



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 2019



Assessing Where We Are and Where We Are Going: *St. John's To Hold Congregational Event on September 15*

Over the past six months, the St. John's Strategic Planning Committee has thought about ways the church can better focus and define its ministries, be more welcoming and visible in the community, and become more financially stable over the long term. The committee has already initiated several activities and continues to develop ideas that the church may wish to pursue. However, for any new efforts to succeed, the thoughts of all the members of St. John's need to be included in the decision-making process. On September 15, the committee will hold a congregational event from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. to assess where St. John's is now and what congregants' hopes and dreams are for the church's future.

Participants will share both in small groups and in collective sessions. After the event, all ideas will be compiled so that the committee can use the input as it continues its work. Further action based on the results of the session may include revisiting the church mission and vision statements to ensure they represent what St. John's hopes to be.

Please plan to attend on September 15. As a church family, all input is valuable as the congregation thinks about how it can be the hands and feet of Christ in the community and the world. Refreshments will be plentiful to provide energy for the sharing session. If you have any questions, please talk to Rector Ann Barker or one of the committee members: Mike Birmingham, Patricia Broida, Debbie Carter, Dave Dunlap, Pete Olivere, Lisa Pope, and Sandy Winger.

From the Rector: New Wine in New Wineskins

John's disciples come to Jesus and ask him why the Pharisees fast and Jesus's disciples do not. Jesus replies that a new thing is happening in Israel—the kingdom of God is coming in a new way—and it is a time of celebration, not of mourning. Then Jesus illustrates what he means with two metaphors. You can't put new cloth on worn garments, he says, or the new patch will tear away. And if you put new wine in old wineskins, they will tear and the wine will be lost. That does not mean that you put wine in a whole different container—that wineskins in themselves are bad—but it means you need to have something new to contain the new wine. The Incarnation is bringing something that has never before been experienced by Israel. The coming of Jesus is not to say that Israel has been wrong all this time and its beliefs should be discarded. Rather his coming builds on their traditions in a new way.

That is what we are doing at St. John's. We are seeking to build on the many things that are good about our church, using them as a springboard for new efforts to help St. John's carry out its ministry more effectively in the world, becoming more the community we are called by God to be. But since we cannot put this new wine into old wineskins—things that don't work—we are committing ourselves to some changes if we are going to carry out new visible ministries that care for people both inside and outside the church walls.

We are not changing our wineskins to a laundry bag, but we will need to change old wineskins for new ones. The new wineskins are shaped the same as the old ones—ministries such as worship, Christian formation, pastoral care, outreach, and community building and involvement; attitudes such as welcoming and inclusive; feelings such

as joy and peace—but we need to determine how to make these ministries and characteristics fresh and new.

One way to do that is prayer. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us in our discernment—to move through our congregation as a whole and through each of us individually—as we take part in the redevelopment of St. John's. As we prepare for congregational sharing, we need to ask God to bless our ideas and our conversations so that we will talk and listen supported by the grace of the Holy Spirit. We need to be open to the voice of God in us as we work.

Sometimes it is hard to remember to pray for discernment. We go immediately to our own ideas, not checking to see if God wants to change our hearts and minds. With something as important as the new efforts we want to make at St. John's, we need God's help to point the way.

Another way to create new wineskins is participation. I'm talking about more than participation in worship, though that is something we need and appreciate very much. I am talking about participating in the future of St. John's. That means contributing your ideas, giving of your time, and sharing your talents with your church community. I know there are a few who cannot get to church at all and some who would find it difficult to come except on Sundays, but thoughts and ideas can always be contributed in writing or over the phone, and virtual meetings are now possible. Think and pray about how you can best give of yourself and what types of activities you would like to be involved in. Jesus's disciples didn't just listen; they participated in his ministry. We are disciples too.

A third way to create new wineskins is possibility thinking. Yes, we have participated in visioning exercises before and sometimes

we feel like not much has happened (although things definitely did), but we need to continue thinking and dreaming about the future. We need creative outside-the-box thinking like never before, and we must all be involved in building on our traditions and exploring exciting new possibilities for ministry, outreach, and community.

We can't put our new wine into old wineskins. They will break. We need to make new wineskins for our ministries so that St.

John's can move forward in the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer, participation, and possibility thinking are keys to having new wineskins for our new wine. As we get ready for our congregational meeting on September 15, ponder what you can give to this effort. The Strategic Planning Committee looks forward to having you as a partner in this important conversation.

Ann †

Renovating and Rebuilding Spirituality: Start Fall with the Sunday Seminar

The Adult Sunday Seminar will start up again on Sunday, September 8, at 9 a.m. The first study of the fall will be "Renovate." Participants will discuss Nehemiah, a Jew who had risen to a high position in the Persian administration during the exile. He received permission from the Persian king to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. "In this series we learn about not only Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but also how he rebuilds his people's spirituality. We discover how we can enhance our spirituality in our lives with the help of the Holy Spirit," says Rev. Ann Barker.

The seminar is a series of DVD segments and discussion. Please join the group on Sunday mornings in the parlor.

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Judith Marcinko
Interim Family Programs Director: Jonathan Muehlke
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Seminarian: Chip Russell
Child Care Provider: Kaitlyn Osteguín
Sexton: Julio Sorto

Vestry

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

Parish Leaders

Peter Olivere, Treasurer
John Restall, Pledge Clerk
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Diane Henderson
Peter Olivere
Sandy Winger

Come Worship on the Lawn

Come worship outdoors with St. John's on Sunday, September 29, as the 10 a.m. service moves outside to the church lawn (weather permitting). Give thanks for God's creation and experience the Sunday service in a fresh and inspiring way! Chairs will be provided. The service will be followed by refreshments al fresco.



Ring the Bell in Remembrance



St. John's and Cristo Rey joined the National Park Service, churches, and others across the country in ringing the church bell for four minutes starting at 3 p.m. on Sunday, August 25. The bell ringing marked the day in 1619 when the first slaves were brought to the English colonies.

VBS Goes to Mars and Beyond

More than 20 children came to St. John's for Vacation Bible School (VBS) in July, which featured the theme of "To Mars and Beyond." Each evening the participants worked on a particular trait, such as demonstrating kindness, in giving a stranded spaceship fuel for its power cells so it could come home. Activities included Bible story time, music, arts and crafts, science projects, and recreation, as well as eating plenty of food. Lots of laughing and noise could be heard both inside and outside the church as the participants enjoyed themselves. Making a lantern was a particularly fun arts and crafts project, and the children waited all week to see the homemade volcano erupt. The weather cooperated with outdoor recreation activities, except for one day, and Friday was the always-popular water day. Also a hit was the alien puppet EP-320. What will next year's VBS bring? Stay tuned!



Words on Hymns: *Ode to Joy*

Our recessional for September 1 was *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*. The tune is the *Ode to Joy* from the final movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. It is sometimes called the *Choral Symphony* because of the large section for four soloists and the chorus at the end. The symphony, Beethoven's last, was written and premiered in 1824, three years before his death at the age of 57. Despite its being under-rehearsed, the audience loved it. The story is told that after the final measure, Beethoven, totally deaf, continued conducting. One of the soloists turned him around to face the audience so he could see their reaction. Some, aware of Beethoven's deafness, threw their hats and scarves in the air.

Beethoven's orchestra for this symphony was bigger than any other of the time, and at well over an hour in playing time, played for considerably longer. (As one who has sung this work as a member of the chorus three times, I can attest to its length. The chorus is seated on stage throughout the first three movements. By the time the moment has come for the singers to spring into action, any vocal warm-up is just a memory. Beethoven was merciless in his composition, particularly for the sopranos and tenors, as he put them into the vocal stratosphere repeatedly and left them there.) The symphony ushered in the Romantic period, when composers began breaking the rules of composition and exploring the use of large ensembles, extreme emotion, and unconventional orchestration.

The "Ode to Joy" text that Beethoven employed, and slightly modified, was written by the German poet Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller in the summer of 1785. It was a celebratory poem addressing the unity of all mankind.

In 1972, the Council of Europe made Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" its official anthem. In 1985, the European Union did the same.

Although Schiller's text isn't sung in the anthem, the music conveys the same ideas of freedom, peace, and unity.

Another interesting fact: During World War I, German prisoners held captive by Japan introduced their captors to Beethoven's masterpiece. Years later, Japanese orchestras began performing it. Then, after the devastating events of World War II, many Japanese orchestras began performing it at the end of the year, hoping to bring in enough audience members to help fund reconstruction efforts. Since then, it has become a Japanese tradition to perform Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the end of the year.

The text used as a hymn is a poem written by Henry van Dyke in 1907 with the intention of setting it to Beethoven's work. He wrote it while staying at the home of Williams College president Harry Augustus Garfield. He was serving as a guest preacher at Williams at the time. He told his host that the local Berkshire Mountains had been his inspiration. The lyrics were first published in 1911 in Van Dyke's *Book of Poems*, Third Edition.

Van Dyke wrote of this hymn: "These verses are simple expressions of common Christian feelings and desires in this present time—hymns of today that may be sung together by people who know the thought of the age, and are not afraid that any truth of science will destroy religion, or any revolution on earth overthrow the kingdom of heaven. Therefore this is a hymn of trust and joy and hope."

The hymn is generally considered by hymnologists to be one of the most joyous expressions of hymn lyrics in the English language. Van Dyke's poem had four verses, but only three are included in our hymnal. The fourth verse is:

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began.
Father-love is reigning o'er us,
brother-love binds man to man.

Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music lifts us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

Carol Dunlap

Wednesday Bible Study Begins September 4

St. John's Wednesday afternoon Bible Study begins again on September 4 at 3 p.m. The topic will be forgiveness. Please join the group for the entire study or drop in when you can. Each session can be done individually. If you would like a book to be ordered for you, please let Rev. Ann know.

Attend the Backpack Blessing on September 15

St. John's will hold a Backpack Blessing on Sunday, September 15, at the conclusion of the 10 a.m. service. Adults and children are welcome to bring backpacks, computer cases, and other work bags to be blessed. Each person will receive a small cross and a tag for their backpack or bag that says they are loved and supported by the St. John's congregation.



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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 October issue is September 21. Article ideas for future issues are also 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, September 10**, at 7:30 p.m. to discuss *11/22/63* by Stephen King. The novel tells the story of a time traveler who attempts to prevent the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. All are welcome!
- Bring your friends and family and have some fun at Game Night on **Saturday, September 21**, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Thank You to:

- Everyone who made Vacation Bible School such a success in July: coordinator Valeria Antelo; arts and crafts coordinator Patricia Amaya; recreation coordinator Stacy O'Connor; science coordinator Sandy Winger; helpers Jonathan Muehlke, Richard Henry, Evelyn Bence, Mia Amaya, and Angie Hernandez Cruz; photographer Pete Olivere; dinner providers Lynn Robinson, Anne and Paul Stenger, Pete and Barbara Olivere, Barbara Wien, Lin Novak, and Lisa Pope; and the tremendously helpful OAR workers. The 20-plus children who attended had a great time!
- All who contributed money and supplies to the school supply drive for Carlin Springs and Campbell elementary schools and to Diane Henderson, who used the donated funds to shop for a wealth of additional supplies.
- Faye Pritchard, for coordinating pick-up and delivery of the school supplies.
- Sandy Winger, who organized the ringing of St. John's church bell for four minutes on August 25 to remember the first slaves to arrive in the colonies in 1619 and to commit to seeking justice, freedom, and peace for all human beings.
- Pete Olivere for coordinating St. John's ongoing directory update and creating new signs for the inside of the church.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in September:

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

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in September:

Erin and Gerard Baynham; Richard and Chelsea Kaufman; Cristina and Matthew Tallent.

Welcome Back

St. John's welcomes back Seminarian Chip Russell on September 8!