



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: Growing in Transitions

It is fall outside my window and the leaves are turning colors. In autumn, we are moving from the flowering of spring and green of summer to the bareness of the winter. The trees will look bare and dead, but the truth is they are not. In winter tree roots deepen and strengthen so the tree can flourish the following year. It is a time of transition into growth. Another thing that is happening underground has to do with bulbs. The spring flowers are not visible, but they too are growing. The bulbs are dividing, splitting into two bulbs to give our eyes even more brilliant color in the spring. Nature proceeds in its transition and growth cycle as a matter of design—when the time comes for change and growth, nature doesn't think about it, it just moves. Caterpillars don't think about when it is time to build a cocoon and turn into a butterfly. They just do it.

A human version of this physical transformation occurs when I go to the gym. It's the first time I have belonged to a gym, and I learned I was not supposed to do a strength training workout two days in a row. It is natural to assume that doing the workout every day would help you grow stronger faster, but that is not the case. There is too much strain on the muscles, which actually tear a little bit when you use them in a hard workout. You have to give them a day's rest so they can repair themselves and grow into stronger parts of you the next time you work out.

Human beings grow through transition too, but often to get the most out of our transitions, we have to think about them to learn and grow from them. Human growth in transitions often takes place when relationships change. One example of this truth is pregnancy. There is an outside element of bodies changing (at least for the woman), but there are also elements inside that are changing. People are making room for another human being in their lives. They are thinking about how their lives will change forever and how that will feel. Many times these emotions are positive but sometimes they are negative. There is that pure joy of having another human being to love, but there are also thoughts about late nights and the terrible twos. Growing emotionally from two to three or three to four people is at its best a transition into more selflessness and a desire to parent the child well. Humans take active roles in our transitions too. We might read books about parenting, shop for new furniture, go to Lamaze classes. Having a baby is a natural part of many of our lives, just like the leaves changing is a part of a tree's natural cycle. But we take action to learn and grow emotionally through the transition.

Another natural human transition is death. People can grow from being with the dying and from being the one who is dying. People who are with the dying think about loss and

grieve separation. They can contemplate their own mortality and look toward the goals they have already achieved in life and what they want to accomplish in the future with the time they have left. Being around someone who has little time left can help you make subtle or not-so-subtle changes in your own life—perhaps to help more people or mend broken relationships or take better care of yourself. The person who is dying also can experience growth in transition. They can look back on their lives and see where they have been. Perhaps this time is a chance for them to mend relationships too, with people and with God, or to reflect on all the love that has been present in their lives. They wonder about life after death and hope it is all true. Perhaps they feel the presence of God with them more tangibly. This happens not just to old people, but also to children. On telethons for one disease or another, there are amazing stories of dying children comforting their parents and growing emotionally at a rate they would never have grown had they been a healthy child.

Sometimes our transitions are about moments of change in our outward lives. We lose a job, we can't sell a house, we downsize to a retirement community, we move again and again to different places and have to build new relationships. A friend of mine and her husband are working on downsizing to a retirement community. She doesn't want to leave her home and the beautiful antiques and other collectibles she has purchased over the years. She is experiencing regret, but what she is experiencing underneath in this transition time is a loss of identity. She loves to shop for things for her house: who will she be if she cannot do that? What will she do with her life?

People who lose their jobs may lose their identity too. They feel like they are “used-to-be’s” instead of “are’s”. It is hard not to feel sorry for yourself and get mired in self-pity, especially if you are in a group demographically that will have trouble finding a new job. It is important at this time that folks between jobs learn that what matters is who they are not what they do. Some job hunters I know have new business cards made with their personal information on it. It is, of course a good business practice, but it also says, “I am important to me and to my loved ones even without a job.” When people begin to look for jobs they need to continue to learn this lesson to be able to take the

hard work and multiple rejections that come with the territory.

Growing is a difficult process. Joan Chittister says about growing pains that “the process of struggle is the process of the internal redefinition of the self... When our expectations run aground of our realities, we begin to rethink the meaning and shape of our lives... It is a slow but determining deconstruction of the self so that the real person can be reborn in us, beyond the expectations of others, even beyond our own previously unassailable assumptions”.

Our transitions make us new people. From muscles getting stronger to new life and death to outside changes in our lives that force inside changes, we are growing through the transitions and hopefully becoming the people God wants us to be. God is with us in our transitions, guiding and helping us change our minds, our hearts, our bodies and our spirits. Look for the transition moments in your life. Ask what God is doing in you. Be open to change and growth, seen and unseen. Your life will be richer for it.

Ann†

AFAC Food Drive a Success

Thanks to all who supported St. John's efforts to collect food for the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) food drive September 18–25. A good deal of food was contributed—we won't know exactly how much until AFAC has weighed it and sent us our receipt, but it was a good effort. The food brought for AFAC goes to feed hungry people in Arlington. This is a form of stewardship that is exactly what the Gospels call upon us to do: Help those in need around us.

The food drive culminated with our service in Glencarlyn Park on September 25. Instead of pews and an altar we had picnic tables. Dress was more casual and singing was accompanied on an electronic keyboard instead of an organ. The service was followed by a potluck lunch in the park. The informality, the good weather, and the refreshing outdoors left many feeling the service was a nice change.

Gratitude

by Brian Cavey, Senior Warden

Autumn in Northern Virginia brings cooler mornings and warmer colors. In the church, autumn brings the focus to stewardship. For some of us the subject is an uncomfortable one. But I suggest that we should reevaluate the true meaning of stewardship. For the Episcopal Church, and I would suggest for those of us who are lucky to call St. John's our home, stewardship should be rooted in gratitude for the many blessings we enjoy: the gifts of life, family, faith, health, freedom, friends, a job and so many other things we take for granted.

Stewardship originally related to the care of the castle. The leader of that effort was the steward. The focus of stewardship has changed over time — we no longer have castles. But there is a common thread from the original focus on the castle to today's focus on our church home and our annual stewardship campaign at St. John's.

The gifts we commit to St. John's are the lifeblood of the missions we fulfill every day. The sharing of your time, your talent and your treasure help provide the roof under which we worship. Your generosity means that the Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter's residents, those with few gifts in this life, benefit physically from the lunches we provide. Our gifts make it possible for the children of the area to experience God's love through Vacation Bible School. Our gifts make it possible for adults to take a spiritual journey through Education for Ministry. As we look toward the new year, the ministries we can do at St. John's will be determined through the success of our stewardship campaign.

I challenge you to try to view stewardship as an expression of gratitude to God from whom all blessings flow. As you consider your commitment to St. John's for 2012, consider the blessings that God has provided and think of your pledge of support for the St. John's community as your gift of faith and gratitude to God.

Coming in November...

- The book club will meet November 8. November's book is *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery.
- The Vestry meeting will be held on Monday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m.
- The parish clean up day is November 19, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Lunch is included. Come join in the fall effort to clean up and get ready for the holiday season.
- All are invited to the Thanksgiving potluck on Sunday, November 20 after 10:00 service.
- The community Thanksgiving service will be at St. Paul's, Bailey's Crossroads this year—Tuesday, November 22 at 7:30 p.m.
- November is Stewardship month. Stewardship will be the subject on three Sundays: November 6, 13, and 20. Please read the article by the Senior Warden, the update on this year's budget, and prayerfully reflect on St. John's needs and how you can help meet them in the coming year.
- November 13 is United Thank Offering Sunday. See the short article about the UTO ingathering on page 4.
- The Sunday morning Adult Education will continue its study of Genesis through Christ the King Sunday (November 20). Advent and an Advent study begin the following week (November 27).

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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The next deadline is Thursday, November 17 at 10 am.

Seminarian's Diary

by Mary Ruetten Mackin

The Seminary has been hopping. The first week in October was our annual Convocation, a time when alumni and alumnae of the Seminary return to campus for two days for worship, lectures, discussions, and fellowship. We have had visitors in the refectory, in the book store, and at chapel. It is lovely to see recent graduates and those who graduated some time ago reconnect, remember, and reflect on their time here and on their lives in ministry. For those of us still in formation, witnessing the fortitude and grace of those who have gone before is an inspiration.

For me, the highlight of convocation was a lecture by one of my favorite authors, Diarmaid MacCulloch, a Church History Professor at Oxford University. MacCulloch's best known works are *Thomas Cranmer, The Reformation*, and *Christianity, the First Three Thousand Years*. MacCulloch, who has won the National Book Critics Circle Award, the British Academy Prize, and the Whitbread Prize, was brought up in a country rectory in East Anglia, England. MacCulloch writes for a popular audience but with a thorough scholarly knowledge of his subject. His books are both readable and fascinating.

MacCulloch's lecture at Convocation was on Thomas Cranmer, who he seemed to know as one would know a family friend. Cranmer, as we know, was the architect of the first Book of Common Prayer; our Prayer Book today contains much of the language that he wrote. According to MacCulloch, Cranmer's gift was his ability with words, for formal prose. Cranmer wrote prayers, collects, and litanies that could be repeated again and again and still retain their freshness and power. MacCulloch said that the Book of Common Prayer is "the greatest play in the English language," greater than Shakespeare or Milton, and it is a play that has endured. Cranmer's genius with language was to use words that were of Anglo/Saxon origin and not to import words from the Latin. These old Anglo/Saxon words are the bedrock of the English language—they are English at its best, arranged

in patterns that we still use in speaking. The Book of Common Prayer is Cranmer's enduring legacy to the English language and to us. As we say many of the prayers and collects in the Book of Common Prayer we have Thomas Cranmer to thank for giving us language which still proclaims the glory of God and gives thanks for the gifts God has given us.

While a packed house was enjoying the fascinating lecture by MacCulloch, another drama was being played out behind the scenes. The Dean of the Seminary, Ian Markham, tells the following story: "It was Rev. Keith Johnson who found himself with a predicament. Keith was here for the Convocation. His wife had just told him that a house sale would go through if he was able to notarize and sign the relevant paperwork in the next two hours. The Seminary staff leapt into action... [and with the help of seven different staff members] the deadline was met, the documents were signed and notarized. Thanks to the Seminary staff, a house sale went through."

We at the Seminary are greatly blessed. We live and work in a community of learning, love, and worship. Convocation is a time for many people to come together, to remember our past and all the saints who have gone before, and to give thanks for all those still serving faithfully in every corner of the world.

United Thank Offering Fall Ingathering November 13

On November 13 we will give thanks for our many blessings by putting coins in a little blue box or writing a check for the United Thank Offering (UTO).

November seems a particularly appropriate month for our fall ingathering for UTO since it is the month we celebrate our Thanksgiving holiday. We are able to give thanks to God for our blessings by offering gifts to others. We do not offer gifts expecting to be paid back. What draws us close together is the mystery of the gift of gratitude: from us to God, from God to us for sharing out resources, from those who receive our gifts and from their gratitude to us for our generosity.

Please be generous at the fall UTO ingathering.

Parish News

Congratulations

To Gerard and Erin Tallent Baynham on the birth of Griffin Reid Lloyd Baynham, born September 15, 2011

A Hearty “Thank you” to:

Bryan Harbin for all his work to coordinate our signs for our activities

Everyone who helped clean the church while Justiniano Garay was on leave

Brian and Beth Cavey for coordinating the service and picnic in the park; Brian Cavey and Jones Tallent for doing the grilling; the altar guild; all who brought food; and everyone who came to share this experience

Brian and Beth Cavey for coordinating the September Movie Night Under the Stars

Bill Pritchard, Pete Olivere and Barbara Olivere for coordinating our AFAC food drive and everyone at St. John’s who brought food to support the food drive

Best wishes to those who celebrate a birthday in November:

Bronwen Berliner, Lisa Buchanan, Jud Buchanan, Gage Buchanan, Dave Dunlap, Beth Fowler, Betty Geris, Jean Harrison, Douglas Le Sage, Roger Ludwig, Keith McCartney, Robert L. “Larry” Rawls, III, Alva Rice, Dave Robinson, and Laura Van Wyk

Best wishes also those with November Anniversaries:

Jeff and Michelle Aitken, Brian and Beth Cavey, Del and Carole Hunt

Rest in Peace

Deb Dyer, friend of Lynn Robinson, entered the Life of the Resurrection in September 2011

Budget Update

At its recent meeting, the vestry reviewed the current financial situation and wanted to make everyone at St. John’s aware of the budget situation. Like so many things in life, there is good news and there is bad news.

In September the pledge and plate income was \$9,300. This was slightly below what might be expected. One month’s share ($\frac{1}{12}$) of the projected pledge and plate income would be \$10,833. For the first nine months (three quarters) of the year, pledge and plate income projected to be \$97,500. It was, in fact, almost exactly that, coming in at \$97,370.55. This reflects well both on the people in the pews who put their money in the plate, and on the vestry, which did a good job of projecting income.

The bad news in the budget report is that when the budget was adopted, it included a deficit of \$21,000. The vestry reported this to the congregation in January and has worked all year to contain expenses and to maximize income, but has not been able to close this gap. The deficit can only be covered by taking funds from the parish reserves—investments and savings. This is troubling because it can not be sustained indefinitely.

The vestry asks that we all pray and reflect on the budget situation as we enter this year’s stewardship campaign.

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.

Gospel Lessons for November 2011

November 6, 2011, All Saints' Day (observed) Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 4:23-25 says "Jesus went throughout Galilee...proclaiming the good news of the kingdom... great crowds [including Gentiles] followed him..." He speaks to his disciples, but the crowd is not far away: per 7:28, they too hear.

"Blessed are" (v. 3) can be translated as Happy are those who. The "poor" (v. 3) are the many who were literally impecunious and therefore suffered subservience to the will of the wealthy. Those of them who place themselves in God's hands will enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who have no worldly joy because life is hard on them ("mourn", v. 4) yet turn to God for help will be comforted, renewed, strengthened. Those whose lives are God-centered ("meek", v. 5) will enter the kingdom ("the earth", figuratively, the Promised Land). Those who seek ardently to live in unison with God ("righteousness", v. 6) will know the privilege and joy of loyal response to God's will. The compassionate ("merciful", v. 7) will receive compassion. Those who are single-minded, in their very beings, in complete loyalty to God will live in God's presence (v. 8). Reconciliators ("peacemakers", v. 9) will, because they share in what God does, be his "children". Those who are "persecuted" (v. 10), ridiculed, denounced, ill-treated, in maintaining a right relationship with God (through Christ) will receive a "reward" (v. 12), God's blessing: they will share in the kingdom. Disciples in Jesus' day are like the prophets: they suffered persecution from their own people (v. 11). (Some of the beatitudes overlap.) The Beatitudes present a paradox; they overturn the conventional values of society; they constitute a moral revolution, which continues today.

November 13, 2011, Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost—Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus continues to tell parables about the kingdom of heaven. In the previous parables, he has told us that we need to be prepared for the Second Coming at all times. Today's parable is set in the realm of finance. A master, before leaving on a journey, entrusts his slaves with his money, "each according to his ability" (v. 15). (A talent was about 15 years' wages for a labourer, a large sum of money.) Two servants invest the money

and earn more (vv. 16, 17); the third simply buries it (v. 18). When the master returns (v. 19), he praises the investors; they, he says, will be made responsible for "many things" (vv. 21, 23), and will "enter into the joy of your master". But the third slave, admitting that he was afraid of his master's wrath (v. 24), simply returns the original sum (v. 25). The master chastises him for his wickedness and laziness. This slave loses what he has been given (v. 28) and is condemned to "outer darkness" (v. 30). This would have caused a stir in Jesus' day, for a rabbinic maxim commends burial of money as a way of protecting it.

But this parable is about the kingdom of heaven, so what is the lesson it teaches? "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v. 30) is a stock phrase for condemnation of the wicked at the Last Day. The master stands for God and the servants for various kinds of people. Yes, God both rewards generously and is a stern judge. He expects us to be good stewards of his gifts. We will be commended and rewarded for faithfully carrying out his mission. Failure to use what he gives us will result in punishment—by separation from him, the essence of goodness. We are expected to make it grow. He is free to distribute his gifts as he sees fit (vv. 28-29).

November 20, 2011, Christ the King Matthew 25:31-46

Vv. 14-30 are the Parable of the Talents. Jesus has used it to stress the importance of fidelity to him and his mission while he is away. Here Jesus tells us the kind of conduct, of morality, towards others expected of the faithful—and the consequences of not caring for others. Sheep and goats behave differently but in Palestine they were fed together. At the end of the era, when Christ comes again, he will act for the Father ("sit on...[his] throne", v. 31). He will separate the "sheep" (v. 32) from the "goats", assigning the former to a place of honour ("at his right hand", v. 33) and the latter to dishonour. He, as "king" (v. 34) will invite the godly (or faithful), those whom the Father has pre-ordained for this, to live with him ("the kingdom"), a state that existed before creation ("from the foundation of the world"). Why? Because the godly have fulfilled God's expectation: in reaching out to the disadvantaged they have, in fact, been reaching out to him (v. 40). We are all part of his family. But the "goats", those who have ignored the needy, will be permanently separated from God, be unhappy, and be punished, for they have

failed to see Christ in people. The “righteous” (v. 46) are the faithful, the godly, those who understand that to serve humanity is to serve Christ—and do so.

**November 27, 2011, First Sunday of Advent
Mark 13:24–37**

In v. 2, Jesus has prophesied the destruction of the Temple to the disciples. Then Peter, James, John and Andrew (the first four he called) have asked him: “when will this be...?” (v. 4). How will we know when “these things” are about to happen? He has told them of persecution, of strange natural phenomena, of societal breakdown, of the fate of the disciples. The portents will be wars, earthquakes and famines (vv. 7-8). The end will come suddenly; people will suffer greatly. It is only because God, in his mercy, has “cut short those days” (v. 20) that the elect, the godly, will be saved. Even they will be tempted by other messiahs. Now we come to our reading. “In those days” (v. 24)

there will be darkness: a sign of the coming of divine judgment (as in Isaiah 13:10). The elect will see “the Son of Man”, a superhuman person with heavenly power and glory, coming to inherit his kingdom (v. 26, as prophesied Daniel 7:13). He will bring the godly together (as in Isaiah 64:22) from all over the world. (Winds were thought to originate at the four corners of the earth.) By implication, the “Son of Man” (v. 26) is the true Messiah, Christ come the second time. Jesus admonishes his followers to “keep alert” (v. 33) for this coming. The leafing of the “fig tree” (v. 28) is a sure harbinger of summer; similarly, when they see “these things”, the End is near, very near (v. 29), but when is the Father’s prerogative. The images are those of apocalyptic (vision of the future) literature, popular in Jesus’ day.

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

St. John's Calendar

November 2011

- Thu 3 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- 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., discussing *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery
- Thu 10 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.
- Mon 14 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thu 17 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
LOGOS deadline, 10:00 a.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.

December 2011

- Thu 1 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 4 Second 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.
- Tue 6 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m. discussing
Little Princes by Conner Grennan
- Thu 8 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 11 Third 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.
- Tue 13 Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thu 15 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 17 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
- Sun 18 Fourth 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
Community Christmas Caroling, 5 p.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Thu 22 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 24 Christmas Eve
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 5 p.m.
Holy Eucharist, 11 p.m.
- Sun 25 Christmas Day
Holy Eucharist with hymns, 10 a.m.

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Next deadline is Thursday, November 17 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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