



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

November 2015

The Art of Listening to God: Shrine Mont 2015



Shrine Mont retreat participants enjoyed the beauty of the woods and the meditative atmosphere of the labyrinth.

The first cold weekend of the season, October 16–18, saw 13 St. John's parishioners and guests travel to the annual parish retreat at Shrine Mont. This year's retreat focused on "The Art of Listening to God," as participants learned about the spiritual and physical benefits of various types of meditation and the traditions started by their ancient desert ancestors. Workshop presenters encouraged attendees to make a commitment to prayerful meditation on a regular basis; ideally 12 minutes a day.

Despite the chill in the air, participants also had the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding woods and hills. Some went for walks, while others enjoyed the scenery from inside. In a change from previous years, the group's meals were all taken down the hill at Virginia House (fortunately the hearty comfort food had not changed!) Saturday night activities included relaxing, reading, doing puzzles and crafts, and engaging in good conversation. The young adults in the group, meanwhile, ventured forth on a late night outing to a nearby Halloween "Haunted Woods." Due to the weather, the Sunday morning worship service was held indoors, rather than at the outdoor Cathedral Shrine. A few hardy souls ventured to the shrine and the labyrinth for some reflective moments before the group headed back to the big city and home.

From the Rector: Choose Life

One of the gifts Jesus has given us is the power to choose. We are not robots, we do not have to follow every command. Even though Jesus is Lord, as Julian of Norwich says, he is courteous. Brother Mark Brown of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) says Christ abides within us, but does not force his attributes upon us. We choose whether he may transform our lives.

We have choices to make about all kinds of things every day. How to prioritize our lives, whether to go to a friend's house or stay home and work, how much money to spend, what to eat, what to wear, how long to stay at the office, whether to come to church—we are choosing something all the time, consciously or unconsciously. Sometimes these choices turn out well, and sometimes they turn out badly. Sometimes there is no value at all—one choice is equally as good as another. As long as the sermon and the *Logos* column get written this week, it doesn't matter what order I do them in.

As Christians, there are some choices we can make that will help us follow Christ in a closer way. They will help us transform our lives. There are many of these to choose from, but I will offer a few.

First of all, choose your passions. God gave you gifts, and your passions are one of them. Do what you love to do if you possibly can. When you pick a career, do it out of a sense of commitment. If it is not the right one, then make a change. If you are an avid sports fan, watch the game. Get into your team and root heavily for them. My sister has a passion for knitting and weaving and all things fiber, which she indulges in frequently, after her day's work as a passionate pediatrician. My brother has a passion for music, as do I. He directs the orchestra for musical theater. I sing with a choral group and take voice lessons.

When you are passionate about your life, you are using the gifts God gave you and that will make God's heart happy.

Choose to say yes to life. Sometimes we spend more time avoiding what we have to do than doing it. We might spend much of our time in fantasies or excessive escapism. We might plunge ourselves into distracting activities rather than face the tough times in life. But we can't truly experience the joy God wants to give us in life unless we're willing to experience the hard times too. We have to choose all of life to get the best of life.

Choose compassion. Love and care for one another and the world. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, help the homeless, walk or run in a race where the money raised will go to fund research for a disease. Send money to charities of various kinds. We need to show compassion for ourselves as well, to give ourselves a break.

Choose inclusivity. God embraces everyone and so should we. Acceptance of everyone exactly where they are shows a generosity of spirit that transforms us. This choice too includes ourselves. God loves every part of us, the parts we like and the parts we are not so happy about, and we can go about our day knowing that no matter what, we have a place at Jesus's table.

Choose perseverance. Mary Ng, writing in *The Upper Room*, tells of watching a couple training their son to kick a ball between two cones. At first he was unable to do it, but he never gave up and he finally could do it every time. We need to keep at it too. Sometimes it is all we can do to put one foot in front of the other as we go through our day. It may be a tough slog, but if we make it through, we can consider the day well done. God wants us to persevere in our lives as God wants us to persevere in seeking the kingdom.

The choices we make determine our futures. God is always in our choices big and small if we allow God in. When we want to know God's will, we can ask and God will tell us

and help us get there. Choose for God. Give thanks in this season for all God has given you, especially the power of choice.

Ann †



St. John's animal blessing took place at the Shirlington dog park on October 3 and outside the church on October 4. To view more pictures, visit stjohnsarlingtonva.org.

St. John's Monthly Financial Statement

September income:	\$5,708
Pledge + Plate:	\$5,286
Year-to-date income:	\$108,699
September expense:	\$10,495
Year-to-date expense:	\$117,999

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 December issue should be submitted by November 16. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

Meet St. John's New Family Programs Minister, Whitney Coleman



St. John's welcomed Whitney Coleman as its new Minister of Family Programs in September. Whitney is busy planning upcoming family program activities, including a Thanksgiving Craft Village Day and the annual Christmas Pageant. In Sunday School, she will be working with the children to learn more about the parables and sayings of Jesus and what they mean.

When not at St. John's, Whitney is a teacher for the Big Science Learning and

Engineering Program at elementary schools in Montgomery County, Maryland. She also tutors students in English, Chinese Mandarin, writing, and reading comprehension and serves as a college preparation consultant.

A graduate of St. John's University, Whitney has previously worked with the Church Resources Ministries organization in Kunming, China; the Harlem Children's Zone; and at an international school in West Africa that drew students from more than 15 countries. Her community and educational service work has also taken her to New Orleans, New York, Kenya, Panama, and South Africa.

As Whitney settles into her new position, stay tuned for more details about exciting family programs at St. John's this fall and into 2016!

Walking on Water and Papal Publications: Join the Sunday Seminar in November

In November, the Sunday Seminar will continue its study on "If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat." On November 8, Bill Pritchard will discuss papal publications such as bulls and encyclicals. On November 15, Bill Schenck will offer a session on the pope's encyclical about climate change. Please join the seminar at 9 a.m. in the parlor for these stimulating discussions!

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.

Words on Hymns: *For All the Saints*

One of the most stirring hymns ever written is *For All the Saints*, which we customarily sing as the processional hymn on All Saints Day. This year the feast day actually falls on a Sunday. The music as composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams has a challenging but exciting “walking bass,” which is a continuously moving line for the pedals, coupled with rousing chords in the hands. (It’s also exhausting—I’m ready to pack it in after the processional, with a whole service yet to play!)

The origin of All Saints Day cannot be traced with certainty, and it has been observed on various days in different places. However, there are some who maintain the belief that it has origins in the pagan observation of May 13, the Feast of the Lemures, in which the malevolent and restless spirits of the dead were propitiated. Liturgiologists base the idea that this Lemuria festival was the origin of All Saints on their identical dates and on the similar theme of “all the dead.”

The Feast of All Saints, on its current date, is traced to the foundation by Pope Gregory III (731–741) of an oratory in St. Peter’s for the relics “of the holy apostles and of all saints, martyrs and confessors, of all the just made perfect who are at rest throughout the world,” with the date moved to November 1 and the May 13 feast suppressed. Today there are various traditions around the world to celebrate All Saints Day.

The truly fine poem that is the text for this hymn was written as a processional hymn by the Anglican Bishop of Wakefield, William Walsham How. The hymn was first printed in 1864 in *Hymns for Saint’s Days, and Other Hymns* by Earl Nelson. It originally had 11 verses, which were reduced to eight in many

hymnals, including ours. We usually sing just four verses in the interests of time. How was a very active member of the clergy who wrote many influential treatises and founded several organizations to help the poor.

The hymn was sung to the melody *Sarum* by Victorian composer Joseph Barnby until the publication of the *English Hymnal* in 1906. This hymnal used a new setting by Ralph Vaughan Williams that he called *Sine Nomine* (literally “without name”), in reference to its use on the Feast of All Saints. While most English hymn tunes of its era are written for singing in SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) four-part harmony, *Sine Nomine* is primarily set in unison (verses 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8) with organ accompaniment; just three verses (4, 5, and 6) are set in sung harmony. The tune appears in this form in most English and American hymnbooks. The tune *Sarum* does not appear to have been used with any other text, and it still appears in this setting in a number of hymnals, although not ours. (However, two other tunes by its composer, Joseph Barnby, are in our hymnal, set to *Now the day is over* and *When morning gilds the skies*.)

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford’s tune *Engleberg* was also written to be partnered with this hymn, although in the wake of *Sine nomine* it never gained popularity and is now more commonly used with other hymns: *When in our music God is glorified*, *We know that Christ is raised and dies no more*, and *All praise to thee, O thou, O King divine*. *Engleberg* is also one of the greatest hymn tunes ever written, so we are lucky to have texts for both *Sine nomine* and *Engleberg* in our hymnal.

Carol Dunlap

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ Bring your favorite dish and celebrate Thanksgiving a little early at the **potluck fellowship** on Sunday, November 22, following the 10 a.m. worship service.

Thank you to:

➤ Marshall Adair, Charlotte Bovender, Peter Olivere, and Paul Stenger for their help in making the grounds ready for the bishop's visit.

➤ Peter Olivere for his continuing good work as stewardship chair, including his assistance with the technical aspects of mail merging.

➤ Bill Thomson and Peter Olivere for helping out at the animal blessing at Shirlington Dog Park. Thank you also to Peter for taking pictures at both the dog park and the church.

➤ Bill Schenck for providing the cake for the bishop's reception.

➤ Bishop David Jones for visiting us for worship and sharing conversation with us afterwards.

➤ Beth Cavey for writing a description of St. John's family programs ministry highlights for the diocesan blog, Diodocs (stay tuned for information on when you can see it in the blog).

➤ Debbie Carter for coordinating the Shrine Mont weekend.

Thanks Be to God:

➤ For the dedication of the Virginia Seminary Chapel.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in November:

Bronwen Berliner; Gage Buchanan; Jud Buchanan; Dave Dunlap; Beth Fowler; Jean Harrison; Douglas Le Sage; Roger Ludwig; Keith McCartney; Robert L. "Larry" Rawls, III; Dave Robinson; and Laura Van Wyk.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in November:

Jeff and Michelle Aitken; Beth and Brian Cavey; Del and Carole Hunt.

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker

Minister of Family Programs: Whitney Coleman

Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson

Organist: Carol Dunlap

Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson

Sexton: Juan Figueroa

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer

John Restall, Pledge Clerk

Lenore Schmidt, Chair, Finance Committee

Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Vestry

Bill Schenck, Senior Warden

Sandy Winger, Junior Warden

Jeff Aitken

Paul Stenger

Bill Thomson

Linda Trochim