

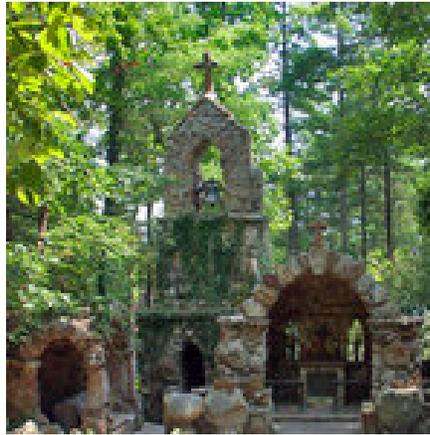
LOGOS

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

October 2016

Shrine Mont Unplugged



St. John's Shrine Mont weekend will include Sunday worship at the open-air Cathedral Shrine of the Transfiguration.

Too busy? Need to get away from everything? Is your spiritual well-being flagging from too many hours spent on the Beltway, inside an office or classroom, or staring at a screen? Come to Shrine Mont. Turn off that cell phone and discover the peace of the mountains during St. John's Shrine Mont retreat from October 14-16.

From prayer, study, and worship to hiking, reading, socializing, and just plain resting, the Shrine Mont conference center in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia offers

the space and tranquility to renew your soul. On Sunday morning, worship will be held at Shrine Mont's open-air cathedral, first consecrated in 1925.

All are welcome, including families. Children of all ages can join their parents on a hike and at the campfire (complete with marshmallows). There are also fields for family ball games, plenty of board games, and a playground. If requested in advance, a few hours of babysitting can even be arranged.

The cost for the weekend (two nights and six meals) is \$162 for adults and teenagers (shared room; \$205 for a single room) and \$55 for children ages four to 12. There is no charge for children three and under. For more information, see the brochures located in the sanctuary pews or contact Debbie Carter at 703-575-7969 (email: ddgcarter@yahoo.com). Please let Debbie know if financial assistance

is needed. No one will ever be turned away because of financial need.

To register, fill out the form in the pew brochure and place the form and your check in the Sunday collection plate or mail it to the church office at 415 South Lexington Street, Arlington, VA 22204 (make your check payable to St. John's Church and write "Shrine Mont" on the note line).



Come enjoy the beauty and peace of Shrine Mont during St. John's retreat weekend in October.

Meet St. John's New Organist

St. John's welcomed Judith Marcinko as its new organist on September 18. Judith first started playing the organ in junior high and then honed her skills as an adult as she, her late husband, and their four children moved frequently around the country for his work with IBM. From Newport, Rhode Island, to Boca Raton, Florida, Judith played at churches wherever they lived until they settled more

permanently in Maryland. "It's always been a part of my life," she says.

Now living in Sterling, Virginia, she most recently served as organist at St. Philip Catholic Church in Falls Church. Away from St. John's, teaching more than 40 piano students a week fills her days. As Judith settles into her new position, please say hello, make her feel welcome, and continue to lift your voice in song on Sunday mornings!



From the Rector: Embrace the Hard Stuff

Sometimes I admit I am overwhelmed. I have too much to do, and I don't see how I'll ever get it all done. Or I am overwhelmed because I don't have enough to do and wonder how I am going to fill the time. It's like Goldilocks and the three bears. I am comfortable when it is just right—just enough to do, just enough time to relax. But I have been told recently to embrace the hard stuff, to sit with it and let it be part of my life. I've been told it's a good idea to write about it and see what causes my tendency to be overwhelmed, to call a friend to help set priorities, and most of all to offer it to God for God to handle—to show me how much God loves me and wants to help me in the midst of my dilemma. And God has done so. I get things done I need to get done (like this column, which is several days late because it went completely out of my mind). I find things to do when I have spare time. God wants to be active with me, not to have power over me, as Richard Rohr says, but have power with me to do what God needs me to do.

There is other hard stuff we can embrace, knowing God is with us. We can embrace our doubt. None of us wants to do that because it leaves us constantly questioning who God is and what God is up to. God doesn't give us certainty, but the gift of doubt, says Brother Mark Brown of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). "God has left a trail of crumbs for us," he says, "but remains to a great extent elusive and beyond absolute certainties." God has given us doubt, he says, so we will take things of this world seriously. When we doubt, we turn to God for help with our unbelief and that is what God wants more than anything. Yes, God is elusive, but God is also present within us and around us and wants us to know that. We can know that through our questioning.

Embrace your fears. We most often push our fears away—not the sensible fear of large bears in the woods but the everyday anxieties, the "what ifs" we are all prone to. It is not comfortable for us to live in the midst of these worries, but it is important to acknowledge them. Having fears is not a choice we have in our humanity, but we can surrender those fears to God and ask God to draw us away from them to be what God would have us be. Trying to avoid our fears—or concentrating too much on them—isolates us from the very people God wants us to love.

Embrace your emptiness. We all have a big empty hole inside us, some of us bigger than others. It can't be filled with stuff or alcohol or food or anything but God because the hole is God-shaped. If we keep stuffing the hole with other things, we cannot admit that we have it and invite Christ into it to love us unconditionally. Having our hole available for Christ to fill is a way of embracing Christ himself.

Embrace your longing. What are your deepest desires? What do you want more than anything? Don't be afraid to look at those parts of yourself that yearn for something else, for something more, for something joyful and hopeful to be part of your life. Share your longings with God. Sometimes God will show you that the longings are of this world and help you let them go, and sometimes God will satisfy your longings with rich abundance. We need to be ready to receive the abundance by asking God to help us let go of negativity and a scarcity mentality that haunts so many of us.

Finally, embrace the God who pursues you. Embracing God shouldn't be hard we think, but it so often is much harder than we think. Embracing God means putting your whole trust in God's grace and love, as the *Book of Common Prayer* says. It means turning your

will and your life over to God's care. It means waiting for God to tell you what is right for you. It means intimacy with God, which many of us desire, but ultimately find scary to contemplate.

Embracing the hard stuff is difficult, but it is what we have to do to grow our relationships

with God. And God made us to do that. Embrace what you are afraid of, and God will embrace you.

Ann †

St. John's Monthly Financial Statement

August income:	\$10,972
Pledge + Plate:	\$10,132
Year-to-date income:	\$92,804
August expense:	\$11,762
Year-to-date expense:	\$102,941

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
 Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
 Organist: Judith Marcinko
 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

St. John's Conducts Mutual Ministry Review

On September 18, the St. John's congregation met to conduct a Mutual Ministry Review (MMR) focused on the 2016 church goal of welcoming visitors and newcomers. Led by the Rev. Jonathan Bryan, approximately 25 people attended the MMR. Rev. Bryan noted that welcoming or hospitality is very important to the concept of church growth. He then spoke about the components of being hospitable and forming a "Hospitality Team," with duties that encompass both Sundays and weekdays.

Sunday activities, for example, include greeting newcomers and introducing them to other members, offering assistance during the service if needed, and both inviting and escorting visitors to the coffee hour following the service.

Just as important as hospitality on Sunday is the follow-up during the week with a phone call or an email, as well as a handwritten note. Also discussed was making the St. John's brochure and visitor cards more visible to guests through such means as placing them in the pews. Name tags for both St. John's members and visitors were advocated by many MMR participants as a way to more easily learn names and capitalize on the appeal of a small church that is like a family. Adding pictures to the St. John's directory and going

back to the practice of hanging photos of the congregation in the undercroft were additional suggestions made by participants.

Also explored was the visibility of St. John's in the community. Does the signage need to be better? Do visitors know where to go to enter the church? Is help needed in knowing where to park? Within the church building, suggestions were made to improve wayfinding, including helping visitors make their way down to coffee hour and locate the restrooms.

Rev. Bryan distributed a list of Hospitality Team duties for both Sundays and weekdays and asked everyone present to think about two things they could pick from the list to try for two weeks, whether it be greeting visitors, acting as a tour guide to show newcomers around the premises, or assessing signs around the church with a stranger's eye to locate weaknesses. He noted that "these interactions will help everyone get to know one another better too, even if there aren't strangers who visit every week."

For more information on the Hospitality Team list, talk to Rev. Ann Barker. St. John's other 2016 goals, building a strong spiritual community and serving needs in the community, will be addressed in future MMR sessions.



St. John's members participated in a Mutual Ministry Review on September 18.

Living into the Journey with God

This year's theme to guide us through Education for Ministry's (EfM) study and materials is "Living into the Journey with God." We are invited to learn about and reflect on our personal path and to experience others' journeys. Two states of living introduced at the beginning of our work are *theosis* and *scotosis*.

Theosis is an idea more common to Orthodox theology, but not unknown to the Anglican community. This year's Reading and Reflection Guide defines *theosis* as the "participation of the human person in the life of God." *Scotosis* is defined by Bernard Lonergan as an "aberration of understanding," or as Henri Nouwen observed, "for learning to be a redemptive process one has to consider first whether one wants insight."

Scotosis is the state I think we find ourselves in most often. *Scotosis* can take the form of choices that keep us apart from feeling God's presence. Being in this state allows us to blame God and others for our own choices. In this state, we can feel inferior and helpless, or we can cling to our personal beliefs with arrogant fierceness. We are prevented from seeking and finding divine connection. Our ego-centered focus creates an intellectual blindness to others' points of view, and we

prefer our blindness to the light of God's truth and love—all the time feeling justified in our position.

Living the journey to God and finding *theosis* takes the ability to "face and word the truth and to practice patient listening." In other words, we need to get over ourselves and our own truths and focus on others and their truths. When Jesus talks about giving up and giving over our lives, he is not just talking about a willingness to die for our faith. He is often talking about sacrificing our ego. Following Jesus is to live in a constant state of paradox: losing to win, giving up personal truth to find eternal wisdom, giving away to receive, dying to live. It also means that just when we think we have everything figured out, the Holy Spirit rips open our heart and says, *Try again*.

As we continue to live into our journey with God, we can either be stymied by *scotosis*, thinking that either no new insights are possible, the effort is hopeless, or that our own belief supersedes all else. Or we can embrace the paradox and build toward a longer-lasting *theosis* that sustains us on our travels like manna in the desert. Either way, God invites us in, and it is our choice whether or not we enter into the life of God.

Beth Cavey

Six Decisions that Will Change Your Life

The adult Sunday Seminar is now studying "Six Decisions that Will Change Your Life." Topics cover The Decision to Follow, The Decision for a New Life, The Decision to Mature, The Decision to Respond, The Decision to Persevere, and The Decision to Surrender. Planning is also underway for the next study. Come join the discussion on Sundays at 9 a.m. in the parlor!

Are You Registered to Vote?

Election Day is fast approaching on November 8. Are you registered to vote? Sandy Winger, a registrar for the Commonwealth of Virginia, will be available at St. John's on Sundays in October to register eligible voters. Look for Sandy in the undercroft from 9:15 to 9:45 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. to 12 noon. Community members are also welcome to stop by. To be able to vote in the November 8 election, you must register by October 17.

St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

St. John's Mission Statement

St. John's mission is building a strong spiritual community; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.

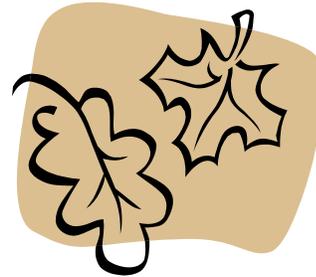
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LOGOS is published monthly except for August, at the beginning of the month.

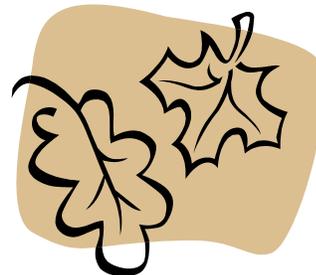
Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

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

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



Come help St. John's shine this fall! Join the Fall Cleanup Day on October 15 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided.



Parish News

Upcoming Events:

- The St. John's Book Club will meet on **October 4** at 7:30 p.m. to discuss Agatha Christie's mystery classic, *Murder on the Orient Express*. The **November 1** selection is *The Heart Goes Last* by Margaret Atwood. All are welcome!
- Get ready for St. John's Fall Cleanup Day on **October 15** from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (lunch will be provided). Come help with jobs big and small!

Welcome to:

- Judith Marcinko, our new organist.
- Kaitlyn Osteguín, our child care worker.
- Peggy and Carey Blount, Teresa Birmingham's parents, who are staying with Teresa, Mike, and Jack for the school year.
- Joy, Bobby, and Nella Candelieri.

Thank you to:

- The Vision Committee, who helped us set a vision, a mission, and goals for St. John's—Teresa Birmingham, Dave Dunlap, Peter Olivere, Lisa Pope, Faye Pritchard, and Bill Thomson.
- Bill Schenck and Lynn Christopher for agreeing to serve as Commitment Campaign co-chairs.
- Peter Olivere for his advertising expertise and technical help with office issues.
- Peggy Blount for teaching Sunday School.
- The Rev. Jonathan Bryan for conducting the Mutual Ministry Review on welcoming that was held on September 18.
- Debbie Carter, Beth Fowler, and Barbara Wien for posting St. John's information on the Arlington Forest, Bluemont, and Barcroft list serves.
- Mike Birmingham for coordinating acolyte festival participation.
- Beth Cavey and Wade Hinkle for getting EfM off to a great start.
- The Birminghams, the Candelieries, and Peter Olivere for putting up posters advertising the October 2 animal blessing.
- Debbie Carter and Faye Pritchard for their work in organizing the Shrine Mont retreat.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in October:

Erin Baynham, Jacob Beavin, Betsy Cullen, Bryan Harbin, Carrie Harbin, John Hart, Monica Lozano, Taylor Robinson, Rev. Peter Swarr, Bill Thomson, and Liz White.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in October:

Marshall and Ginger Adair; Cathi and Andy Del Gallo; Eileen Flynn and Paul Harless; John Hart and Angie Rollet; Heather and Tony Kollath; Dave and Lynn Robinson.