

# 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*

July 2016

## Education for Ministry: A Celebration and a Farewell



Left: Past and present EfM students gathered at St. John's on June 19 to celebrate the 2016 graduates and say goodbye to Pat Bleicher. Right: Rev. Ann Barker presents a plaque honoring Pat Bleicher's decades of service to EfM at St. John's.

When Pat Bleicher got a call from a former Yale Law School classmate on Labor Day weekend 1980 asking if she had ever thought about studying theology, she didn't realize it would be the start of a 36-year journey with Education for Ministry (EfM). She joined her friend's class and completed the 4-year EfM curriculum before then becoming an EfM mentor. "My emphasis was on going into churches where EfM didn't exist, starting a class, raising up new mentors, and then moving on," said Bleicher. In 1997, she began leading an EfM class at St. John's.

On June 19, St. John's celebrated Bleicher's decades of service as she prepares to

retire from EfM and recognized this year's program graduates, John Restall and Sandy Winger. Both current and former EfM participants came to mark the occasion and thank Bleicher for her ministry. "For several years I looked forward to clearing my schedule so I could take EfM with Pat before she retired. I'm very happy to have finished two years with her," said Debbie Carter. "It's amazing to learn how many people her ministry has touched over the years. St. John's is truly blessed to have Professor Bleicher!"

At the 10 a.m. worship service, Restall and Winger received their certificates of graduation, while Rev. Ann Barker presented

Bleicher with a plaque marking her nearly 20 years of service with the St. John's EfM class. The plaque will be placed in St. John's vestry room, where the EfM group meets each Sunday evening from September until June.

The St. John's class draws students from all over the Washington, D.C., area, including one participant who drives in from Winchester, Virginia, each week. Students gather in study, prayer, and reflection but also in fellowship, sharing a meal together during each session. While many different versions of the study texts have been used since Bleicher began with EfM, the four-year curriculum continues to have a distinct emphasis for each year of study. The four years cover The Hebrew Bible, The New Testament,

Church History, and Theology, Ethics, and Interfaith Encounter. "My greatest joy over the years is when somebody gets it and their hearts and minds open up because of what they are studying," said Bleicher.

"Reflecting on my four years in EfM, I started because I wanted a better understanding of the Bible. Though I had read the words from cover to cover three times, in EfM I learned to really hear the words. More important, I learned who I am," said Winger.

Bleicher may be retiring from EfM, but her days ahead will remain busy. She will continue teaching, preaching, and writing books, including a current project examining the historical role of the rabbi.

### *St. John's Monthly Financial Statement*

May income:	\$16,207
Pledge + Plate:	\$14,076
Year-to-date income:	\$57,483
May expense:	\$12,434
Year-to-date expense:	\$64,112

#### **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.

## From the Rector: The Importance of Words

Remember that old children's rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me"? Of course we now know that is not true. Words have a great deal of power. They can cause immeasurable joy, but also incredible pain. The book of James advises readers to "bridle their tongues." Brother David Vryhof of the Society of St. John the Evangelist says, "Remember that what you say powerfully shapes your life and the lives of those around you. Let your words be carriers of God's grace and blessing."

How can we use words to carry God's grace and blessing? We can begin with ourselves. How many of us make it a habit to belittle ourselves, to bemoan our imperfections, to figuratively beat ourselves up because we are not the people we think we should be or we want to be? Talk like that draws us no closer to our goals. In fact, it takes us farther away from the people we want to become because we believe the things we say about ourselves. Instead it is important to talk to ourselves with words of acceptance. There is a young adult book that works for adults too called *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. These are good words to start the day with. They carry with it an acceptance of who we are right now and a willingness to present ourselves before God. I say these words—with my name of course—every morning when I get out of bed, and I ask that I may do God's will for the rest of the day. Not "Help me be somebody else God," but "Help me be the best me I can be." In doing that, we will naturally fall into the "becoming" God wants for us.

Every day, remember to tell yourself that you are lovable and loved, not only by God but hopefully by yourself too. Not only is it important to accept yourself; it is important to love that person. Acceptance is something you

can be resigned to or something you can revel in. When you tell yourself you love yourself—your body, your mind, and your spirit—you are much more likely to take care of yourself and thereby increase your chances for growth into God's idea for you in God's kingdom.

How many of us can name our gifts? How many of us are embarrassed to do that? It is important to know what gives us life, what we are good at, so we can do more of that and less of some other things that we are not so good at or don't have a passion for doing. My spiritual director once told me that if we can do the things we love 70 percent of the time, then we are doing great. But it isn't easy to say what we're good at. We are used to being self-deprecating. But we are shaped in an unhappy way when we cannot name our assets. We feel useless and depressed, not lively and animated. Share your passions with yourself and others for a more joyful life.

Other things we can speak about honestly include what we need, our doubt and our faith, and the hope that is in us. And if we feel hopeless, see the beginning of this column. Speaking the truth about ourselves and knowing that God wants that ability for us will give us the hope we need as we move through our day-to-day lives, experiencing both challenges and joys.

The way we speak also shapes the lives of others. One of the most important things we can do is speak words of encouragement to one another. We all have doubts and fears about ourselves. Sometimes we can handle them ourselves, but usually it takes words of support from others to shake us out of our negative feelings, so we believe that we really can do the things we are told we can do.

We can also speak words of respect and value rather than words that tear down. Each human being is loved by God and worthy of

our respect, if for no other reason than that. Sure, we might have to deliver bad news or get angry with someone, but we can speak those words in a way that values the person, even if the deeds are a problem to be dealt with. A person can make a mistake, but no person is a mistake.

We can speak words of comfort. People need to be comforted about all kinds of losses, and they turn to us for that help. A listening

ear, an empathetic “I understand,” or a helpful suggestion all are ways of “being instruments of God’s peace” as the Serenity Prayer says.

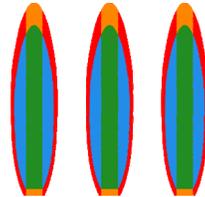
Words are powerful—words to ourselves and words to others. They really do shape how we look at the world and how we look at ourselves. The gift of good words blesses us and others and helps us to become the kingdom people God wants us to be.

Ann †

### We Want YOU for VBS!

St. John’s is looking for volunteers to help with Vacation Bible School. Individuals are needed to assist with the program, as well as volunteers who can help provide dinner

Monday through Friday, July 18–22. Please sign up on the sheets in the narthex. We need your help to bring stories of God’s love to our children this summer!



#### St. John’s Staff and Leadership

##### Staff

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

##### Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer  
John Restall, Pledge Clerk  
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

##### Vestry

Bill Thomson, Senior Warden  
Sandy Winger, Junior Warden  
Jeff Aitken  
Teresa Birmingham

Del Hunt  
Lisa Pope  
John Restall

## Words on Hymns: *Battle Hymn of the Republic*

Most people are familiar with the story of Julia Ward Howe's writing of the lyrics of *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, our recessional hymn for July 3. But just in case you missed it, in November 1861, Howe was touring Union army camps near Washington, D.C., with President Lincoln, Rev. James Freeman Clarke, and her husband, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, a member of Lincoln's Military Sanitary Commission and a fervent abolitionist. Julia Howe, who was staying at the Willard Hotel downtown, overheard Union troops singing *John Brown's Body* and was inspired to write a set of lyrics that dramatized the rightness of the Union cause. Within a year, this new hymn was being sung by civilians in the North, Union troops on the march, and even prisoners of war held in Confederate jails.

But where did the tune come from? In the early days of the Civil War, the song *John Brown's Body* was wildly popular. Although in its original incarnation it had nothing to do with the notorious abolitionist leader hanged at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, on December 2, 1859, it became inextricably identified with him and acquired new verses that were sung by federal troops and Union sympathizers alike. The tune was borrowed from an old Methodist hymn, *Say, Brothers, Will You Meet Us?*, by William Steffe, of Richmond, Virginia. Steffe was asked to lead the singing at a Georgia camp meeting. When he got there, he found there were no song books and so improvised some words to one of those tunes that—like most of the others in those pre-copyright days—was floating in the ether. Steffe's lyric, like the original John Brown song, had one verse, "Say, brothers, will you meet us?," and one chorus, "Glory, glory, hallelujah...."

Early versions of "Say, Brothers" included variants, developed as part of the call-and-

response hymn singing tradition, such as Brothers, Sisters, Mourners, Sinners, and Christians. This initial line was repeated three times and finished with the tag "On Canaan's happy shore."

The original namesake for the song was Sergeant John Brown, a Scotsman and a member of the Second Battalion, Boston Light Infantry Volunteer Militia. This group enlisted with the Twelfth Massachusetts Regiment and formed a glee club at Fort Warren in Boston. Brown was second tenor and the subject of a lot of good-natured joshing, including a song about him mouldering in his grave, which at that time had just one verse, plus chorus: "Glory, glory, hallelujah, Glory, glory, hallelujah...."

They called it "The John Brown Song." On July 18, 1861, at a regimental march past the Old State House in Boston, the soldiers sang the song and the crowd assumed, reasonably enough, that it was inspired by the life of John Brown, the Kansas abolitionist, not John Brown, the Scots tenor. Later on, various other verses were written about the famous John Brown and the original John Brown was forgotten. As a footnote, Sergeant Brown died during a Union retreat. When the enlistment of Colonel Webster's Twelfth Massachusetts Regiment expired in July 1864, only 85 of more than a thousand men were left to return home to New England. Huge crowds in Boston greeted the survivors with cries to sing "John Brown's Body," but, as one report commented, "the brave heroes marched silently to their barracks and the 'Websters' passed into history."

*John Brown's Body* had a number of versions very similar to this one published in 1861:

John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave; (3X)  
His soul's marching on!

*(Chorus) Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah! His soul's marching on!*

He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord! (3X)  
His soul's marching on! *(Chorus)*

John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back! (3X)  
His soul's marching on! *(Chorus)*

His pet lambs will meet him on the way; (3X)  
They go marching on! *(Chorus)*

They will hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple tree! (3X)  
As they march along! *(Chorus)*

Now, three rousing cheers for the Union; (3X)  
As we are marching on!

Of all the songs written during and about the Civil War, perhaps none is as strongly identified with the Union cause today as *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. It has been a fixture in patriotic programs and is still sung in schools and churches across the nation.

Carol Dunlap

### Abiding Amazement: Reflections on EfM

As we transition leadership of the St. John's Education for Ministry (EfM) program from the brilliant and insightful Dr. Patricia Bleicher to myself and Wade Hinkle, parishioner from Holy Cross in Annandale and graduate of St. John's EfM, I consider this collect from one of our theological reflections:

Dear God, the Source of Wondrous Gifts,  
You fill our senses.  
Please help us keep our abiding amazement,  
So that we can accept your message with a child's wisdom.  
Amen.

Summer is a time of sweltering heat, tasty cooler drinks, smells of fresh cut grass, sounds of children playing in sprinklers, skinned knees, burned skin, and long, slow days. It is also a time when many of us take a break from the grind of work and commitments with a much needed vacation. Summer break gives us

new tools to keep our abiding amazement. We experience nature, culture, and new surroundings as we travel, and we sequester ourselves in a cool room with a rich book to be filled with the imaginations of a great writer. We often reconnect with family and friends. Our hiatus allows us to fill our senses with wondrous gifts.

With September comes a getting-back-to-business. Learners return to school. *LOGOS* resumes publication, and Christian education begins again. EfM rolls into a new year of study. After a summer of opening up, fall is where we are filled anew.

This collect asks us to hear with a child's wisdom. When a child learns, the experience is new and exciting. There is no need to pray to keep our abiding amazement when we are children, because wondrous gifts are more apparent and plentiful. September calls us to reclaim that joy and wonder. Only then are we able to really hear God's message—with open

hearts and minds that have been filled with the wonders of God's creation. And, as a child, accept it as truth.

Summer will allow me to take a break from the daily grind, but it also offers an opportunity to prepare for a new year of EfM. God's message to me has been to take on a leadership role, and summer will allow me to open up so that I may be filled with insight and inspiration for a new year of study. I look

forward to being amazed and rejuvenated to receive new learning in the fall.

I invite all of you to embrace the idea of this collect. Open your souls to wondrous gifts so that you too may be filled with abiding amazement and accept God's message to you with child-like wisdom.

St. John's EfM group meets September until June on Sundays from 6–9 p.m. For more information, please contact Wade Hinkle or me at [efm@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:efm@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).

Beth Cavey



### Sunday Education Takes a Vacation

The Sunday Seminar and children's Christian education program are on vacation until Sunday, September 11. Keep reading, seeking, worshipping, and rejuvenating over the summer. We'll see you in September!



### 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](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org) (preferred) or left at the church office.

LOGOS will return in September. Material for the September issue should be submitted by August 22. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club is on a summer break, but get ready for the **September 6** meeting (and discover what all the buzz surrounding *Hamilton* is about) by reading *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow. The biography inspired the Broadway smash. All are welcome!

### Thank you to:

- All the people who worked in our children's Christian education program this spring: Debbie Carter, Del Hunt, Pete Olivere, Lisa Pope, Faye Pritchard, Bill Thomson, and Barbara Wien.
- Pat Bleicher for her many years of work with EfM here at St. John's. Her mentorship has guided many people through the process of theological reflection to discover their gifts for ministry in the church and in the world.
- Beth Cavey and Wade Hinkle, who will mentor the EfM group beginning in the fall.

### Congratulations to:

- Maddie Harbin, who graduated from Falls Church High School in June. She will attend Old Dominion University in Norfolk this fall. We appreciate all her years of dedicated service to acolyting and Vacation Bible School.
- Douglas LeSage, who also graduated from Falls Church High School in June and will attend Old Dominion University.

### Rest in Peace

- Spencer Cohen, Lisa Pope's father-in-law, who died June 15. May his memory be for a blessing.
- All the people killed in the Orlando shootings.

### We celebrate with all who have birthdays in July and August:

Marshall Adair, Nolan Baynham, Michael Beavin, Carol Bogart, Henry Carter, Brian Cavey, Carolyn Corlett, Dennis Eckhout, Nancy Gibb, Lexie Hart, McKenzie Hart, Klaus Held, Thomas Held, Janice Hull, Anne Kaylor, Billie Jean Keith, Kenji McCartney, Helen Naw Mumu, Ray O'Connor, Virginia Pearson, Paul Petrich, Bill Pritchard, Harriet Sheehan Rawls, Patrick Rawls, Marion Reed, Lynn Robinson, Lenore Schmidt, Christian Tallen, Jones Tallent, Angie Turner, Bill Turner, Simon Van Wyk, Sarah Vistica, Kim White, and John Wilson.

### We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in July and August:

Dennis and LuAnne Eckhout; Reverend Sue and Rob Hardman; Matthew and Adrienne Hubbard; Lisa Pope and Justin Cohen; and Jones and Sharon Tallent.



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