



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

January 2018

A Christmas Pageant to Remember



It was a Christmas Pageant to remember on Sunday, December 17, as the children (and a few adults) of St. John's presented the Christmas story. Thank you to all who helped make it so special: Galen Henderson (director), Rodger Ludwig (pianist), Dave Dunlap and Diane Henderson (backstage assistants), and cast members Jack Birmingham, Michael Birmingham, Brian Cavey, Michael Cavey, Tina Cavey, Lucy Drake, Maddie Harbin, Elinor Sonnet, Frances Sonnet, Nora Wien, and Vladi Wien. The cast and crew vividly brought the familiar story to life. A special thank you to Galen as well for her beautiful performance of a Christmas song she wrote and composed. It truly was a great day.

From the Rector: Resolve to Rejoice

I generally do not make New Year's resolutions. Though the beginning of a year does seem a good time to make promises about losing weight, quitting smoking, exercising more, and other self-improvement projects, it is easy to get overwhelmed and abandon the goal in short order. However, there are exceptions to almost everything, and I believe there is one resolution we can make that will be good for us and good for the world. We can resolve to rejoice. We can resolve to have a positive, thankful attitude about things in our lives, which can lead to happiness much deeper than what we experience when we lose 20 pounds.

First of all, in this Christmas and Epiphany season, resolve to rejoice in Jesus. Rejoice that God loves us enough to come among us to reconcile us to God. Rejoice that Jesus came among us, not to change God's mind about us and how bad we were but to change our minds about God. Rejoice in Jesus's example of abundance. He fed the hungry, he healed the sick, he met people's needs to show us that God is *for* us. God is there to give us what we need to sustain an abundant life.

Resolve to rejoice in hope. I know it may be hard to cultivate that attitude in the political atmosphere of today, but remember the Magi during Epiphany and how they followed the star, hoping to see a great leader, someone who would transform the world. Don't you think they were surprised to find a baby? But they gave Jesus gifts and were full of joy for the wonder of God's action in the world. What is your star? What can you look at that reflects God's action in your life and will give you an attitude of hope rather than despair?

Rejoice in relationship. I am getting Christmas cards from people I met in school, at summer camp, at my first parish, and in my neighborhood. I am so glad to hear from

everyone because it reminds me of how we are tied together with the people with whom we develop relationships in our lives. I went to visit my brother and his family at Thanksgiving and will go to my sister's for Christmas. Everyone will be there except one nephew, who goes to Europe for Christmas because his wife is British. Even my brand new grandnephew will be there. I will also get to see Evan and Kristy (they will drive to my sister's, but not up here). My family would be there for me in a heartbeat if I ever needed it. Relationships sustain us and hold us up. They are the chief way we experience God's love. Some of us may not have good family situations, but hopefully we have friends who fill that role for us.

Rejoice in today. Today is what we have. Yesterday is past and we have no idea what may happen tomorrow, so the joys and pleasures of today are what we must concentrate on. While we may plan for tomorrow, it does us no good to worry about what might happen. Most of the things we catastrophize about never come true, and the anxiety we experience only makes it harder for us to enjoy God's gifts of today. Every morning I thank God for the giftedness of the day and pray that I may recognize, receive, and rejoice in all the good things God wants to give me.

Rejoice in passion. What really gives you life? For me, one of the things is singing. I feel most authentically myself when I sing. Your passion may be something else—gardening, hiking, playing golf, caring for your children or grandchildren, volunteering, photography, or any number of things. Whatever it is, it is something God has given you to help fulfill you, to help you be joyful and thankful. Exercise your passions. Your excitement is a gift to the world.

Rejoice in play. It has been a surprise to me, who tends to want to be busy all the time, that play is productive. It is important to us because it helps us develop a balanced life, to use our creative energies, to power down from stressful lives. If you don't know how to play, ask a child and they'll show you.

Rejoice in your challenges? That is something "they" say, but I haven't bought into it yet. You will always learn a lesson from your challenges, "they" continue. And if you don't learn the lessons, the challenges will come around again. I'm not sure I can go along with that. How do you learn something from a tragedy, a lost job, a nasty boss? And why would God choose to teach you this way? I do rejoice that in my challenges, God is with me and will help me pull all the good out of them

that I can. What do you think about this one?

Last but not least, rejoice in St. John's. This is a loving community that sustains and nourishes us. It is a giving community that sustains and nourishes others. Our faith is strengthened here, and we can know the joy of giving of ourselves. It is a good place to grow and learn about Jesus, who loves us more than life itself.

So let's try to catch ourselves rejoicing and smile. The more we recognize ourselves being happy and thankful, the more we will want to put more of that in our lives. And the more we will be part of transforming the world into the place God wants it to be.

Ann †

St. John's Annual Meeting

St. John's will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, January 21, following the 10 a.m. service. The congregation will elect vestry members and the 2018 budget will be presented. This is also an opportunity to hear about all that has been happening in the church over the past year and to thank the many volunteers so vital to St. John's ministry and activities. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend this important gathering!

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
Nursery Attendant: Kaitlyn Osteguin
Sexton: Julio Sorto

Vestry

Lisa Pope, Senior Warden
Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden
Jeff Aitken

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Pledge Clerk
Dave Dunlap, Chair, Finance Committee
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Diane Henderson
Del Hunt
John Restall

Words on Hymns: *Brightest and Best*

Our processional hymn on the first Sunday of Epiphany, January 7, is a hymn to the Christ child, *Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning*. The original title was *Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning*. It was written by Bishop Reginald Heber (1783–1826), one of the finest Romantic hymn writers. Heber was born into a family of wealth and position. He was bright and a diligent student of the Bible even at a young age, as was evidenced by his Latin studies at age seven, when he translated a classical Latin text into English. Heber entered Oxford at age 17 and soon won two prizes for poetry.

He took orders in the Anglican Church in 1807 and became a rector in his father's church in the village of Hodnet near Shrewsbury. During his 16 years at this parish, he took on the task of improving hymn singing in the congregation. When he arrived, they were still singing only metrical psalms. He couldn't find the hymns he wanted, especially those that would fit the Anglican liturgy and the requirements of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Heber decided to prepare his own hymnal and invited other poets to contribute, including Sir Walter Scott and Henry Milman. Hymn singing was not firmly established in the Anglican Church at this time, and the Bishop of London refused Heber's request to publish a hymnal. *Brightest and Best* was thus first published in the *Christian Observer* in November 1811 before Heber's wife Amelia published it in 1827 as *Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Service of the Church Year*.

In 1823 Heber was appointed the Bishop of Calcutta. He was known for his tireless labor, enthusiasm, and administrative abilities. He died prematurely of a stroke in 1826 while taking a cold bath in India on a trip to Trichinopoly. British hymnologist J.R. Watson called him "the dedicated missionary-bishop, giving his life for the furtherance of the gospel."

The first stanza of *Brightest and Best* employs images of light. The second uses Romantic images of a cold and lowly station in opposition to the angels adoring him. The third stanza asks what we can give him, and the fourth realizes material gifts are not important. The final stanza serves to bookend the hymn by repeating the first stanza.

Most of Heber's 57 hymns, written while he was at Hodnet, are still in use today. There are five Heber contributions to our hymnal, including *Holy, Holy, Holy* and *Bread of the World in Mercy Broken*.

Among the many tunes that have been set to this hymn (biographer William E. Studwell estimates there are more than 20), the "Morning Star" setting by James P. Harding (1859–1911) is among the best known. Harding was for 35 years the organist at St. Andrew's Church, Islington, London, and composed a considerable body of church music, especially music for children's festivals in Islington. For many years, he was engaged in work for the civil service, dedicated to the material and spiritual well-being of the poor. According to Studwell, "Morning Star" was composed in June 1892.

Carol Dunlap

LOGOS

LOGOS is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except for a combined July/August issue.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

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

The deadline for the February issue is January 20. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

Sunday Seminar Resumes Study of *The Evolution of God*

After a break for Advent, the adult Sunday Seminar will resume its study of *The Evolution of God*. We will have a few sessions to complete the book, and then we will embark on a study of Islam. Our Lenten study will begin February 18. The seminar meets in the parlor at 9 a.m. Come join the discussion!



Come Out and Play: St. John's Hosts January Game Night

Bring your friends, neighbors, and favorite board game and come join the St. John's Game Night on January 27 at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be provided. All are welcome!

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 in Christ; 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.

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet **Tuesday, February 6**, at 7:30 p.m. to discuss *Journey to Munich* by Jacqueline Winspear. In this latest addition to the Maisie Dobbs mystery series, private investigator Dobbs travels to Munich in 1938 as a secret agent for the British government.

➤ Bring your favorite board or card game and come join St. John's Game Night on **Saturday, January 27**, at 7 p.m. Invite your friends and neighbors to be part of this fun-filled evening.

Thank you to:

➤ Eileen Tallent and all the volunteers for helping to decorate the church and make Christmas so beautiful.

➤ The choir for the lovely Christmas music and for leading the Lessons and Carols service on December 31.

➤ Lynn Robinson for organizing the Cookie Exchange.

➤ All of the Lessons and Carols readers: Marshall Adair, Carol Dunlap, Dave Dunlap, Del Hunt, Faye Pritchard, Lynn Robinson, and Kay Wells.

➤ Dave Dunlap for chairing the Finance Committee as it developed the 2018 budget and to all the committee members: Debbie Carter, Kendrah McDonald, Peter Olivere, John Restall, and Bill Thomson.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in January:

Patricia Broida, Keelyn Del Gallo, Don Hess, Tony Kollath, Mary Mackin, Janet Spence, Paul Stenger, and Cynthia Todd.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in January:

Robert L. Rawls, III, and Harriet Sheehan Rawls; Anna and David Scherer