



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

September 2015

Food, Fun, and Following Jesus: VBS 2015



More than 30 children attended St. John's VBS 2015 session in July.

From July 6–10, St. John's welcomed more than 30 children to Vacation Bible School (VBS) 2015. During a week full of both laughter and learning, participants studied the first followers of Jesus while playing Bible games, competing in trivia contests, and singing. There was time for food and fun too, including creating bracelets, designing t-shirts, and getting wet on swimsuit day. On the last day, everyone packed meals for the homeless and then ate the same type of meal themselves.

The good times will continue next summer, so start thinking ahead to VBS 2016! To see more photos from this year's session, visit the St. John's web site at stjohnsarlingtonva.org.

Church Elects Michael Curry as First Black Presiding Bishop

Bishop Michael Curry of North Carolina was elected presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church at the church's triennial convention, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, from June 25 to July 3. Curry was elected by a landslide in the House of Bishops and confirmed in the same way in the House of Deputies. "It really is a blessing and privilege to serve our church and to serve our Lord in this way," said Curry. "I treasure this church, this house, the House of Bishops, all of us. We are God's children."

Curry said The Episcopal Church is "the church where I learned about Jesus. This is a good and wonderful church and we are good and wonderful people and I thank God to be one of the baptized among you." He added, "My heart is really full."

"We've got a society where there are challenges before us and there are crises all around us. And the church has challenges before it," Curry said. "We got a God and there really is a Jesus, and we are part of the Jesus Movement. Nothing can stop the movement of God's love in this world."

In other actions at convention, the church decided to approve marriage equality guidelines for same gender couples. In the wake of the June 26 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage for all Americans, General Convention followed suit on July 1 with canonical and liturgical changes to provide marriage equality for Episcopalians.

The House of Deputies concurred with the House of Bishops' approval the day before of a canonical change eliminating language defining marriage as between a man and a woman and authorizing two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples.

The resolutions marked the culmination of a conversation launched when the 1976 General Convention said that "homosexual

persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance and pastoral concern and care of the church," said the Very Rev. Brian Baker, deputy chair of the Special Legislative Committee on Marriage. "That resolution began a 39-year conversation about what that full and equal claim would look like. The conversation has been difficult for many and painful for many."

The resolutions represented compromises reached after prayerful consideration and conversation within the legislative committee and then the House of Bishops to make room for everyone, Baker said. "I know that most of you will find something...to dislike and to disagree with" in the resolutions, he said, asking deputies to "look through the lens of how this compromise makes room for other people."

Because it is a canonical change and will change the language in the prayer book, the resolutions must be approved again at the 2018 General Convention.

Besides authorizing two new marriage liturgies, the convention also approved for continued use "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant" from "Liturgical Resources I," which General Convention approved for provisional use in 2012, "under the direction and with the permission of the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority."

The budget for the next three years emphasizes evangelism and racial reconciliation. The convention adopted the 2016-2018 triennial budget July 2 after agreeing to add \$2.8 million for evangelism work. While the addition passed with relatively little debate in the House of Deputies, it faced some opposition in the House of Bishops.

The 2016-2018 triennial budget is based on \$125,083,185 in revenue, compared to the

forecasted \$118,243,102 for the triennium that ends December 31 of this year. The expenses are projected to be \$125,057,351. The budget comes in with a negligible surplus of \$25,834. Its revenue projection is based in part on asking the church's dioceses and regional mission areas to give 18 percent of their income to fund the 2016 budget, 16.5 percent for the 2017 budget, and 15 percent in 2018. The version of the budget presented July 1 by the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F) included a major new \$2 million initiative on racial justice and reconciliation, even as it reduces the amount of money it asks dioceses to contribute to 15 percent by 2018.

General convention also changed the structure of the church's governance. One resolution, Substitute Resolution A004, rewriting the rules governing the church's Executive Council, rejected a proposal by the Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church to halve council's size. The resolution slightly expanded Executive Council's appointment power concerning three members of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's executive staff, including the chief operating officer, chief financial officer, and chief legal officer (a position created in the resolution). The presiding bishop will conduct annual performance reviews with all three of those officers and share the results with council's executive committee under the terms of the resolution. The resolution also sets up a provision for those three officers, along with the presiding bishop and the House of Deputies president, to engage in a mutual ministry review every 18 months.

Another resolution reduces the number of the church's standing commissions from 14 to two. The two would be the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons, and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. The

presiding bishop and House of Deputies president would appoint study committees and task forces to complete the work called for by a meeting of General Convention, with council's approval. All of those bodies would expire at the start of the next General Convention unless they are renewed.

Other topics covered at convention included environmentally responsible investing, support for Christians in Israel and Palestine, plans to revise the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, and the issue of alcohol abuse. The next convention in 2018 will be in Austin, Texas.

(Information for this article was provided by Episcopal News Service.)

Arlington Interfaith Council Dissolves

The Arlington Interfaith Council (AIC), of which St. John's is a member, dissolved on June 15. AIC was an umbrella organization that supported many agencies in the area, including the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) and Meals on Wheels. Since its beginning in 1966, the council had represented a sizable portion of the faith community in Arlington County. It had been a leading voice within the county on issues of broad interest and concern to people of faith—poverty, homelessness, affordable housing, immigration, and mental health, among others.

But the council had been challenged by many things. Membership had dropped and participation by AIC members had declined to less than a third of the 47 organizations regularly attending; many churches did not even have formal representatives. Financial support had fallen so that AIC could not provide even the minimal amount of \$500 to the Helping Hands Agencies.

Some external factors also affected the decision to dissolve. When AIC began, the faith communities in Arlington lacked a voice to speak for those in the community who needed assistance. Over the intervening years, many churches and faith organizations have developed strong social justice ministries and provide significant support directly to the Helping Hands agencies, have created their own in-house programs that meet some of the

needs of the community, and have taken their concerns directly to the Arlington County Board and county agencies.

For these reasons, AIC decided to end its ministry and disperse its remaining funds to the Helping Hands agencies.

(Information for this article was provided by the Arlington Interfaith Council E-Bulletin.)

St. John's Half-Year Financial Statement

Operating Budget	YTD	Budget
Operating Income	\$86,392.48	\$148,145.00
Operating Expenditures	\$78,786.84	\$165,689.00
Income Less Expenditures	\$7,605.64	-\$17,544.00
Funds Designated for Specific Uses		
Designated Funds In	\$10,204.26	
Designated Funds Out	\$12,768.76	
Total Financial Assets	\$260,476.00	

For details, see posting on the bulletin board outside the nursery or contact Bill Thomson.

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.

A Letter to Charleston's Emanuel AME Church

At the suggestion of Anne Stenger, St. John's sent the following letter of solidarity and support to the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

July 15, 2015

Emanuel AME Church
110 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are a small Episcopal Church in Northern Virginia. At one with people of all faiths everywhere, we are saddened and upset at the tragedy you suffered. Shaken by the shooting, we are moved by the forgiveness given by your members and relatives of the victims.

This true example of Christian love is a shining reminder to us and to Christians everywhere of the importance of God's love.

The members of your historic church and the victims are, and will remain, in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours in Christ,

William Schenck
Senior Warden

From the Rector: Stretching Toward Life

Whenever I take physical therapy—and it has been way too much lately—I get a series of stretches to do. They aren't very long but they are to prepare me for what is coming next, which are my strengthening exercises. Mine are hamstrings right now because they tightened up before and because of the surgery.

It is the time of the year for taking new classes. Students are registering for subjects they will need to graduate. The role of the classes is to stretch their minds, to prepare them for life in the world. The goal is to impart the knowledge they need to move farther along in their education.

Our own parishioner, Paul Petrich, is going off to college this fall. That is a big stretch. He will stretch his body, I am sure, for the sports he will engage in. He will stretch his mind with all sorts of new ideas to assimilate. And Paul will stretch his emotions. He will be away from home for an extended period of time. As with most 18-year-olds, I suspect he is ready, but still he will have to adjust to life without his family. He will engage in the process of making new friends, another emotional stretch. And he will do some spiritual calisthenics too. He will have to decide if he wants to make going to church or sleeping in on Sunday mornings his priority. Or perhaps he can find a 5 p.m. service to attend.

It is not only teenagers going to college that are called to stretch themselves spiritually. Every day we are called to stretch our hearts and minds to meet God, who is always calling to us. Brother Geoffrey Tristram of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), says that every day “the Spirit...urges us to remember whose we are... and [stretch] forward to the heavenly call in Christ.”

Jesus stretched out his arms on the Cross to draw all people to him as God wanted, and

we are called to emulate his example. There are many ways we can stretch.

We can be welcoming. Brother Curtis Almquist of SSJE says, “[We pray] to God for the merciful enlargement of our hearts to have space for all to whom Jesus’ outstretched arms so generously welcome...including our enemies.” And we must try to make space in our hearts for ourselves. Sometimes we are much harder on ourselves than on anyone else, but it is important to love and accept ourselves as Jesus does.

We can forgive. Forgiveness is not easy, but if we do not forgive we remain stuck in the past, unable to stretch forward. We do not need to have old resentments taking up space in our heads; we need to leave room for the new things God is teaching us. Forgiving doesn't mean we forget, but it does mean we wish the person well, even if we have to cut ourselves off from him or her to avoid getting hurt again.

We can proclaim. Proclaiming is something that truly lifts us out of our comfort zone. We don't like to talk about our Christian stories with others in order to bring them to faith. We are afraid we will be rejected. We will talk about our church and how great the people are—sometimes—but speaking the Gospel of Jesus Christ is much harder. We can act it out, but saying it is like pulling teeth. Regardless, we have to stretch toward proclaiming God's message in the world.

We can encourage others to stretch and in doing so stretch ourselves. When we say we believe in another's ability to stretch and grow, we cause that person to begin to think differently about themselves, to think they can become a new creation, shaped and formed by reaching for God.

Stretching is not about pushing “our way through life...roughly shoving people out of

our way,” says Tristram. It is about giving everyone their space to journey toward the resurrection with everyone else. It is about living in the resurrection, doing what Jesus wants us to do in every moment of the day. The Gospel of John says that when we believe, we have eternal life now and that life is rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus. When we stretch ourselves, we are stretching toward life. We are drawing closer to God and our neighbor. So stretch yourself and grow into the person you were meant to be.

Ann †

A Note of Thanks from Ann

Dear people of St. John’s,

I wanted you to know how grateful I am for all the cards and visits I received while I was at home recovering from my hip surgery. Your cards made me smile, and the visits were truly gifts from God. Thank you all for your generous hearts, and a special thanks to Debbie Carter for organizing the visits and other help.

Retreat to Shrine Mont



The St. John’s Shrine Mont parish retreat will take place October 16-18. Make plans to attend this annual time of rest, relaxation, and reflection. More exciting details will be coming soon! Contact Debbie Carter if you have questions.

St. John’s Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
Minister of Family Programs: Jonathan Muehlke
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Carol Dunlap
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Juan Figueroa

Vestry

Bill Schenck, Senior Warden
Sandy Winger, Junior Warden
Jeff Aitken

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Pledge Clerk
Lenore Schmidt, Chair, Finance Committee
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Paul Stenger
Bill Thomson
Linda Trochim

Words on Hymns: Take My Hand, Precious Lord

The gospel hymn *Take My Hand, Precious Lord* (also known as *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*) is our gradual hymn for September 6. The lyrics were written by the Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey (1899–1993), who also adapted the melody.

The melody is credited to Dorsey, drawn extensively from the 1844 hymn tune *Maitland*, which is often attributed to American composer George N. Allen (1812–1877). However, the earliest known source (*Plymouth Collection*, 1855) shows that Allen was the author/adaptor of the text “Must Jesus bear the cross alone,” not the composer of the tune. The tune itself was printed without attribution for many years and appears with the name “Maitland” as early as 1868. Dorsey said that he used it as inspiration.

Dorsey wrote *Precious Lord* in response to his inconsolable bereavement upon the death of his wife, Nettie Harper, in childbirth, and his infant son in August 1932. (Mr. Dorsey can be seen telling this story in the 1981 gospel music documentary “Say Amen, Somebody,” which is available from Amazon.) The earliest known recording was made on February 16, 1937, by the Heavenly Gospel Singers.

Take My Hand, Precious Lord is published in more than 40 languages. It was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, favorite song, and he often invited gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to sing it at civil rights rallies to inspire crowds. At his request, she sang it at his funeral in April 1968. King's last words before his assassination were a request to play it at a mass he was due to attend that night. Opera singer Leontyne Price sang it at the state funeral of President Lyndon B. Johnson at his request in January 1973, and Aretha Franklin sang it at Mahalia Jackson's funeral in 1972.

Dorsey was known as “the father of black gospel music” and was at one time so closely

associated with the field that songs written in the new style were sometimes known as “dorseys.” Earlier in his life, he was a leading blues pianist known as Georgia Tom. As formulated by Dorsey, gospel music combines Christian praise with the rhythms of jazz and the blues. His conception also deviates from what had been, to that time, standard hymnal practice by referring explicitly to the self, and the self's relation to faith and God, rather than the individual made part of the group via belief.

Dorsey was born in Villa Rica, Georgia. His father was a minister and his mother a piano teacher. He learned to play blues piano as a young man. After studying music formally in Chicago, he became an agent for Paramount Records. He put together a band for Ma Rainey called the Wild Cats Jazz Band in 1924. He started out playing at “rent parties” or house parties with the names Barrelhouse Tom and Texas Tommy, but he was most famous as Georgia Tom. In all, he is credited with more than 400 blues and jazz songs. Dorsey began recording gospel music alongside blues in the mid-1920s. This led to his performing at the National Baptist Convention in 1930 and becoming the bandleader of two churches in the early 1930s. He was the music director at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois, from 1932 until the late 1970s.

Another composition, *Peace in the Valley*, written for Mahalia Jackson in 1937, was a hit for Red Foley in 1951, and has been performed by dozens of other artists, including Queen of Gospel Albertina Walker, Elvis Presley, and Johnny Cash.

Dorsey was the first African-American elected to the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and also the first in the Gospel Music Association's Living Hall of Fame. In 2007, he was inducted as a charter member of the

Gennett Records Walk of Fame in Richmond, Indiana. His papers are preserved at Fisk University, along with those of W.C. Handy, George Gershwin, and the Fisk Jubilee Singers. In 2002, the Library of Congress honored Dorsey's album *Precious Lord: New Recordings of the Great Songs of Thomas A. Dorsey* (1973) by adding it to the United States National Recording Registry.

Carol Dunlap



Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey

Bishop Jones To Visit St. John's

The Rt. Rev. David C. Jones, retired bishop suffragan of Virginia, will be at St. John's on September 27 for the annual bishop's visit. He will preach and celebrate and meet with the congregation after the service. An 8 a.m. service will not be held that day, so that all of St. John's can gather with the bishop. Please mark the date on your calendar and be sure to come.

From Peace Studies to the God We Can Know: Join the Sunday Seminar

St. John's adult Sunday seminar, which begins on September 13 at 9 a.m., will offer a wide range of topics this fall. The seminar begins with a session or more by Barbara Wien, who teaches peace studies at American University. Next up is a DVD study, "The God We Can Know," that focuses on the "I Am" sayings of Jesus. Participants will then discuss "If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat." This study will examine how to face our fears, discover and embrace the unique call of God in our lives, and experience the power of God to accomplish what we would not be capable of doing on our own.

On October 25, the Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard will talk about General Convention outcomes, while another session by Bill Pritchard during the fall will provide a primer on papal encyclicals—what they are and how they function. "Our lessons provide the groundwork for wide ranging discussions. We invite you to join us for these stimulating sessions," says Rev. Ann Barker.

LOGOS

LOGOS is published monthly except for August, at the beginning of the month.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Articles for LOGOS may be emailed to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org (preferred) or left at the church office.

Material for the October issue should be submitted by September 20. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

Join the St. John's Book Club on **Tuesday, September 8, at 7:30 p.m.** to discuss *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. Participants will also select books for the coming year. All are welcome!

Thank you to:

➤ Beth Cavey, for planning and running another wonderful Vacation Bible School (VBS) program, which had more than 30 children attending; to the team leaders Madeleine Harbin, Heidi Heim, John Petrich, and Olivia Siddle; to Patricia Broida, Jonathan Muehlke, Marion Reed, LiTan, and Wen Wang for their help with the teams, arts and crafts, and serving and preparing meals; to those who provided dinner—Brian Cavey, Del and Carole Hunt, John Restall, and Barbara Wien; to Lenore Schmidt for extra funding; and to Anne and Paul Stenger for providing VBS t-shirts. This program is one of St. John's big successes and we need to keep supporting it with our time and effort.

➤ VBS for preparing the bagged lunches for the Bailey's Crossroads homeless shelter in July.

➤ Brian Cavey, Tina Cavey, Jonathan Muehlke, and Sandy Winger for putting the sandwiches together for the Bailey's Crossroads Shelter on August 9. Thank you to Brian for transporting them to the shelter.

➤ Pete Olivere, who has agreed to be stewardship campaign chair.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in September:

Ginger Adair, Jeff Aitken, Griffin Baynham, Stephanie Beavin, Delaney Del Gallo, William Gibb, Rev. Sue Hardman, Connor McCartney, Rev. Anna Scherer, Clara Naw Sweet, Lane Turner, Jeffrey Wallace, and Kay Wells.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in September:

Erin and Gerard Baynham; Matthew and Cristina Tallent.