



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

From the Rector: Realizing Our Spiritual Potential

Easter is just about as late as it can be this year, which makes Lent late, too. When we began Lent on March 9, spring had already begun to show itself. Buds were swelling and the grass just beginning to turn green. The days were getting warmer—sometimes warm enough not to wear that winter coat that had been our constant companion for three months or so. As I write this column, the crocuses bloom in riotous profusion in the cross garden. (My house is in the shade, so I only have one small purple flower, but I expect more any day.) A few daffodils are up. The forsythia bushes are blooming too. Soon we will see tulips and Bradford pears and all the other beauty spring brings with it. By Easter, the new life spring promises will be fully present to us in all its glory.

Spring is made possible by the gray, bleak and sometimes snowy days of winter. Not much is going on above ground, but below ground, the potential for a new spring is being formed. Bulbs are dividing. Plants that are dormant in winter prepare in some unfathomable way to wend their way up through the surface of the soil and reach their full growth. Sometimes the plants are short-lived and sometimes they last throughout the summer, but always they remind us of the glorious potential of new life.

Just as nature has cycles of life, death and rebirth, so do we as human beings. We are constantly changing as human beings as we practice the pattern of holding on, letting go and seeing what springs forth in the empty places we have left. This pattern is also one that holds the promise of new life as we fulfill our spiritual potential.

Lent is a season in which we are invited to examine ourselves to find out what is holding us back from fuller relationship with God. What is keeping us walking in the dark, instead of in the light of life? What are we holding onto that keeps us from following Jesus and experiencing the new life he offers us? What do we need to let go of and what do we need to be open to? Unlike the change from winter to spring, which follows nature's given cycles, we have to work at becoming the people God wants us to be. Lent is a season in which we prepare for Easter by working on our spiritual potential.

One of the things we can do to work on our spiritual potential is to "walk wet". Rich Bimler says walking wet helps us remember that we are baptized each day through Jesus Christ. He says every time we see water, we can remember our baptism. We can remember whose we are and who we are. We remember our baptismal vows and work to live them out. We continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, repent and return to the Lord when we sin, proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ, strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being. When we "walk wet" we

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look at daily situations in light of our relationship to God and the promises we made. We ask God's help to carry out our vows in all our daily situations.

Another thing we can do to realize our spiritual potential is to live with interruptions. Writer Henri Nouwen notes that the interruptions in our lives, the ones with which we become so impatient, are often the true work we are called to do. A friend calls and needs to talk while I am working on a very important project. My child needs help with his homework while I am busy doing my own. Interruptions come through the mail, in our email inboxes, on our cell phones.

One of the interruptions I often experience is someone coming to the door who needs money when I am in the middle of something. I am thankful that I have learned not to be impatient (most of the time) and I know that I am serving God by helping God's people. God sends the interruptions to keep our lives from being too manageable, too controllable. God is in the interruptions.

Nouwen also says that to improve our spiritual potential, we need to reject self-rejection. Voices that tell us we are bad unless we can prove otherwise send us off on quests for money, success and power. The voices that tell us that we are not good enough, that we are doing too little, that we are worthless, are not the voice of the Holy Spirit. They are voices we have internalized in the past and are something that we need to let go of in order to unblock the spiritual channels that God wants to use in us to help us develop along spiritual lines. The Holy Spirit's voice speaks to us only of God's love for us and God's desire for our good.

Another good practice, Nouwen says, is to realize that we are not what we can conquer, but what has been given to us. We are empty on our own and it is God who fills us. We cannot fill ourselves. In fact, before we can give any gifts to others, we have to be given them by God. Our spiritual potential is more deeply realized when we find that our life is not a position to be defended, but a gift to be shared, Nouwen says. Sharing our lives with others keeps us growing and blooming in a spiritual sense.

Renee Miller suggests something called "consciousness practice" to bring out our spiritual potential. She says we don't engage the deeper parts of our mind as much as we do the thoughts and ideas that jostle one

another for attention on the surface. It is important for us to explore our unconscious, because we become fuller as human beings and as children of God. We can explore our unconscious in many ways, from meditation, to therapy to journaling. We don't do this willy-nilly, but ask God to help us bring our unconscious mind into our conscious mind. We wait for God to reveal our deepest selves to us. And we take a step forward in knowing where we came from, where we are now and where we are going.

Living in the moment is a hard discipline to practice. Children do it naturally, but we are often focused on the past or worried about the future. It takes effort to pull on the reins and bring ourselves back to the present. Sometimes, we may have to say to ourselves what we are doing right now in the moment, down to the smallest things—I am turning on the oven, I am putting the fish into the oven, I am closing the oven. When we want to project ourselves into tomorrow or dwell on the problems of the past, this strategy is a helpful one. We want to live in the moment because that is where God is with us—in the here and now. God was with us in the past and God will be with us in the future but right now, the present is all we have and God fills us with God's love in every moment.

We may not feel like we have very much spiritual potential, but God sees what we do not. When Jesus first met Simon Peter, he was a rough fisherman, but Jesus saw his potential, says Brooks Ramsey. He said to Simon, you are Peter (rock). "You are an ordinary person, but you will become like a rock. I will make you that." Even though Peter denied him three times in his fear, Peter did become a rock of the early church, an apostle whose witness converted many.

Working on our spiritual potential in Lent prepares us for Easter and the resurrection life it brings. It helps us become more the people God wants us to be. Kathleen Card reminds us that many ancient theologians remind us that "a new life in Christ is always a matter of new perceptions, of seeing through earthly things to heavenly things" and that is what we are trying to do when we develop our spiritual potential. This new life, says St. Augustine, "happens in the inner person, such that while sin always continues, progress in virtue is possible."

Working on our spiritual potential in this season of Lent as we look to Easter is important because we

St. John's Mission Statement

We welcome everyone including believers, seekers and doubters to share God's love and acceptance in a community of worship and service.

St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's is dedicated to nurturing disciples for Jesus by:

- Offering faith-deepening worship, education, outreach and pastoral care;
- Attracting and welcoming newcomers; and
- Sharing God's love with our community and the world around us.

want to participate in the new life Christ offers us. To do this we do have to see beyond earthly blocks and darkness to things heavenly. When with God's help we remove the blocks and shadows, we can more fully realize who we are and who God means us to be. Brooks Ramsey reminds us that "the commitment of Christ is always to see what our possibility is. He never looked at an individual that he didn't see potential there because he knew that through God's grace a person could become less of what they had been and more of what God would have them be."

This Lent I pray for all of us that as spring fulfills its potential, we may take the next step in fulfilling our spiritual potential, so that when Easter comes, we may experience the joy of resurrection and the promise of everlasting life that Jesus brings to us all.

Ann†

Pancake Supper Nets Funds and Food

St. John's annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper was a hit again this year. The men of the church served parishioners and neighborhood families with pancakes, ham and applesauce. We collected \$329 for admission fees and \$48 for the Arlington Food Assistance Center as well as many boxes of cereal to help feed the hungry.

News Notes from Virginia Seminary: Construction on Campus

If you have been at VTS lately, you know that the campus is undergoing a great deal of construction; there are orange webbed fences, bulldozers, various trucks and other equipment, and people in hard hats inhabiting the place. All this activity is because the seminary is replacing its heating/cooling system. This change required a new building to be built and the laying of underground pipes to all the buildings on campus. The laying of pipes required that some trees be cut down and that ditches be dug to accommodate the pipes. Thus, all the trucks, bulldozers, and people. We have been told that the work should be completed by summertime.

As you may know, the site for an interim worship space on campus is the Lettie Pate Evans Auditorium. Work has begun to transform that space into a usable chapel. As I understand it, the room will be gutted, the floor leveled out, a sacristy and choir room will be built in the stage area, and acoustical changes made. In addition, since worship will be oriented toward the glass windows, the patio and outdoor area in front of the windows will be cleaned and landscaped. We are told that this space should be available for worship beginning in September.

Adult Education Focuses On Poetry, Literature

The adult education class will focus on Mary Oliver's poetry for most of the month of April. Our seminarian, Mary Mackin, will lead the discussion. On Palm Sunday we will have a presentation on different theories of the atonement. After Easter, Lorraine Underwood will talk about the theology of Brother Cadfael, who is a character in a series of mystery novels by Ellis Peters.

LOGOS

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Dave Dunlap, LOGOS Editor

Jane Edwards, LOGOS Editor and Page Layout

Email Dave at dave_dunlap@yahoo.com (preferred) or leave info in newsletter box in the office.

The next deadline is Thursday, April 21 at 10 am.

April Events

Mark your calendar for these important April events.

April Tuesdays in Lent

April 5 and 12, the Region III Lenten Programs continue with a light dinner and speaker beginning at 6:30. April 5th the meeting will be at St. Michael's; April 12th at St. George's. Plan to be there.

Saturday, April 2—Spring Clean-Up, 9 a.m. to noon

With the coming of warmer weather, it is time to take care of things both inside and outside the church building to get ready for the new season. Junior Warden Del Hunt needs our help for as much of the morning as we can afford, because he has a "to do" list. The jobs are varied, so tell Del what you want to do to make sure you get your preference. Work opportunities include:

- mulching flower beds
- repairing the outside door to the parish offices
- painting the back door to the Sunday school rooms
- sanding/painting the front porch
- painting the inside of the lift
- rebuilding and painting window air conditioner platforms
- trimming dead limbs from the 5th street cherry trees
- repairing the church's lawnmower pull cord.

Tuesday, April 5—St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.

In April the book club will discuss *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson. It is not too late to get the book, read it, and join the fun.

Tuesday, April 19—Afternoon Movies for Parents and Kids, 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Come join the fun with a G-rated movie that will be enjoyed by both parents and children.

Thursday, April 21—Loves and Fishes Meal & Service, 6:30 pm

April 21 is Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday. A simple meal of bread and fish is a tradition, followed by the Maundy Thursday service that culminates in the stripping of the altar, silencing the organ, and exiting the church in silence. Mark your calendar and join us as we reach the culmination of Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection. In the spirit of the day, you are asked to bring a can of tuna to help feed the hungry. Donations will go to AFAC, the Arlington Food Assistance Center.

Saturday, April 23—Flowering of the Church for Easter

After the last of the pre-Easter services, the church is changed from Good Friday's place of bare mourning to the joyful and festive place of Easter as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. The altar guild welcomes all who can help with this transformation.

Gospel commentaries for April were not available.

Seminarian's Diary, April 2011

by Mary Ruetten Mackin

The other day I picked up a book I hadn't looked at in a while and reread the first chapter. It was, I thought, the perfect book to reread for Lent. Written by Philip Simmons, *Learning to Fall: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life* is a collection of twelve essays in which Simmons reflects on loss and how to live life. Simmons was thirty-five years old and a husband and father when he was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, and told he had less than five years to live. Simmons lived another ten years, using those years to face his loss and live richly in the face of it.

He calls what he comes to understand about life, and what we all must understand, the work of "learning to fall." He is not content with aphorisms and tips on how to be content with what we have; he approaches life more deeply. His approach is a paradox: "that we deal most fruitfully with loss by accepting the fact that we will one day lose everything. When we learn to fall, we learn that only by letting go our grip on all that we ordinarily find most precious—our achievements, our plans, our loved ones, our very selves—can we find, ultimately, the most profound freedom. In the act of letting go of our lives, we return more fully to them." Thus, the essays in his book are lessons "in the art of falling."

Because the essays in the book are arranged in the order in which they were written, they also chronicle the changes in Simmons' physical condition: we see him "progress from climbing mountains to climbing into a wheelchair." Yet Simmons doesn't show us this progress to gain our pity or compassion. He records his deteriorating physical condition with irony, humor, and honesty, as part of that day's lesson in learning to fall.

Simmons reflects, "We are all—all of us—falling. We are all, now, this moment, in the midst of that descent, fallen from heights that may now seem only a dimly remembered dream, falling toward a depth we can only imagine, glimpsed beneath the water's surface shimmer. And so let us pray that if we are falling from grace, dear God let us also fall *with* grace, *to* grace. If we are falling toward pain and weakness, let us also fall toward sweetness and strength. If we are falling toward death, let us also fall toward life."

As I aspire toward a holy Lent, I think reflecting on the paradox of finding my life in letting go of it will allow me to be open to God's grace in the work of Lenten self-examination and repentance.

Appreciations and Milestones

Congratulations

To John Petrich who won the Campbell School Geography Bee. The school level winners (elementary school and middle school) then took a test and the top 100 scores in the state were invited to the state geography bee (sponsored by National Geographic) in Winchester on April 1. John's score was high enough to participate in the state bee. John is in 5th grade and he will be competing with students in 4th–8th grade. Good luck, John!

Rest in Peace

Evelyn Sullivan, who entered the life of the Resurrection on March 14

Best wishes to all who celebrate birthdays in April

Evan Barker, Gerard Baynham, Maggie Buchanan, Carol Dunlap, Diane Henderson, Jim Hull, Caitlin O'Connor, Amanda Pardo, Sebi Pardo, John Petrich, Bob Tallent, Jackson Tallent, Sharon Tallent, Linda Trochim, Valerie Wilson

Congratulations to those celebrating anniversaries in April

Lisa & Jud Buchanan, William & Nancy Gibb

Thank you

- To organizer Bill Thomson and all who made the pancake supper such a success: Bill Schenck, Del Hunt, Bill Turner, Henry Carter, Don Hess, John Petrich, Paul Petrich, Pete Olivere, Jeff Aitken, Marshall Adair and Bill Pritchard
- To Kay Wells, for decorating for the pancake supper
- To Beth Fowler for coordinating our Lenten supper for Region 3 and to all who helped with set up and clean up and contributed food
- To Beth Cavey for running our monthly "Afternoon Movies for Parents and Kids". The last one will be in April, then our "Movie Nights Under the Stars" will begin in May.

St. John's Calendar

April

- Sun 3 Fourth Sunday in Lent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 5 Region III Lenten Program, 6:30 p.m., at
St. Michaels' Episcopal Church
St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 7 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 10 Fifth Sunday in Lent
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 12 Region III Lenten Program, 6:30 p.m.,
at St. George's Episcopal Church
- Thu 14 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 16 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
- Sun 17 Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday
Liturgy of the Palms & HE Rite I, 8 a.m.
Liturgy of the Palms & HE Rite II, 10 a.m.
- Tue 19 Afternoon Movies for Parents and Kids,
3–5 p.m.
- Wed 20 Candlelight Prayer Service, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 21 Maundy Thursday Traditional Meal and
Stripping of the Altar, 6:30 p.m.
Bring a can of tuna to feed the hungry.
LOGOS deadline, 10:00 a.m.
- Fri 22 Good Friday Liturgy, 12 noon and 7 p.m.
Cristo Rey Good Friday Liturgy, 8:30 p.m.
- Sat 23 Flowering of the church, time to be announced
- Sun 24 Feast of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday)
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
No Christian Education or Children's Chapel
Reception and Easter Egg Hunt following the
10 a.m. service
- Sun 1 Second Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
- Sun 1 Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
African Team Ministries Jewelry and Craft
Sale following 10 a.m. service
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 3 St. John's Book Club, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 5 Morning Guild, 10 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 7 Morning Guild Spring Tea, 1–3 p.m.
African Team Ministries Jewelry and Craft
Sale, 1–3 p.m.
- Sun 8 Third Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
African Team Ministries Jewelry and Craft
Sale following 10 a.m. service
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Tue 10 Vestry Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thu 12 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 15 Fourth Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Mon 16–Sun 22
Arlington Food Assistance Center food drive
- Wed 18 Candlelight Prayer, 7:30 p.m.
- Thu 19 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 21 Men's Fellowship, 8 a.m.
Movie Under the Stars, time to be announced
- Sun 22 Fifth Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.
- Thu 26 Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Sun 29 Sixth Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.
Christian Education: 9 a.m. adults, 9:20 youth
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10 a.m.
Education for Ministry, 6 p.m.

May

- Sun 1 Second Sunday of Easter
Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8 a.m.

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Next deadline is Thursday, April 21 at 10:00 a.m

Time Sensitive Material—Please Deliver Promptly

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
Seminarian: Mary Mackin
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Carol Dunlap
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Justiniano Garay

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Assistant Treasurer
Don Hess, Co-chair, Building and Grounds Committee
John Wilson, Co-chair, Building and Grounds Committee

Vestry

Brian Cavey, Senior Warden
Del Hunt, Junior Warden
Patricia Broida
Debbie Carter
Carrie Harbin
Diane Henderson
Faye Pritchard

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