



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: Keeping Your Head Where Your Feet Are

I have friends who often tell me to keep my head where my feet are. What they mean is that I am not living in the moment right now. I am living in the past or the future or a possibility or a negative place that is not good for me. My feet are firmly grounded in the present and my head is a million miles away. This is not good, healthy daydreaming I am talking about. This is avoidance of the present, usually because it is unfamiliar or uncomfortable. It is bad enough that our feet have to be there; we don't want to have to think about it too.

Avoiding putting our head where our feet are happens to all of us, at some times more frequently than others, especially if there is a situation at work, at home or in the culture in general that we would rather avoid.

One way to pull our heads out of the present is to spend time regretting the past. We focus on things we could have done if only this or that circumstance had gone right for us. We focus on past failures, trying to make them right by thinking hard enough about them, forgetting that human beings fail all the time as well as forgetting that we might not be in as good a place as we are now. Darius Rucker sings a song about all the things he did and didn't do and how they led him to his current place of happiness. Garth Brooks sings a song called "Unanswered Prayers" in which he remembers praying for his high school sweetheart to become his wife and promising God he'd never ask for anything again if this would happen. But it didn't and he is grateful, because the wife he has now is the one he loves more than anything. Regretting the past doesn't do us any good. It leads us to what a friend of mine calls "pity parties", and that is not healthy. Now of course if we have any unfinished business from the past—people we have hurt, situations that have not had closure—we must make sure to do our best to take care of them, so we have nothing to regret about the past. Regretting the past is forgetting the now.

Another way to forget the now is to spend it beating yourself up for who you are today. Telling ourselves what stupid, bad people we are because of something we have said or done or not said or done is a foolish exercise. It does not help us do anything better or face our present situation more squarely. It is just a brutal exercise that makes us feel less than other people when we are all children of God. Now that does not mean there are not some things we would like God to change in us, but thinking badly of ourselves about our characteristics only takes us away from the present moment again. It moves our head away from our feet again and puts us in a place of excessive self-criticism, most of which is probably not true.

One of the biggest ways people keep their feet and head separated is fear and worry about the future. There is absolutely nothing wrong with fear in the now—for example if you come out of

your tent and a bear is staring at you, fear is an appropriate response. There is also some cause for anxiety about the future if you are afraid you are going to lose your job in the next round of layoffs, for example. Anxiety about the future pushes us toward action in the present to prepare our resume or make contacts or whatever we need to do. But Jesus says we are not to worry, especially about tomorrow, because today's worries are enough for today. We are not really even to be worriers because we have a God who takes care of everything—sometimes not in the way we expect, though, and that can make us worry too. Sticking our heads out into the future in worry and fear leaves us alone in a very dangerous neighborhood, as an old 12-step saying goes. It can lead us into despair and negative thinking.

We can also fantasize our way through an uncomfortable present. “When I lose those 10 pounds, I am going to...” “When I have made my million, then I can do...” “When I retire, I will...” There is certainly nothing wrong with planning for the future, but not if it keeps us from enjoying the present. Even if we are in an uncomfortable situation, we can find small ways to enjoy ourselves while waiting for resolution of the difficulty. Or we can accept that the difficulty won't be resolved soon and go on living our lives.

Another way to leave the present is to stick your head in the sand. You can keep on overspending, overeating, over-drinking to numb yourself and try to escape for a while. You can blithely say, “Everything will be alright financially” when deep down you know you need to save more money. You can ignore your children's health problems, saying, “Oh they are just active” (or quiet or whatever extreme characteristic they have) when you know they need help to function well in society.

Our goal is to keep our head where our feet are and that is called mindfulness. We focus on where we are right now and what is going on around us. We open our senses to receive all the impressions that they are bringing us. We can focus on our breathing or on some object to calm us down and help us practice the serenity prayer about having serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference. We can stand where we are and feel our feelings. Really putting our heads where our feet are is being willing to feel whatever feelings we are having.

Meredith Janson of the Imago Center of Washington, DC, says that avoiding our negative feelings in any of the ways described above keeps us from experiencing positive feelings like joy. Bottling up our feelings also leads to the breakdown of our immune system.

Jesus was always present to the moment he was in—the bad and the good. He did not avoid uncomfortable confrontations with the Pharisees or his own crucifixion. He taught his followers to listen and learn about the kingdom of heaven and begin to live a kingdom life, finding it and proclaiming it in all sorts of ways in all sorts of places.

This fall, in the busyness that rushes back on us after the (hopefully) slower pace of the summer, I invite you to be present to yourself—to take your head out of the sand, out of the past, out of the future in unhealthy ways and be in the world exactly as you are where you are. Avoidance of our feelings when we are in uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations is not a good way to live our lives. God needs us to be present to the now, because that is where God is and God wants to be with us in it. God will show us how we need to act, what we need to do, in each and every situation we face. We can count on that without fail, because Jesus promised us the presence of God always and we can trust those promises.

Ann†

October's Coming Events...

Mark your calendar and don't miss these events in October.

- On October 2 we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis with the annual Blessing of the Animals at 5:00 p.m. If you have a pet you would like to have blessed, bring him or her for a blessing from our rector. If your pet deserves this attention but may not be good in crowds, or you would like a blessing for a former pet, bring a picture for the blessing.
- The book club will meet on October 4 at 7:30. This month's book is *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jaime Ford. It's a good read and you still have plenty of time to read it before the meeting.
- On October 9 we will again be preparing bagged lunches for people at the Bailey's Crossroads Homeless Shelter following the 10:00 service. The Sunday School students and Leslie Mead will lead

the effort, but “many hands make light work”, so pitch in and join the fun!

- On October 22 from 9 a.m. to noon the junior warden will need our help for the fall Parish Cleanup. Plan to set aside all or part of the morning to work with your fellow parishioners to clean up that which needs cleaning, fix up that which needs fixing, and generally get the church and grounds ready for the end of fall and the coming winter. The junior warden is a master of matching jobs to the worker’s talents, so no one will go away feeling they have not contributed to the good of the parish.
- Lorraine Underwood is leading a discussion of the book of Genesis at the Sunday morning Adult Education forum. Come and join the discussion and learn more about the first book in the Bible.
- Interested in joining a Bible Study group? We are planning a weekday Bible Study program this fall. The start date and subject are still up in the air, but if you are interested, please let Rector Ann Barker know so you can be included.

Help Wanted

Part of St. John’s efforts to reach to the community around us, to attract new members and offer our programs and services, involves advertising in the local newspapers. There are three in which St. John’s advertises, all of them monthly publications.

We need someone to take over the important task of preparing and sending these advertisements.

The position requires the ability to use a word processor to prepare the ads and to send them electronically to the newspapers. Advertising content focuses on events connected to the religious season (especially around Christmas and Easter) as well as publicizing community events like the summer Movies Under the Stars and this fall’s food drive for AFAC.

If you are interested, please let Ann Barker know of your interest. Both Beth Cavey (the outgoing advertising person) and her predecessor, Dave Dunlap, would be glad to discuss the position in more detail if you have questions.

Shrine Mont Weekend is Coming: October 14–16

It doesn’t matter whether we are parents, singles, white collar, blue collar, military, or retired—we all feel the pressures of modern life. Even Sunday, the day of rest, can become filled with an abundance of catch-u activity. Where, then, do we find space for the Sabbath peace necessary to our spiritual well-being?

Come to Shrine Mont.

Shrine Mont, full of the peace of the mountains, offers us peace to do whatever we need to restore our souls—from prayer and study to hiking, socializing, and just plain resting. This year’s program is designed to reinforce the peace, to help us explore ways to counter the pressures in our lives, to discover the spiritual space, and to create Sabbath peace in our hearts—peace that we can carry home with us.

Our guide and facilitator for this spiritual journey is Ann Kulp, who has been a spiritual director and retreat leader for over 20 years. She has a background in both education and spirituality, with an MA in guidance and counseling and a Doctor of Ministry in spiritual direction.

Ann is a graduate of—and now serves as an associate director for—the Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C., which offers training and support in contemplative living and leadership for both clergy and lay people. She is the author of *Prayer Practices and of Spirit Windows: A Handbook of Spiritual Growth Resources for Leaders*.

Come, create Sabbath peace in your heart over our Shrine Mont weekend.

St. John’s will have its annual Shrine Mont retreat weekend October 14–16. Faye Pritchard is coordinating the weekend again. If you want to join in, look for the Shrine Mont brochure in the pew or just let Faye know you want to attend. Financial aid for the Shrine Mont weekend is available, and carpools will be available if you would rather not drive.

Seminarian's Diary

by Mary Ruetten Mackin

The fall semester at Virginia Seminary has begun—with a number of changes and a good deal of energy. Much of the energy has come from the entering class, which has sixty-three students, compared with forty-six last year and fifty-five the year before. A bigger class than the Seminary has seen in a while, with students from as far away as Burundi, France, and Haiti, this entering class has already created a good spirit amongst themselves and liveliness in the refectory.

A number of the changes on campus are the result of work started last year that has recently come to fruition. Perhaps most important, we now have a new interim worship space. What was formerly the Lettie Pate Evans Auditorium has become the Lettie Pate Evans Interim Chapel. The transformation of the space is remarkable. A dark, underused, rather uninviting place has been changed into a light, airy simple yet elegant space that invites worship. Long white filmy panels line the sides of the chapel as the seating faces a wall of windows overlooking a green space. A raised altar covered with a rich brocaded frontal is situated in the front of the room with a green marble baptismal font placed near the door in the back. Thus, as we worship, we are between the two symbols of the sacraments—the altar and the font. We at the seminary have been truly blessed.

Another blessing is the absence of bulldozers and jackhammers around campus. Last year we became very familiar with the sight of yellow tape marking off work zones and the sounds of heavy equipment during classes as the heating and cooling system was completely re-engineered. Now, all of the pipes have been laid, the ground has been resodded, and the yellow tape is gone—we now are graced with a new heating/cooling system that is more energy efficient and effective than the old one. Peace and tranquility have returned.

On a different note, if we are in a convivial mood, we can head off to the new pub on campus. Named 1823, in honor of the year the Seminary began, the pub is situated just next to the refectory, and, decorated in dark wood, is quite inviting. It is a perfect place to take visitors for a cup of coffee, to hang out with friends and colleagues, or, as some did several weeks ago, to gather to watch the Redskins game.

My status has changed as well. I am now a senior, with a new array of courses for this semester. Perhaps two of the most interesting I am taking are “The Holy Spirit and the Life of the Church” and “Readings in the History of Mission.” The “Holy Spirit course,” as we call it, focuses on the experience of the sacramental life among the people of God, the body of Christ, the Church. It is taught by Bishop Dyer, who has had a long and rich life in the Church and who will share his wisdom with us. The Missions course looks at six different missionary experiences in the history of Christianity, including missions in the New World, India, West Africa, and China. We will look at the writings of missionaries and then discuss the issues that they struggled with, always asking the question how we can carry out Christ's commandment to go into all the world.

As we move into the new semester at VTS, we are full of hope, energy, and excitement. We not only are adjusting to the changes on campus, but also praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our daily lives together and to form us into a community that loves God and neighbor.

Parish News

Rest in Peace

Martha Becker (Dave Dunlap's sister) entered the life of the resurrection on August 29.

Kaylin Pardo, niece of Sheryl and Jaime Pardo, entered the life of the resurrection on August 15.

Thank you

To Bryan and Carrie Harbin for hosting our August Movie Night Under the Stars.

To Bill Thomson for taking care of building matters while our senior and junior wardens were out of town.

To Kay Wells for sending out the September issue of LOGOS.

October Birthdays

Jacob Beavin, Ericka Cullen, Betsy Cullen, Carrie Harbin, Bryan Harbin, John Hart, Taylor Robinson, The Rev. Peter Swarr, Erin Tallent Baynham, Bill Thomson, Liz White

October Anniversaries

Marshall & Ginger Adair, Michael & Stephanie Beavin, Paul Harless & Eileen Flynn, Angie Rollet & John Hart, Tony & Heather Kollath, Dave & Lynn Robinson

Gospel Lessons for October 2011

October 2, 2011—Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 21:33-46

The Sanhedrin members who first heard this parable would recall Isaiah 5:1-7, where God tells what will happen to his unfruitful “vineyard”, “the house of Israel, and the people of Judah”. In vv. 33-39, Jesus tells the parable: the landowner plants the vineyard, leases it out, and leaves. At harvest time, he sends successive sets of slaves “to collect his produce”; all are mistreated. When he sends his son, he is killed. If a landowner died without an heir, the land passed to the first claimant, so by killing the son (presumably the only one), the tenants become landowners. Jesus’ hearers answer his question: the first tenants will suffer “a miserable death” (v. 41) and other tenants will be found who will deliver. Here, the landowner stands for God, the first tenants for Israel’s leaders, and the time the landowner is away for their period of stewardship of God’s chosen people. So the second tenants are replacements for Israel, probably those who follow Christ. Is Jesus “the son” (v. 38, Aramaic: ben) and the “stone” (v. 42, ‘eben)? Then v. 43: to oppose God will be disastrous; his patience will be exhausted. The leaders of Israel recognize his reference to Isaiah; were it not that Jesus was widely accepted as God’s “prophet” (v. 46), they would have arrested him.

October 9, 2011—Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 22:1-14

This is the third parable about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus’ audience would naturally associate a festive meal with the celebration of God’s people at the end of time. This story has elements of harshness and tragedy; some responses seem disproportionate to the crime. It was the custom for the host to send “his slaves” (v. 3) to invite the guests, and again to tell them when dinner was ready; preparing a banquet took many hours. To refuse to come, to refuse a king’s command, is treason; to kill his slaves (v. 6) amounts to insurrection, so the king sends troops to put down

the rebellion. After those whom the king had chosen refuse to come, he invites all people, “both good and bad” (v. 10). (In Jesus’ day tax collectors were considered “bad”.) One guest is ill-prepared for the banquet (v.11); the king banishes him to torment. We recognize the king as God. The first guests are those who are hostile to Jesus; the one without the wedding robe represents those who do not count the cost in becoming disciples. The judgment on anyone who does not prepare will be at least as severe as that on those who reject Christ. The final verse is the moral of the story—a generalization of Jesus’ intent in telling the parable.

October 16, 2011—Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 22:15-22

Back in 21:23, as Jesus was teaching in the Temple, Jewish officials questioned his authority to do “these things”, all he has done in his earthly ministry. Jesus declined to answer the question, for the answer could only be understood by those with faith. Just before our reading, we find the parable of the Wedding Feast, which the Pharisees saw as an attack on them. Now followers of the “Pharisees” (v. 15) and “Herodians” (v. 16, people who supported Herod, the Roman puppet king, and his successors)—united only in their desire to get rid of Jesus—speak to him. They appear to respect him, but speak with irony. And then the question, the subject of great debate in Jewish circles: should we pay the annual poll tax to Rome? (v. 17) Opinions varied: one group, the Zealots, claimed that God’s people should not be subject to pagan Gentiles. Jesus sees through their plot; he calls them “hypocrites” (v. 18) for pretending to respect him but

St. John’s Mission Statement

We welcome everyone including believers, seekers and doubters to share God’s love and acceptance in a community of worship and service.

St. John’s Vision Statement

St. John’s is dedicated to nurturing disciples for Jesus by:

- Offering faith-deepening worship, education, outreach and pastoral care;
- Attracting and welcoming newcomers; and
- Sharing God’s love with our community and the world around us.

intending to discredit him. If Jesus says yes, Zealots and other Jews hostile to Rome will turn against him; if he says no, he will risk arrest for inciting rebellion against Rome. We know his answer, as translated, but “Give” (v. 21) can be give back or repay. To Jews then and to us now, all we have is given to us by God; we owe everything to him. Jesus sidesteps another issue (vv. 20-22): the obverse side of the coin is inscribed Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, great high priest—an affront to his fellow monotheistic Jews.

October 23, 2011—Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 22:34-46

Some Sadducees (who believed that life ended with physical death) have argued with Jesus; they have tried to show him, by quoting from the Pentateuch, the absurdity of belief in resurrection. He has told them that they neither understand the “power of God” (v. 29, to transform us into a new way of being alive when risen) nor the purpose of the Scriptures. The Pharisees now “test” (v. 35) Jesus by asking him a question often debated (v. 36): of the 613 laws in the Torah, which is most important? Jesus’ answer would not have surprised them, but his “second” (v. 39) of equal weight (“like it”) would, for it was considered unimportant. Developing a right relationship of actively loving God and fellow humans is the key to the Scriptures. Now Jesus asks the Pharisees (who considered themselves experts in biblical interpretation) some questions (v. 42). People expected a political “Messiah” descended from David, “the son of David”. In vv. 43-44 Jesus asks: “How is ... that David” (inspired “by the Spirit” to write Psalms—as was then thought) refers to “him” (the Messiah) as “Lord” (overlord), in writing “The Lord” God (Yahweh) “said to my Lord” (i.e. David’s overlord, whom Jesus takes to be the Messiah) “sit ...” So (v. 45) how can the Messiah be both David’s son and his overlord? (While in English and Greek, “Lord”, kurios, occurs twice, Jesus would have quoted Psalm 110:1 in Hebrew; there the words are different. He was probably not unique in taking “my lord” there to be the Messiah, for a political Messiah would defeat his “enemies”.) The Pharisees too do not understand the Scriptures.

October 30, 2011—Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 23:1-12

Jesus has just silenced his principal critics, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, by showing their lack of understanding of parts of the Old Testament. He now speaks “to the crowds and to his disciples”. (Most “scribes”, v. 2, were Pharisees. They made copies of the Mosaic law; they taught and applied it and the aural tradition that had grown up around it, considering the latter to be as binding as the Law.) Jesus tells his audience (v. 2): the Pharisees have authority to teach the Law, in (what was considered) an unbroken chain back to Moses (“Moses’ seat”), so honour their teachings, but beware of their practices! They are great ones for teaching a severe (rather than humane) interpretation of the Law (“heavy burdens”, v. 4) and not following it themselves! They are vain and hypocritical (v. 5): they exert effort to appear pious. (“Phylacteries” are small boxes containing biblical texts, worn on the arm or the forehead; “fringes” are prescribed in Numbers and Deuteronomy as a way of remembering to live by the commandments. The longer the fringes, the more pious the wearer appears to be.) Vv. 6-7 give four examples of vanity. (“Rabbi” means master and later became a title for a synagogue leader.) Then vv. 8-10: Christians are not to use honorific titles. Jesus is our one “teacher” and instructor for we are his lifelong disciples; others teach us only for a time. God the “Father” is our father. Vv. 11-12 emphasize the importance of humility and service to others.

Commentaries on the Revised Common Lectionary were prepared for the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, Canada, © 2003–2011 by Chris Haslam. Used with permission.

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.

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

The next deadline is Thursday, October 13 at 10 am.

St. John's Calendar

October 2011

- Sun 2 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Blessing of the Animals, 5 p.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 4 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 6 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 9 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 11 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thu 13 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
LOGOS deadline, 10:00 a.m.
- Fri 14 – Sun 16
Shrine Mont Weekend
- Sat 15 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
- Sun 16 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Thu 20 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 22 Parish Cleanup 9 a.m. – noon
- Sun 23 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Thu 27 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 30 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.

November 2011

- Sun 6 All Saints' Day (observed)
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 8 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 10 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 13 Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 15 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thu 17 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 19 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
- Sun 20 Christ the King Sunday
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Commitment campaign / Thanksgiving Pot
Luck Luncheon, 11 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Sun 27 First Sunday of Advent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.

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Next deadline is Thursday, October 13 at 10:00 a.m

Time Sensitive Material—Please Deliver Promptly

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Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Carol Dunlap
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Justiniano Garay

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