

**St John's Episcopal Church
Annual Meeting January 2018
Rector's Report Highlights from 2017**

Worship

Our 2017 highlights begin with our worship services at St. John's. Our worship together inspires and renews us to do God's work in our daily lives. We had our 7th Maundy Thursday loaves and fishes service and a joyous Easter celebration with 74 in attendance (an increase from 2016). We had a fun Easter egg hunt for our children after the service. Our Advent wreath lighting liturgy continued to remind us of the faith, hope, joy and love with which we await the coming of the Christ Child. Our Christmas services were inspiring and beautiful, with about 58 in attendance. We had our always popular lessons and carols on New Year's Eve.

We continued with our Blessing of the Animals service at the church and also blessed dogs at the Shirlington Dog Park. We offered Ashes to Go at the Ballston Metro Station. In 2018 ideas on the drawing board are using Enriching Our Worship for more services as well as The New Zealand Prayer Book. We have money in the budget for a music license and hope to broaden our singing options. We are also looking into adding a new monthly service. Possibilities are a healing service or a contemplative service. If you have ideas about any of these options, please see me.

Family Programs

This year Jill McAfee served as our family programs minister for most of the year. She prepared and taught curriculum for our younger children during the fall. She planned a valentine making party, a Hogwarts back to school party and a Halloween party. Jill left in September and our seminarian Kendrah McDonald, Lynn Robinson and Lisa Pope coordinated the last two. We also had the blessing of Peggy Blount, Jack Birmingham's grandmother, who taught our children in the first part of the year. Our Vacation Bible School this year was based on the theme of being heroes for God and included storytelling, arts and crafts, outdoor play, cool science projects and dinner. About 10 children came and learned about how their particular abilities make them heroes. VBS was led by Jill, our Family Programs Director, with assistance from Patricia Amaya, who did arts and crafts, and three team leaders, who kept the children engaged and focused.

John Petrich has led our bagged lunch program efforts. Galen Henderson coordinated our Christmas pageant, which included some neighborhood children as well as our own. I have just hired Galen Henderson as our Family Programs Director and we look forward to her contributions to our ministry.

In 2017, we continued our outreach activities. We continued donating food to AFAC, bagging lunches for the Bailey's Crossroads Shelter and participating in the Salvation Army's Angel Tree Project. We also continued our program of bagging food at AFAC. We have several parishioners who participate in this activity, which we do the second Friday of each month for an hour. This was our third year of assisting with supplies for Carlin Springs Elementary Schools. During Lent, we participated in Region 3's Stop Hunger Now project with monetary donations and volunteer time. The group packaged 10,000 meals in about

two hours to go anywhere in the world where there is food insecurity. This project will be repeated in 2018. We also increased our commitment to AFAC during Lent.

In keeping with our policy of inclusivity, we are members of POF-EV, People of Faith for Equality in Virginia. This interfaith organization has a vision of inclusion, welcome and equality for LGBTQ Virginians and their families.

Parish life draws our community together. We had a game night in January. This coming year we hope to make it a monthly event. Our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper in February, the spaghetti supper in October and the annual tea in May. This was the second year it was sponsored by the whole parish as a fund raiser. Organizers included Diane Henderson, Lisa Pope and Barbara Oliver. We had a Thanksgiving potluck in November. We provided our usual hot dogs and drinks for Glencarlyn Day. The effort was headed by Bill Thomson with a lot of help from the parish. Our weekend at Shrine Mont was once again enjoyed by all. Ann Barker, Diane Henderson and Debbie Carter led our program. Ten parishioners and guests enjoyed this time to relax and experience God in nature. Optional activities were also offered. We joined with two other parish for worship.

In the fall, we had a round table discussion with Cristo Rey to determine how we could interact on a more frequent basis. We held our Thanksgiving potluck at 2:15, during their fellowship time. Next year we are scheduled to join them for a Lenten outreach project and three of our game nights will be bingo nights and raffles that we share with Cristo Rey. We will further discuss meeting together and perhaps worshipping together.

Adult Formation in spring 2017 included classes on Hazardous Saints and a Lenten study held Sunday morning and on a weekday afternoon that centered on the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church. We also had a presentation on icons and classes on science and religion as well as fear of the other. In the fall we began a study of the book "The Evolution of God" and had an Advent Study on Joseph.

In 2017, we welcomed Chelsea and Richard Kaufman and their son Pearce, who was baptized in March. We also welcomed Lin Novak, a friend of Lisa Pope's who has been a member of the book club. We said a partial goodbye to Linda Trochim, who has retired and will be in Florida most of the time and here some of the time. Bill Schenck and Carolyn Corlett have had to stop coming to church because of disability issues, and Lynn Christopher cannot drive anymore because of her eyes. We miss Jean Harrison, who died in June.

We continue to remain concerned about the size of St. John's membership. Every Sunday, we pray the St. John's collect, written by the youth, that God will help us grow St. John's so we are able to do all God wants us to do. In 2018, we will focus on discipleship – following Jesus individually and as a church by asking what he would have us do, to help us discover our passions and our gifts. We pray for new initiatives and ask that God will send us the people God wants us to serve and that we will be inspired to invite new people to join our warm and welcoming parish. We will keep reaching out to the community, using the strength of our greatest resource, the people of St. John's.