



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

October 2013

Jump Start Workshop Shares Ideas on Re-Vitalizing Parishes

Over 70 people – including five from St. John's – came together at Resurrection Episcopal Church in Alexandria on September 14 for a "Jump Start Workshop," examining what is succeeding and what is failing in creating healthy churches.

Bishop Susan Goff set the tone for the six-hour program, telling participants that if we want our churches to thrive, then we must "step outside the boxes, including those prescribed by the four walls of a building." Presenters and members from successful parishes emphasized the need for relevance and taking calculated, informed risks, both in building membership and in creating financial stability.

Attending from St. John's were the Rev. Ann Barker, Debbie Carter, Faye Pritchard, Bill Schenck, and Sandy Winger.

Julia Groom, President of the Episcopal Church Building Fund pointed out that "there has been a cultural shift. We have to understand and embrace the changes to survive. If we are looking for people just like us, it won't work."

She warned against falling into several "traps." These include physical the trap of a church putting a big investment into old equipment, preventing it from investing in the new; the psychological trap of focusing on old successes when new opportunities presenting themselves; and the strategic trap, of a church considering only the marketplace of today

without anticipating the future.

She urged parishes to study and understand the demographics and the needs of the community in which the church resides. She, and other presenters, urged participants to take advantage of informational resources and training provided by the Episcopal Church Building Fund, the diocese, and other church organizations.

"Transform churches into indispensable community assets," she said. "Invite in people like the police, the mayor, and social service agencies, Ask them what their most pressing needs are. Tell them you are ready to lead and serve. Research the demographics in your area. Learn how to be relevant. It's about reaching outside, not dragging inside. It's the mission model. Attract by what you do." And in doing so, be willing to incur risk, she said: "Make failure a part of every day. Unless you're landing an airplane, encourage experimental risk."

The rest of the workshop focused on examples of how parishes have actually put these ideas into practice, with presenters and members of parishes from throughout Virginia sharing examples of how to build a successful church. The examples, many of which demonstrated informed risk, covered everything from fundraisers and renting to mergers. They included:

- A church that closed its building and reopened in rented spaces as a community focused on the spiritual needs of the young professionals in the surrounding area;
- A church that began renting to groups that share its mission goals and another church that uses Craig's list to advertise its space for rent to music groups for practice and performance;
- A church that merged with another, where they became a mission hub for community development;
- A church that started a ministry to youth attending a nearby school by setting up activities of interest – and snacks and drinks – in their parking lot and building;
- A church that sometimes holds services in members' houses and invites the neighbors;
- A church that got a grant to start their own project to feed the needy;
- A church that holds a monthly service for pets and people; and
- Resurrection Episcopal Church in Alexandria, where the workshop was held and which has just completed a year-long re-visioning process.

Often a successful church studied its community, inventoried its resources (property and people), and decided whether and how it could respond to community needs while building financial stability. In several examples, the Episcopal Church Building Fund supplied guidance and resources to help the church decide what to do.

Resurrection Episcopal provided an example. They formed a Re-Visioning Committee that studied their community and parish and developed options for facility and land use, increasing revenue, and reducing expenses. They put closing the church and merger on the table and took them off again in favor of finding ways to increase funding. They talked with a nearby continuing care community and other churches about how they could work together. Over the course of a year they

presented their work and the options to the congregation for discussion and brainstorming, both in small groups and in regular congregational meetings. They recommended drawing up a balanced budget once the re-visioning was completed. And, at the same time, they reviewed their mission so it could inform their work and their decisions.

"We discussed what our passion is and what God is calling us to do," Betsy Faga of Resurrection's Re-Visioning Committee told the workshop attendees. "We preserved our values and mission – caring for our church family and community service."

Ms. Faga also said that they came to realize that the difficulties at Resurrection are part of a cultural trend and that those difficulties were not the fault of anything they or anyone connected with their congregation – lay or clergy – "did or did not do." They also realized, she said, that there is no one single solution to the difficulties facing churches and that re-visioning is not the best approach for all churches.

In a another presentation, Sally O'Brien, Vice-President of the Episcopal Church Building Fund, discussed how parishes can use their real estate to find new relevance in their communities and new income to stabilize their budgets.

She talked of energy and utility audits, a facility assessment to find out what space can be rented, and grants both to fix what needs to be fixed and to start community-related projects on church property. She urged us to charge the market rate when renting, get a security deposit, set standards for building use, and hire a lawyer for leases. She advised us to be clear in our minds about whether we would rent for mission or strictly for income. She recommended inviting in non-profits and community leaders to brainstorm on building and property use.

"You have to make a connection to the community and be seen as needed by the community," she said. "Develop a niche that you are known for. Relate to people's lives so they share and join in, even if they don't become members."

September Vestry Highlights

The vestry voted to hold a mutual ministry review in late January or early February. The review would involve the church leadership – rector, vestry (including previous wardens), and lay ministers – in looking mutually at all the ministries of St. John's in a constructive way. The review is to be led *pro bono* by an outside facilitator, and a report is to be presented to the congregation for feedback.

The vestry chose September 29 through October 27 for this year's annual giving campaign. Debbie Carter is stewardship chair.

Ann Barker, Pete Olivere, and Faye Pritchard have developed brochures for both the annual giving campaign and the general public. The brochure for the general public was to be made available at Friends and Family Sunday on September 22.

Junior Warden Lenore Schmidt announced that she would arrange to rent a lift for both a Saturday and a Sunday for fall clean-up, to be held sometime in October or November. The lift will enable us to reach gutters and other high places that may need maintenance attention.

The vestry approved naming our church library the Lorraine Underwood Memorial Library in recognition of the many books Lorraine donated. Two parishioners will donate a small plaque carrying the new name. It will be hung in the parlor.

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.

St. John's Goals for 2013

Family Programs

Enhance family programs to support our children and youth and to draw in new families.

Outreach

Provide focus for and expand outreach activity.

Worship

Further enliven worship to uplift our spiritual lives.

Parish Growth

Attract new members and reach out to inactive, prior, and homebound members.

Communications

Improve parish communications with better strategies to inform prospective and current members about St. John's and its activities.

A Fun Friends and Family Sunday

St. John's was crowded with 60 people at the 10 a.m. service on Friends and Family Sunday, September 22. Joining our regular attendees were neighbors from our surrounding Glencarlyn community, some family members who do not attend regularly, Sunday school children and invited friends.

A special fellowship time downstairs after the service featured hot dogs, veggies, chips and drinks, plus ice cream bars or popsicles for everyone. Outdoors there were games for all ages, including a very popular Moon Bounce.

Beth Cavey, our Family Programs minister, spoke about the parish as a mix of young and old, newcomers and established members and how together we all make up tapestry that is St. John's.

This special Sunday was a part of our efforts this year to reach out to the community around us and to attract new members. We were glad to see everyone and we hope that all will come back soon.

From the Rector: “Rooted and Grounded”

It is at this time of the year things begin happening underground. Most flowers have stopped blooming, leaves are starting to float down off the trees and fall is making its presence known. But as things above ground are going dormant, things below ground are taking off. I’m talking specifically about roots. In fall and winter, bulbs separate and re-root. Tree roots push their fingers outward into the soil to provide more strength for the tree or bush in the spring.

Plants are not the only things that have roots. People have roots too, roots that make us who we are, roots that are designed to keep us centered and steady, according to Brother Curtis Almquist of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE).

First of all, we are rooted in our families. If we are biologically related to our family, we share a gene pool. In my family there is a blond gene on both sides and two of my siblings are blond and blue-eyed. There is also a misaligned hip gene, so my sister and I have had hips replaced at young ages, as our father did, and my brother needs both his hips replaced. My brother and I look like my father. You can tell who got the short genes and who got the tall ones. It fascinates me to watch my son, to see his father and me in him. Even if you are not biologically related, there are family habits you pick up. I write my capital “Js” just like my mother; my brother writes them like my father. My sister knits like my mother did; my brother and I are both musical. (Odd, as neither parent was particularly so.).

Looking into genealogy can be fun. My sister stopped by my cousin’s the other day to talk about stuff she had found about my relatives. He gave her a bracelet with my mom’s nickname on it that had been in his mother’s stuff. Family is a part of who we are.

Place is also a part of who we are. I grew up in the West Virginia mountains, and that will always be one of my homes. The mountains are in my blood. Even if you were with a military or other

family that moved a lot, you pick up a little something from each place you go – an accent, a mannerism, a way of doing things.

Friends help form a big part of you. I had a whole group of high school friends that I spent many happy hours with. There were my camp friends and my church friends too. When I think about my roots, I think about growing in harmony with them and being shaped by them, as I in turn helped them acquire their shape.

As Christians, we are rooted in our status as children of God. In our baptism we become part of God’s family and we take on the characteristics that God wants us to live into; we discern our calls and live them out as faithfully as we can. We are to be “rooted and grounded in love” (*Ephesians 3:17*).

At St. John’s, we are rooted in our church family. The longer we’ve been here, the more roots we have. We have worshiped and prayed and played with our fellow parishioners. We have shared fellowship time and been there for each other when the going has been tough. Our interwoven roots have formed the pattern for a healthy church life.

Our roots are strong, but they are not there to keep us stuck. Brother Mark Brown (SSJE), says the purpose of roots is to provide nourishment for this season’s new growth. We are to be who we are now and look forward to a new season of growth and change. We are called to look forward in hope. A group of parishioners and I just went to a conference about called “Jump Start”, which told us how we could become relevant to our communities by taking new risks. It gave us hope for the future. (see the article elsewhere in this issue).

Roots are there to keep us strong and steady, but not stuck. They are to help us grow. During this annual giving time, let us take the opportunity to pledge toward our growth as we look with hope toward our future.

Ann †

Bagging Produce for AFAC

On August 31, volunteers from St. John's helped bag fresh produce for needy people who are helped by the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Working in teams the volunteers prepared net bags and filled them with tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, corn, eggplant, peaches and other produce. This was our second volunteer stint at AFAC. On August 3 St. John's volunteers bagged more than 1,200 pounds of produce.

"It was good to know that what we were doing resulted in food going directly to those who need it," said Bill Pritchard. "It was all fresh, nutritious food, too."

St. John's volunteers will begin helping at AFAC on a regular basis starting October 11, bagging produce from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. the second Friday in each even-numbered month.

More volunteers are welcome! If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch with Faye Pritchard at 703-931-2168 or at pritchardpix@aol.com. A variety of tasks is involved, ranging from sitting jobs to filling bags and moving loaded bins. A job is available for all every level of ability. Transportation will be provided for all who need it.

All ages from teenagers up are welcome, and you do not need to be a member of St. John's to help. We welcome friends, neighbors, relatives – anyone who wants to help. A number of parishioners have already signed up for Friday nights, but we can always use more volunteers to augment our teams.

Those who participated in at least one session in August were Debbie Carter and son Rob, Carolyn Corlett, Rev. Ann Barker, Dave and Carol Dunlap, Kim Houghton, Billie Jean Keith, Stacy O'Connor along with husband Ray and daughter Caitlin, Pete Olivere, Bill and Faye Pritchard, Lynn Robinson, Kay Wells, and Sandy Winger.

AFAC provides food assistance to over 1,500 families in Arlington who are referred by the Arlington County government and by local churches, schools, and social service agencies. Clients include elderly people who might have to

choose between food and medicine; families whose breadwinner brings in a wage too low to meet the family's needs; persons with disabilities, and homeless children. A few hours of volunteering makes a difference for them.

Words on Hymns

Amazing Grace, our recessional hymn for October 6, is certainly on many people's lists of Top Ten Favorite Hymns. Even those who don't like bagpipes are moved by a rendition of the hymn on this instrument, and it is as musically iconic for bagpipes as *Scotland the Brave*.

Surprisingly, the tune of *Amazing Grace* most often sung with the text is American, entitled "New Britain". It was originally an Appalachian folk song, and was first published as a hymn tune in shape notes in *Columbian Harmony* in 1829 to the text "Arise, my soul, my joyful pow'rs." It was first set to "Amazing Grace" in 1835 in William Walker's *Southern Harmony*. The message that forgiveness and redemption are possible regardless of sins committed, and that the soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of God, should be sung with vigor and conviction.

The words to *Amazing Grace* were written by the English poet and clergyman John Newton (1725–1807), and published in 1779. Newton wrote the words from personal experience as an autobiography in verse. He grew up without any particular religious conviction. He was forced involuntarily into the Royal Navy, and after leaving the service became involved in the Atlantic slave trade. In 1748, a violent storm battered his vessel so severely that he called out to God for mercy, a moment that marked his spiritual conversion. However, he continued his slave trading career until 1754 or 1755, when he ended his seafaring altogether and commenced studying Christian theology. He began to ask if he was worthy of God's mercy or was in any way redeemable, as he had not only neglected his faith but directly opposed it, mocking others who showed theirs, deriding and denouncing God as a

myth. Eventually he came to believe that God had sent him a profound message and had begun to work through him.

Ordained in the Church of England in 1764, Newton became curate of Olney, Buckinghamshire, where he started to write hymns with poet William Cowper. "Amazing Grace" was written to illustrate a sermon on New Year's Day of 1773. It is unknown if there was any music accompanying the verses; it may have simply been chanted by the congregation. It debuted in print in 1779 in Newton and Cowper's *Olney Hymns*, but settled into relative obscurity in England. In the United States however, "Amazing Grace" was used extensively during the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century. It has been associated with more than twenty melodies before it settled into the tune "New Britain".

Since 1954 when an organ instrumental of

LOGOS

The LOGOS is published monthly except August, near the beginning of the month.

Dave Dunlap, LOGOS Editor

Articles for LOGOS may be Emailed to dave_dunlap@yahoo.com (preferred) or left at the church office.

Material for the November issue should be submitted no later than October 24.

"New Britain" became a bestseller (!), *Amazing Grace* has been associated with funerals and memorial services, and has become a song that inspires hope in the wake of tragedy.



Matthew David Hubbard and Madeline Elizabeth Hubbard are baptized into the St. John's community.



St. John's volunteers bag produce at AFAC.



Produce: bagged, crated and ready for distribution.

Coming up at St. John's

- Adult Forum at 9 a.m. Sundays is focusing on Holy Spirit during the month of October
- Blessing of the Animals – October 6, 5:00 p.m. – Outdoors unless the weather forces us into the undercroft. Bring your pet for a special blessing!
- Bagging groceries at AFAC, Friday, October 11 – see the article in this issue of LOGOS for information on our regular volunteer shift at AFAC.
- Instruction for First Communion will begin on October 13, following the 10 a.m. service. Please let Beth Cavey know if you have a young person who would want to make their first communion at the 10 a.m. service on November 17.
- The Book Club meets November 5 at 7:30. November's selection is *The Shoemaker's Wife* by Adrianna Trigianni. Come and join the discussion!

Parish News

Congratulations to

- Matthew David Hubbard and Madeline Elizabeth Hubbard who were baptized on September 29
- Paul Petrich, who has just been awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. We are proud of you, Paul.

Rest in Peace

- Eleanor Dobson, Janet Spence's sister, who entered the Life of the Resurrection on September 18, 2013

We thank all for your support of St. John's mission and ministries. We particularly thank

- Beth Cavey, Lenore Schmidt, Carrie Harbin, Faye Pritchard and all who made our Friends and Family Sunday possible. It was a great day!
- Pete Olivere, for his tireless work at getting the new computers up and running
- Pete Olivere, Faye Pritchard and Ann Barker for designing and editing our St. John's brochure and our annual giving brochure
- Faye Pritchard, for coordinating our Shrine Mont retreat
- John Petrich, who has joined our acolytes

Friends and Family Sunday



First there was lunch inside



Then there were games outside!