



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: Snow Lessons

Most of the time, we human beings like to think we are in control of our lives. But this winter, we have been most definitely out of control. On January 30, we had about 6 inches of snow. Diocesan council had to send us all home early because Richmond was supposed to get 12 inches overnight Friday and into the second day of Council on Saturday. We managed to have one church service January 31 and 35 hardy souls showed up. The next weekend the snow started again and we were blasted. Two feet of snow fell in most areas. Power was out for days in some areas. As we shoveled and shoveled the piles got higher, over our heads in some places. We cancelled church that Sunday. Then we got the news that the Weather Channel forecasts, which had begun benignly as snow showers for Tuesday and Wednesday, gradually increased, promising us at least another foot of snow. The plows had no place to put it. We had no place to park our cars and many of us were stranded because the main roads were plowed but our subdivisions were not.

My friend in Atlanta kept telling me to take pictures before people started shoveling and making tracks in it. I did take photos, though I did not want to. I said, "Six inches of snow is pretty. Two feet of snow is scary." Then my friend told me to go out and make snow angels. "I don't think you understand," I said. "If I laid down in the snow to do that, I would sink heavily." I was not a happy camper. I was worried about the electricity going out and I had heavy cabin fever. I talked to some folks the other day though, who took the week and just played even though they had work to do. They sledged and played in the snow and ate pizza and enjoyed themselves. They saw the snow as a gift and took advantage of it.

While I could not manage to see the snow as a gift, I was certainly thankful for some blessings that came my way. My wonderful next-door neighbors came over and checked on me often. They opened and closed my chimney flue just to make sure it functioned since I have not used it in the eight years I have lived in the house. They brought me more logs, swept off my walkway and shoveled my front stoop when the drifts were high. I also had a wonderful man who walked over to my house to dig me out because my joints are not stable enough to dig for long periods of time. I finished my Christmas cards and squeaked them out before Lent. I mailed them on Shrove Tuesday. And I was immeasurably grateful that my electricity went off for only an hour.

There are some lessons we can learn from the snows of 2010. First of all, we are not really in control of what happens in our lives. Things happen that we just don't expect. The economic downturn, a sudden illness for us or a loved one, a job loss, a death in the family,

an unexpected separation or divorce, a best friend moving away and many other life changes force us to adjust to all the time. Change is difficult, and adjustment periods are hard. We need to expect the unexpected and give ourselves a break when we grieve, get angry or have more brain cramps than usual.

Second, though we cannot control events, that does not mean we should not plan for the future. I planned for the snows by buying wood for my fireplace, cooking ahead, checking my stock of candles and flashlights, and finding a method to put frozen food in the snow if I had to so that the raccoons could not get at it. I turned the heat in the house up a bit and I took a hat and gloves into my bedroom in case the power went out at night.

It is important for us to prepare for the future, too. We make New Year's resolutions, set goals and have certain expectations for ourselves and our lives. We plan for our retirement as best we can. We do our best to find satisfying jobs that match our calls to ministry. We raise our children, fully expecting them to live to ripe old ages with fulfilling and happy lives. We teach them to love and serve God, to work hard and to play hard. We make friends where we can, knowing an extended circle of relationships will enrich our lives.

Third, there is this thing about gifts. I sometimes tend to be a negative thinker and I get scared when something new is coming rather than anticipating it with a positive outlook. Sometimes, such as with the snow, I feel very alone and dependent on others for help. At other times negative characteristics of some opportunity strike me before the positive ones do. As I have discovered in my efforts to change this habit, I have never gotten anywhere good by thinking negatively. Realistically, yes; negatively, no. Positive thinking and an open mind and heart get you more out of life. I really am not sure how many people were able to accept at once this huge snowfall as a gift from God, but I do know that many were able to find blessings amid what has been a very hard time for many people. In the face of the earthquake in Haiti, it is impossible to believe that everything that comes our way is a gift of God, but we believe God is present everywhere working for good in every way possible and that gifts are to be found in the midst of hardship.

All this month, we will be in Lent, which is a microcosm for our snow lessons. Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and his rejection, suffering and death were things that the disciples did not want to happen, but they had no control over. Then they made plans to stay with Jesus no matter what befell him and yet they all deserted him when he was taken. Jesus prepared for his death by teaching his disciples all that he could and showing them how much he loved them. The disciples failed to prepare and were not able to handle what was happening. Our sinfulness is something we cannot control, but during this season we can examine our lives and work with God's help to become more the people God wants us to be. We can prepare for Easter.

And what about the gift lesson? Jesus' death certainly did not look like a gift to the disciples nor would it have looked like a gift to us had we been there. It looked like a tragedy in which the Messiah was killed—even let himself be killed—and ended whatever hopes they had for him. But we know there was gift in the tragedy. The blessing of the Crucifixion was our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death through the ultimate gift of Jesus' resurrection. Let us learn from our snow lessons this Lent, to confess our sinfulness, to prepare our minds and hearts for God to enter in and to bring gifts of healing and reconciliation. Let us rejoice in the blessings of drawing closer to God.

Ann†

Remember AFAC

Did you have the experience this winter of going to the grocery around a snowstorm and finding the shelves were bare? If so, did you go down the street to another store (and maybe another and another) until you found what you needed?

Consider the people who rely on AFAC. For them there is no other store down the street. When AFAC's shelves are empty, their customers may go hungry. This is a good time to remember those in need and to bring donations of food for AFAC to St. John's. Let's fill up the basket behind the back pew so the shelves at AFAC are not bare.

Adopt-a-Lunch Bags Full Support for Shelter Meals

In January a call went out to the people of St. John's to underwrite the bag lunches we provide once a month for people at the Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter. Each month St. John's prepares and delivers 50 bag lunches which include sandwiches, chips, fruit and home-made cookies from the youth. The cost for the lunches is about \$100 a month. The Adopt-a-Lunch plan was suggested as a means for spreading the expense and providing another way for members to help with this ministry. The response has been magnificent. Members of St. John's have fully subscribed the meals for 2010, providing more than \$1,200.

Sincere thanks to everyone who donated money to adopt a lunch: Susan Alvarado, Del Hunt, Patricia Broida, the Morning Guild, Marshall and Ginger Adair, Beth Fowler, Barbara Hill, Keith and Kaipō McCartney, Anne and Paul Stenger, Betty Vertiz, Bill Schenck and Lynn Christopher, Beth and Brian Cavey, Bill and Faye Pritchard, Pamela Corey-Archer, Carolyn Corlett, and Dave and Carol Dunlap.

Thanks also to the people who bake cookies, buy lunch-makings, make sandwiches, pack the lunch bags and deliver the lunches to the shelter. Keep up the good work.

Game Night at Saint John's

Do you enjoy a lively game of Scrabble? How about Monopoly? Or is Songburst your game? Whatever game you enjoy, we'll be playing it Saturday, March 20 beginning at 7:00 pm. Players of all ages are invited.

St. John's will provide snacks—popcorn, chips and salsa and pretzels—as well as coffee, hot chocolate and juice. Feel free to bring along any other snack you might want. Bring your favorite game and find someone to play it with you. Learn a new game or play an old familiar one. Chutes and Ladders to Jenga, pre-schooler through “you can't be *that* old”—all are welcome. The more the merrier!

Questions? Call Lynn Robinson at 703-998-6481. See you there.

LOGOS

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The next deadline is Thursday, March 18 at 10:00 am.

Diocesan Council (Part 1)

The 215th Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia convened on January 29 and adjourned . . . on the same day, so delegates could get home before a snowstorm.

The evening before the opening of council featured a welcoming reception with the Presiding Bishop, who was on hand for the first order of business the next day: the recognition and investiture at St. Paul's, Richmond, of Bishop Johnston as the 13th Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. With the Presiding Bishop, our new Diocesan Bishop, a full church, massed choirs, and a congregation that knew (and sang) all the hymns, it was a moving service. A reception followed the formal investiture before the business session of council opened after lunch.

The first order of business for Council was establishing that a quorum was present. The second order of business was changing the agenda so that the Council could adjourn at the end of the day, before the snow arrived. The revamped agenda made for a fast-moving, streamlined day.

Bishop Johnston's pastoral address was the high point of the afternoon. Bishop Johnston outlined his priorities for mission, focusing on youth and young adults; strengthening existing congregations; evangelism; multi-cultural congregations; and mission beyond ourselves. He said these priorities need to be addressed through stewardship, leadership, and communications. Together the priorities and actions form a means to mission.

The bishop also said that pledging to the diocese needs to increase significantly, echoing a concern from his report as Bishop Coadjutor last year. He also said we need to strive to meet a three-year goal of reaching 50 percent communicant attendance on Sundays, rather than members just being "in good standing."

As evening fell in Richmond the council adjourned and delegates headed for home, happy to miss the snow. The remainder of Council February 20 coincides with this month's LOGOS deadline, but look for part 2 of the council report in next month's issue.

Did You Know?

Bill Schenck reports that there are 24 mentions of snow in the Bible, but nothing about shoveling it.

All Ages Enjoy Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Over 40 people crowded into St. John's undercroft on February 16—Shrove Tuesday—for a traditional supper of pancakes before the beginning of Lent. The pancake supper brought in nearly \$300, a total which includes some cash donations to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC).

The pancake supper before Ash Wednesday reflects the church's tradition of fasting and abstinence for Lent. The pancake supper uses up oil, eggs, milk, and meat that would not be eaten during the 40 days of preparation for Easter. The tradition of Lenten fasting is not as prevalent as it once was, but it still shows up in events like Shrove Tuesday dinners.

Thanks are due to the men (and women) of all ages of St. John's who helped with set-up, cooking, serving, and cleaning up: Bill Thomson, Del Hunt, Marshall Adair, Bill Schenck, Jeff Wallace, Jeff Aitken, John Restall, Jud, Maggie and Gage Buchanan, Sebastian Pardo, John Mead, Paul Mead, and Bryan Harbin. Special thanks are in order for Liz White and Kay Wells, who provided the Mardi Gras theme decorations.

St. John's Mission Statement

To discover and share the transforming love of Christ

St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's is dedicated to making disciples for Jesus through

- attracting and welcoming newcomers;
- sharing faith-deepening worship, education, outreach, and pastoral care; and
- together carrying God's vision of the kingdom into the world around us.

Parish Notes

Congratulations

To Nolan Gavin Lloyd Baynham, who received the Sacrament of Baptism on February 14.

Thank you

To Liz White and Kay Wells for all their work on the spaghetti supper that was postponed, then cancelled by snowstorms

To Brian Cavey, Jamie Garcia and Del Hunt for taking down the tree that fell against the roof in the snow

To Brian Cavey, Bill Thomson and Del Hunt for heating system work

To Del Hunt, for all his junior warden work around the church

To the people of St. John's for their generous donations to AFAC

To Bryan Harbin, for putting up the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper signs

To Dave Dunlap for his work in publicizing St. John's events

To Laura Wallace for lettering bookplates for the new prayer books donated by the Beavins

March Birthdays

March 1	Cristina Tallent
March 8	Evelyn Sullivan
March 10	Beth Cavey
March 19	Ian Kunkle
March 21	Dave Vistica
March 31	The Rev. Ann Barker

March Anniversaries

March 8	Paul & Anne Stenger
March 10	Jim & Janice Hull
March 17	Henry & Debbie Carter

Gospel Lessons for March

March 7, 2010, Third Sunday in Lent Luke 13:1-9

Jesus has said that he will return to judge humankind at an unexpected time. Those who know of Christ's coming and use what God gives wisely will be rewarded with God's abundance. Those who know but do not prepare will be condemned. Those who do not know and behave wantonly will be lightly reprimanded. (12:35-48). It was commonly believed that pain and premature death were signs of God's adverse judgement. Now we read of two events where people died prematurely and unexpectedly: one group ("the Galileans", v. 1) doing God's will, killed intentionally as they sacrifice to him in the Temple; the other group ("those eighteen", v. 4, possibly construction workers) killed accidentally. In both cases, Jesus says, there is no link between early death and sin; however, these deaths do show the fate of those who fail to "repent" (vv. 3, 5), to turn to God. In the parable (vv. 6-9), Jesus elaborates on his call for repentance. (The fig tree symbolizes some Jews, possibly the religious leaders.) Jesus expects those who hear him to bear fruit (v. 9), to do his will. If they do not do so immediately, God in his mercy gives them some extra time ("one more year", v. 8) to do so. If they still fail to do so, they will be destroyed.

March 14, 2010, Fourth Sunday in Lent Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The dregs of society ("tax collectors and sinners") coming to Jesus causes the religious leaders ("the Pharisees and the scribes", v. 2) to wonder whether Jesus sees anyone as beyond God's mercy. To explain, Jesus tells three parables: the Lost Sheep (vv. 4-7), the Lost Coin (vv. 8-10) and the Lost (or Prodigal) Son (vv. 11-32). In all three, the recovery of what was lost is cause for rejoicing. There are no limits to God's mercy. Briefly, the story of the Lost Son is this: the younger son leaves home and squanders his inheritance (vv. 12-16); finding himself a hungry outcast resorting to Gentile ways (feeding "pigs", v. 15), he decides to return to his father (vv. 17-19); his father, who seeks him, welcomes him back (v. 20); the son confesses, and his father celebrates his return (vv. 21-24); the elder son returns (v. 25); he learns the reason for the festivities (v. 26-27); he accuses his father of favoritism (vv. 28-30); the father explains the situation to him (vv. 31-32). In the context of first-century Palestine, several things look out of the ordinary: For a son to ask his father for his share of the inheritance would be like a death wish; No older self-respecting Jew would run (v. 20) to his son; A father

would demand a full display of repentance, not the truncated one of v. 21.

Clearly Jesus tells a somewhat unrealistic story to make a point. Allegory is at work: each character stands for someone other than himself: the younger son for the “tax collectors and sinners” (v. 1), the elder son for the religious authorities, and the father for God. Jesus makes three points: The younger son could return home—so all sinners may repent and turn to God; the father sought the son (he saw him while “still far off”, v. 20) and offered him reinstatement—so God seeks people out to restore them; and the good brother begrudges his father’s joy over his brother’s return—so those who are godly should welcome God’s extension of love to the undeserving. The parable raises a question: at the end of the era, will godly people be ready to be joyous in sharing the Kingdom with reformed sinners and a God who loves them?

March 21, 2010, Fifth Sunday in Lent John 12:1–8

Jesus has raised Martha’s and Mary’s brother, “Lazarus”, “from the dead”, because Martha trusts that Jesus is the Messiah. Many people are making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover. The religious authorities, aware that Jesus has performed “many signs” (11:47), and afraid that the Romans will destroy the Temple and the nation because of him, ask that anyone knowing where he is tell them so they can arrest him. Now Jesus returns to Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, a mere three kilometres east of Jerusalem. “Perfume made of pure nard” (v. 3, spikenard oil), was derived from the roots of a plant grown in the Himalayas. If the guests were reclining on couches, Jesus’ feet would be accessible for anointing, but a respectable Jewish woman would hardly appear in public with her hair unbound. Judas’ reaction points forward to Jesus’ arrest (18:1-11). “Three hundred denarii” (v. 5) was close to a year’s wages for a labourer. Anointing was the last step before burial, but not for executed criminals. Perhaps in v. 7 Jesus means that Mary bought the perfume so as to have it ready for his burial, that what she did has a meaning she does not realize, and that the perfume is not wasted. Perhaps v. 8 says: the poor are constantly in need, but Jesus’ impending death is unique. There is a place for spontaneous love of Jesus.

March 28, 2010, Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, Luke 22:14–23:56

Jesus and his “apostles” are gathered in a room on the second floor of a house in Jerusalem. It would be a

guest room, furnished with rugs, cushions and perhaps a low table. 22:13 says “... they went and found everything as he had told them ...”, so they are confident that what he now promises will really happen. The “hour” (22:14) is both the time of the meal—after sundown—and the time of completion of his rescue mission. Jesus begins his farewell speech to his followers with the Last Supper. (The name comes from 1 Corinthians 11:20, “the Lord’s supper”.) He thinks of this meal as pointing forward to the banquet in the kingdom of God (22:17-18). The traditional prayer of thanks over the cup is Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the world, who has created the fruit of the vine. Throughout the speech, Jesus continues to teach, to prepare his followers for their mission in the world. Some Jewish meals began with sharing a common cup of wine, and drinking another after the meal (22:20). Jesus again gives “thanks” (22:19): the Greek word, *eucharistesas*, gives us the word Eucharist. The “loaf of bread” was likely a flat cake of leavened bread. Jews to this day bless the bread and break it, but Jesus says something special: “This is my body” God gives to free us from sin.

That his body is to be broken may indicate that he expects to be stoned, (crucifixion did not necessarily involve breaking bones.) He commands the disciples to “do this”. Again, “poured” (22:20) points to death by stoning: such deaths were bloody while crucifixion was not. He inaugurates a “new covenant”, a new bond between God and humankind. (In Exodus 24:3-8, Moses binds the people to the old covenant by dashing blood on them.) Jesus gives his followers the Eucharist as a continuing remembrance of his sacrifice for humankind. In 22:21-22, Jesus foretells that one of the twelve will betray him. This is part of God’s plan; even though God has “determined” it, Judas’ fate will be horrible! In 22:24-27, Jesus talks about what it is to be a leader in the Church. Hellenistic kings were called “benefactors” (22:25) while in fact they lorded it over the people, but leadership in the Christian community is different: leaders are to adopt Jesus’ style of leadership, to recognize that their talents as leaders are gifts from God, and that they are to serve all in need. Jesus bequeaths (“confer”, 22:29) to those who have shared in his “trials” (22:28) membership in the Kingdom of God. They will join with him in showing to the new Israel, the Church (“the twelve tribes of Israel”, 22:30) that God is right, and share in proclaiming the fulfillment of God’s promises to humankind.

In 22:31, Jesus calls Peter “Simon”, the name he had before becoming a disciple. This verse may look odd, but God placed Job in the hands of the devil, to deter-

mine his worth: see Job 1:12; 2:6. Jesus has prayed for Peter's constancy but he predicts, in spite of Peter's statement (22:33), that Peter will deny knowing Jesus. After his denial, when he returns to Christ, leader that he is, Peter is to use his experience to deepen the faith of the others (22:32). In 10:4, Jesus has sent out the seventy to do his mission "without a purse, bag or sandals" (22:35), but times have changed: his followers must now be prepared for suffering, and even for death ("sword", 22:36), in carrying out his mission. In 22:37, Jesus foretells that he will fulfill Isaiah 53:12 (part of a Servant Song): he will be considered a criminal—and so will his followers, but they take him literally ("two swords", 22:38). Jesus now leaves the house and walks to the garden on the "Mount of Olives" (22:39), across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem. (21:37 tells us of previous visits.) The twelve, and probably other followers, go with him. There he prays for those with him, that they may not be faced with the struggle between God and the devil (22:40) expected to precede the coming of the Kingdom. Usually people stood to pray, but Jesus kneels in humility (22:41).

In the Old Testament, a "cup" (22:42) refers to an action in God's plan, whether pleasant or unpleasant. Here Jesus asks to be absolved of the need to be crucified to save humankind, but he decides to be obedient to the Father's will. Perhaps the "angel" (22:43) strengthens Jesus by reminding him of God's purpose. (22:43-44 are not in the earliest manuscripts, so may have been added.)

"Sleeping because of grief" (22:45) looks odd, but extreme grief can lead to emotional exhaustion. Even so, this is a time for prayer, not sleep. Jesus rises ("got up") as he will at the resurrection: only through its power will followers avoid falling into temptation. Judas' action is especially treacherous because he is in a privileged position: he is "one of the twelve" (22:47). A kiss was normally a sign of intimacy; it was given to a respected teacher. Even on this occasion, Jesus remains non-violent. Perhaps mention of a "sword" (22:49) harks back to 22:38: perhaps "one of them" (22:50) still misunderstands. Jesus performs a miracle: in touching the slave's ear, he heals an enemy! Those who have to come to arrest Jesus are the Jewish religious and political leaders (22:52). Jesus points out to them that he is not a "bandit": he is not a threat to law and order, to Roman rule.

Now they bring him to the "high priest's [Caiaphas'] house" (22:54), which is round a "courtyard" (22:55). To guard against the cold of the night, a "fire" burns in a charcoal brazier. What Jesus foretold in 22:31-34 now happens: Peter, trying to shrink into the crowd,

is noticed; he denies knowing Jesus (22:57). Perhaps those who identify him in 22:58-59 are men: per Deuteronomy 19:15, two male witnesses were required in law. Peter's accent shows him to be Galilean (22:59). Peter does recall Jesus' words (22:61), and he repents ("wept bitterly", 22:62)—unlike Judas; he will be saved. Luke's placement of the trial before the Sanhedrin (the supreme court) in the morning (rather than beginning at night and continuing in the early morning, as Mark has it) is legally correct. "Elders ... , both chief priests, and scribes" (22:66) constituted the "council", which regulated religious (and minor political) matters. Jesus does not answer them when they ask whether he is the Messiah, because they would misunderstand his answer. Apparently powerless, he foretells that God will prove right both him and his ministry: he "will be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (22:69). He does not deny that he is the "Son of God" (22:70). The Sanhedrin considers that they have sufficient evidence to bring him before the Roman authorities.

Jesus is now brought before "Pilate" (23:1) on charges that he has violated Roman law: the charges are made to sound like treason, but neither did he forbid payment of taxes (see 20:20-25) nor is his kingship political (23:2). Pilate, Prefect of Judea 26-36 AD, has the authority to impose a sentence of death by crucifixion. Refusing to take religious ideas in a political way, Pilate announces Jesus' acquittal (23:4), but then he yields to popular opinion in sending him to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of a territory which includes Galilee, Jesus' home district (23:6-7). Herod is curious to "see" (23:8) Jesus: he hopes for a miracle—but his kind of seeing is not that required for faith. Jesus remains silent: he is the innocently suffering righteous one. Again he is mocked (23:11). Herod passes the buck back to Pilate. Even when seemingly powerless, Jesus is able to bring about reconciliation: between Herod and Pilate (23:12).

In 23:13-25, Jesus is tried in full compliance with Roman law: he has been arrested (23:14a); he is charged ("perverting ..."); he is examined; Herod's verdict supports Pilate's findings (23:15a); Jesus is acquitted; he receives a judicial warning (23:16). Three times the authorities and the people demand Jesus' death (23:18, 21, 23); however in 23:35, 48 the people (but not their leaders) repent. Ironically, "Barabbas" (23:18) means son of the father, but they reject the one who is God's Son! 23:19 & 25 tell us that Barabbas is a nefarious character. Jesus will die for even such as him. Pilate gives in to the mob, who have been whipped up by the religious authorities (23:25). (Matthew and Mark tell us of the custom of pardoning a criminal at Passover; v.

17, which scholars say is probably not original, mentions this custom.)

The custom was for a criminal to carry the crossbar, the rest of the cross being permanently installed on a hill outside the city. The religious authorities and the mob cause “Simon of Cyrene” (23:26) to help Jesus by carrying the crossbar. (The Greek translated as “made him carry”, laid on him, elsewhere clearly means laid friendly hands on him—for healing. “Cyrene” was in North Africa, near Bengazi. From Mark, we learn that he was known to the Church, so he may have been a Christian.) The procession includes two other prisoners (23:32) and a few soldiers. There are others in the crowd who are for Jesus, and repent (“beating their breasts ...”, 23:27), but in 23:28-31, Jesus warns the residents of the city to repent of their rejection of him, God’s prophet, otherwise God will punish them. People considered child-bearing a special blessing, and barrenness a particular curse, so 23:29 would hit home. 23:31 is a proverbial saying, probably meaning here: if the innocent Jesus (who is life-giving, “green”) meets such a fate as crucifixion, what will the fate of the guilty city dwellers (who are dead, “dry”) be?

“The place that is called The Skull” (23:33) is called Golgotha in the other gospels. Golgotha is a Greek transliteration for an Aramaic word meaning skull. Crucifixion was a very cruel form of execution; death from suffocation came slowly, often after several days, and resulted from the trauma caused by flogging, thirst, hunger, exhaustion, and exposure. The victims’ arms being stretched back, breathing was difficult. While he had the strength, he periodically lifted himself with his legs to take a breath.

Jesus continues his ministry of giving forgiveness to those who have not heard the Good News (23:34). The division of his clothing fulfills Psalm 22:18; to be deprived of one’s clothing was to lose one’s identity. (Biblical examples are prisoners, slaves, prostitutes and damned people.) The mob contemplates what is happening, but the “leaders” (23:35) taunt Jesus: they blaspheme against God. In accord with Psalm 69:21, a psalm of the innocently suffering godly one, Jesus is offered “sour wine” (23:36)—to revive him, and to prolong his ordeal. Ironically, “Messiah of God” (23:35), “his chosen one” and “King of the Jews” (23:37) are all true. Jesus refuses to subvert God’s plan by saving himself from a horrible death. A placard was placed around the criminal’s neck, bearing an “inscription” (23:38), stating his crime. One criminal joins with the mob (23:39) but the other responds positively to Jesus (23:43). Despite his criminal past, for the latter there is salvation; Jesus pronounces him free of sin.

Only a king can give pardon. (“Paradise” was the Jewish name for the temporary resting place of the godly dead.) The earth (God’s creation) and the Temple also respond positively to Jesus death: the “darkness” (23:44) may have been a solar eclipse; the torn “curtain” (23:45) symbolizes the end of the separation between the priests and the people: open access of humankind to God has arrived. (The curtain was that before the Holy of Holies, through which only the high priest passed.)

Jesus’ words in 23:46 are based on Psalm 31:5, another psalm of the innocently suffering righteous one; he shows his profound trust in the Father. Jesus concludes his life of obedience to God’s will. With God’s free gift of faith, a Gentile (“centurion”, 23:47) sees, understands, the deep significance of Jesus’ forgiveness of the criminal: Jesus’ death has meaning way beyond Israel. The mob repents (“beating their breasts”, 23:48). Jesus’ “acquaintances” (23:49)—apostles and other followers, both men and women—see (or at least, seek) the meaning of what has happened: they are “watching these things”.

23:50-56 tell us about Jesus’ kingly burial, a great contrast to the way he has been treated at the end of his life. The decision of the “council” (23:50 and 22:70-23:1) may not have been unanimous, for “Joseph” (23:50) of “Arimathea” (23:51) now asks the Roman authorities for Jesus’ body (23:52). Joseph “was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God” (23:51), so he is either a God-fearing Jew or a Christian. Tombs were cut into the face of an outcrop of soft rock, a geological feature rare in the area, so they were reused (after a year or so), the bones being moved to an ossuary or bone-box. This tomb is special, fit for royalty, for it has never been used (“where no one had ever been laid”, 23:53). Joseph takes Jesus’ body down from the cross and wraps it in a “linen cloth”. Linen was a symbol of immortality, so he shows hope of the resurrection. Jesus is given a burial fit for one who is God’s Messiah (Greek: Christos), the Chosen One. Deuteronomy 21:22 stipulates that the corpse of one convicted of a capital crime must be buried on the day of his death, so it is important that Jesus be buried before sundown. Sundown is also the start of the Sabbath (when almost all activity ceased). It is already afternoon; time is short. As Luke often tells us, women have an important role: they see inside the tomb, and “how his body was laid.” (23:55) and prepare “spices and ointments” (23:56) for anointing Jesus’ body later, there being no time now for doing it properly.

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St. John's Calendar

March

- Tue 2 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
Region III Lenten Program at St. Michael's,
6:30 p.m.
- Wed 3 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 4 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 7 Third Sunday in Lent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 9 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
Region III Lenten Program at Trinity,
6:30 p.m.
- Wed 10 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 11 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 14 Fourth Sunday in Lent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 16 Region III Lenten Program at St. Peter's,
6:30 p.m.
- Thu 18 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
LOGOS deadline for submissions, 10:00 a.m.
- Sat 20 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
Community Game Night, 7-9 p.m.
- Sun 21 Fifth Sunday in Lent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 23 Region III Lenten Program at St. Mary's,
6:30 p.m.
- Wed 24 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 25 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 28 Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday
Liturgy of the Palms & HE Rite I, 8 a.m.
Liturgy of the Palms & HE Rite II, 10 a.m.
- Tue 30 Region III Lenten Program at St. John's,
6:30 p.m.

April

- Thu 1 Maundy Thursday Traditional Meal & Strip-
ping of the Altar, 6:30 p.m.
- Fri 2 Good Friday Liturgy, 12 noon and 7 p.m.
Cristo Rey Good Friday Liturgy, 8:30 p.m.
- Sat 3 Flowering the Church for Easter,
Great Vigil of Easter celebrated by Region 3
at St. Andrew's, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 4 Feast of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday)
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
No Christian Education or Children's Chapel
Reception and Easter Egg Hunt following the
10 a.m. service
- Tue 6 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed 7 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 8 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 11 Second Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 13 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Wed 14 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 15 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 17 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
Potluck with a Purpose (Small Groups),
- Sun 18 Third Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Wed 21 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 22 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 24 Spring Clean-up outdoors, 9 a.m.-noon
- Sun 25 Fourth Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Formation for all ages, 9 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Wed 28 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 29 Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m.

St. John's Episcopal Church
415 South Lexington Street
Arlington VA 22204
703-671-6834
<http://stjohnsarlington.thediocese.net>

Next deadline is Thursday, March 18 at 10:00 a.m.

Time Sensitive Material—Please Deliver Promptly

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Carol Dunlap
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Justiniano Garay

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Assistant Treasurer
Don Hess, Co-chair, Building and Grounds Committee
John Wilson, Co-chair, Building and Grounds Committee

Vestry

Brian Cavey, Senior Warden
Del Hunt, Junior Warden
Patricia Broida
Debbie Carter
Diane Henderson
Paul Stenger
Liz White

LOGOS Volunteers

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