.m.

Time Sensitive Material—Please Deliver Promptly

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Seminarian: Anna Minor
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Organist: Carol Dunlap
Secretary: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Justiniano Garay

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