



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 2021

St. John's Holds Town Hall on Congregational Survey

On December 20, St. John's held a Town Hall following the 10 a.m. service to discuss the results of the congregational survey. Distributed in early November by the Profile Committee, the survey received 37 responses. Profile Committee Chair Lisa Pope opened the Town Hall by thanking participants for filling out the survey, as the responses will form a major component of the description of St. John's in the church profile information that will be shared with candidates for rector. Committee member Dave Dunlap then provided an overview of the survey results. A strong theme running through the results was the importance of the parish family and community that St. John's provides, as well as the sense of inclusiveness, friendship, and acceptance found in the parish. The skills, gifts, and talents deemed most important in new clergy are preaching, new member growth, and pastoral care. The most desirable personality traits for new clergy, meanwhile, are accepting of all people, personable and outgoing, and open to new ideas.

Participants were then invited to make comments and ask questions. Congregants expressed appreciation for the survey and its results, including the predominant and theologically sound themes of acceptance and inclusiveness. Others noted the need to focus on spiritual development and the will of God for the church, as a focus on growing the membership can become a drag on the spirit. Also noted was that growth should result from love and faith, as just primarily trying to grow will lead to failure. Ideas for expressing and representing the sense of community at St. John's included creating a "Here's who we are at St. John's" video for the church website. In the end, said one participant, "There is a feeling and spirit at St. John's." In thinking about the future, "let the spirit guide you."

The Profile Committee will now use the survey results and Town Hall discussion to complete the St. John's profile and will continue to update the congregation as it finishes its work.



Words on Hymns: *Coventry Carol*

The haunting hymn referred to as *Coventry Carol* or *Lully, Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child* is frequently regarded as a Christmas carol. Yet it is not about Christmas and chronologically falls after Epiphany. The Holy Day assigned to it is December 28. I have always been ambivalent about the hymn. I like it, but the text is very grim so I don't enjoy singing it.

The text recounts the story in Matthew 2:16 that Herod the Great, when the Magi failed to return to Jerusalem to report the exact whereabouts of Jesus, ordered all children under the age of two to be killed. The Gospel goes on to quote from the Book of Jeremiah: "Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." (Matthew 2:17-18).

Herod the Great did a lot of evil things, but most Biblical scholars believe that this event is not one of them. It is thought to be an invention to parallel the killing of the children in Egypt by the pharaoh when he was warned by his advisers of the impending threat to his crown, as recounted in the Book of Exodus. The number of children murdered in Bethlehem probably did not exceed a dozen.

The city of Coventry is the most central in England. It had a 14th-century cathedral named St. Michael's that was bombed to rubble during World War II and subsequently rebuilt. The *Coventry Carol* is the second of three songs included in the Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, a nativity play that was one of the Coventry Mystery Plays, originally performed by the city's guilds. (A mystery play is a medieval drama based on scriptural incidents.) The exact date of the text is unknown, though there are references to the Coventry guild pageants from 1392 onwards.

The single surviving text of the carol and the pageant containing it was edited by one Robert Croo, who dated his manuscript 14 March 1534. Croo, or Crowe, acted for some years as the "manager" of the city pageants. Over a 20-year period, payments were recorded to him for playing the part of God in the Drapers' Pageant, for making a hat for a "pharysyte," and for mending and making other costumes and props, as well as for supplying new dialogue and copying out the Shearmen and Tailors Pageant in a version that Croo described as "newly correcte." Croo seems to have worked by adapting and editing older material, while adding his own verse that has been described as rather ponderous and undistinguished.

Religious changes caused the plays' suppression during the later 16th century, but Croo's prompt book, including the songs, survived and a transcription was eventually published by the Coventry antiquarian Thomas Sharp in 1817 as part of his detailed study of the city's mystery plays. Sharp published a second edition in 1825 that included the songs' music. Both printings were intended to be a facsimile of Croo's manuscript, copying the spellings, capitalizations, and layout; this proved fortunate as Croo's original manuscript, which had passed into the collection of the Birmingham Free Library, was destroyed in a fire there in 1879. Sharp's transcriptions are therefore the only source for the carol. Sharp had a reputation as a careful scholar, and his copying of the text of the carol appears to scholars to be accurate. His publication of the text stimulated renewed interest in the pageant and songs, particularly in Coventry itself.

In the pageant, the carol is sung by three women of Bethlehem, who enter on stage with their children immediately after Joseph is warned by an angel to take his family to Egypt. The carol's music was added to Croo's

manuscript by Thomas Mawdyke and dated 13 May 1591. Mawdyke, possibly a tailor in Coventry, wrote out the music in three-part harmony, though whether he was responsible for its composition is debatable, and the music's style could be indicative of an earlier date. The three (alto, tenor, and baritone) vocal parts confirm that, as was usual with mystery plays, the parts of the "mothers" singing the carol were invariably played by men.

Mawdyke is thought to have made his additions as part of an unsuccessful attempt to revive the play cycle in the summer of 1591, though in the end the city authorities chose not to support the revival. The surviving pageants were revived in the Cathedral from 1951 onwards.

Carol Dunlap

LOGOS

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

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org. The deadline for the February issue is January 23. 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.

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Supply Plus Minister: The Rev. Dr. Laurence K. Packard
 Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
 Organist: Judith Marcinko
 Family Programs Director: Jonathan Muehlke
 Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
 Child Care Provider: Kaitlyn Osteguín
 Sexton: Julio Sorto

Parish Leaders

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

Vestry

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden
 Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden
 Jeff Aitken

Diane Henderson
 Richard Henry
 Peter Olivere

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ Join the fun without going outside in the cold as St. John's plays virtual bingo on **Saturday, January 16**, at 7 p.m. To obtain bingo cards and be sent the Zoom link to play, send an email to bingo@stjohnsarlingtonva.org or contact Sandy Winger at 703-498-6990.

➤ Plan to attend the virtual St. John's Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 31**, immediately following the 10 a.m. service on Zoom.

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, February 2**, to discuss *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles. This multi-layered, historical novel tells the story of an itinerant news reader who travels around Texas after the Civil War, performing for audiences eager for the headlines of the day. He then agrees to return a young girl held captive by the Kiowa Tribe back to her relatives near San Antonio. Stay tuned for more information on the Zoom link for the meeting. All are welcome!

Rest in Peace:

➤ Paul Stenger, who entered the Life of the Resurrection on December 18.

Thank You to:

- Everyone who participated in the Town Hall on December 20.
- All those who made St. John's Christmas Eve service so special.
- Lin Novak for putting up the Christmas decorations outside the church.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in January:

Patricia Broida, Keelyn Del Gallo, Don Hess, Tony Kollath, Mary Mackin, Janet Spence, Cynthia Todd, and Vlad Wien-Kandil

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in January:

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

