



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

February 2014

Diocesan Council Invites New Ministry Initiatives

"Awake My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve" was the theme of the 219th Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia, held January 23–25 in Richmond. The council focused on innovative mission and ministries that have energized and stretched people from across the diocese. Bishop Johnston spoke of identifying challenges and going beyond our comfort zones to new ways of being and doing church. He said even though it was risky, we had to reach out to the under-served and those who think church is irrelevant. Our ministries can be focused on those around the corner or around the world.

Several examples of creative ministry were presented. Grace and Holy Trinity in Richmond hosted a group of youth from Liverpool, where our diocese has strong relationships. The youth learned about each other and their concerns for their future and for the church. St. Paul's in downtown Richmond looked for the things that were changing in their social context. For the first time in a long time, people want to move downtown, and pub theology is an important way they reach out to these young newcomers. St. Paul's also has a memorial service for the homeless people who have died over a year's time to the meet the needs of that segment of the population.

St. George's Fredericksburg has a group called GIRLs and Women of Faith. They have a women-

to-women partnership with a diocese in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the middle of stories of rape and murder and young boys marched off to serve as warriors, there are women who have started sewing groups and micro-businesses. The girls and women of St. George's have a partnership with these women, working together to empower them to be women and girls in a wider world who, with education available, can change the world. The GIRLs have started a radio show back home to give young people a voice and have attended meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

St. Andrew's in Richmond is sponsoring Grace-on-the-Hill, an intentional community where young people live together and do service work in the area for various non-profits. The group has become part of the Episcopal Service Corps.

In the middle of declining attendance and finances, an aging congregation and a feeling of lethargy, Church of the Resurrection in Alexandria spent a year to re-vision and sustain itself while preserving the church's values and mission. The church looked at a range of options. After this process, they decided their best way forward was to use their property to meet community needs by building affordable housing above the church. Resurrection reported that there has been a slight increase in attendance and finances and more

excitement and vibrancy as they look at the possibilities of this new vision.

Buck Mountain, Earlysville, has developed a life-giving partnership with a new assisted-living facility in the area. The parishioners worship with the residents and have developed a songbook to use. More than that, they became closer to the residents. The church has also opened a food pantry and made a mission trip to Tanzania, to which the assisted-living facility made a contribution of more than \$2,000.

Many other stories were told designed to get us all thinking about what we could do to stretch our mission and ministries into the community, be it local or across the globe.

A conversation with the three bishops focused on topics including the future of the church and the line between faith and politics. Bishop Shannon said he was optimistic about the church's future because it is at its best when it is confronted by challenges from both inside and out. He said the comfort of the status quo hinders our moving forward. His priorities as bishop of Virginia are to find a way to engage congregations around the five priorities for mission and ministry (youth and young adult ministry, strengthening existing congregations, multicultural and ethnic ministry, mission and outreach, and proclamation and evangelism); clergy formation, both spiritual and vocational; and finding greater ways to empower advocacy for social justice.

Bishop Susan was optimistic about the unprecedented number of people coming into the discernment process, wondering about all kinds of vocations, both ordained and lay. She said it was important to look for the Holy Spirit in the massive change going on in the church. Declining revenues and average Sunday attendance often felt like failure, she remarked, but it was not failure, just a sign of change and an indication that we could not keep doing the same old things in the same old way. It is important to look for where the Holy Spirit is calling us to go as a church in this new time.

Bishop Ted shared his optimism about the numbers of adult baptisms he is seeing on his

pastoral visits and the energy around Shrine Mont and its campaign to repair the facilities and to set up a scholarship fund so that campers and counselors who could not otherwise attend could take advantage of the place that had been seminal in the spiritual growth of so many.

All the bishops emphasized the important work of the church in the political arena to promote justice and peace, mentioning such issues as immigration and gun control reform. Bishop Susan said that a relationship with God through Jesus Christ always includes other people, that living in community is what faith is all about, as is politics. We are to go out into the world of politics and relate to other people in God's name. Bishop Shannon quoted Desmond Tutu as saying, "Christianity must be political or it is not Christianity". He said when we engage in politics our primary identity is as one of the baptized, not a Democrat or a Republican. Bishop Ted talked about the Bible's command to take care of the widow, the orphan and the sojourner and to act out of the story that informs us.

The council also elected new members for the Standing Committee and general convention deputies. Catherine Campbell from Region III was elected to the Standing Committee and Kim Coleman of Region III was elected as a general convention deputy.

On the financial front, the council passed a budget of about \$5 million. Karen Grane, head of the budget committee, said the budget was a reflection of our mission and ministries. Litigation

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.

costs have gone down from \$2.1 million two years ago to \$352,000 in 2013. This money came from a line of credit on church property, not from any pledges to the diocese. It was announced that treasurer Mike Kerr would be leaving his post in several months to work for the diocese as the first CEO of the Trustees of the Funds.

The council passed several resolutions on topics including immigration reform, “green church” initiatives, appointing a task force to study how our diocese can become a more effective partner with other concerned groups in addressing requests for relief and development assistance for the Episcopal Church in Sudan and South Sudan, and asking the church’s investment advisors to choose companies that have acted promptly to reduce or eliminate the use of “conflict minerals” (minerals sold by countries in conflict that are believed to put large sums of money into the hands

of warring factions).

The council also approved a resolution to appoint a task force to study changing the name of the council to convention (“council” was a designation adopted during the Civil War) and one to continue to support Boy Scout units in the wake of the Boy Scouts’ recent decision to allow homosexuals to be a part of scouting and to make it clear to the Boy Scout council of their units that the Episcopal Church strongly disagrees with the Boy Scouts’ policy of discriminating against qualified adult leaders based on sexual orientation. Council members referred to the Executive Board a resolution that their be a complete study of the property held by the diocese, including a review of locations and values of property, the size and location of the congregations, demographic trends and the location of over-served and under-served areas of the diocese.

Annual Meeting Points the Way for 2014

St. John’s annual meeting was held on January 26, 2014. Senior Warden Faye Pritchard, assisted by Junior Warden Lenore Schmidt, presided in the absence of Rector Ann Barker, who was unable to attend due to injuries caused by falling on the ice. Following approval of the minutes of the 2013 meeting, Faye read the rector’s report on the many accomplishments of 2013.

Treasurer Bill Thomson reported on the state of St. John’s finances going into 2014. Due to increases in the value of the church’s investments, net assets increased in 2013. This increase took place despite using earnings to cover a \$6,000 deficit in the operating budget. Bill discussed the relationship between designated funds and the operating budget. The 2014 budget included a column to show where designated funds were being used to cover budget items. While the issue of designated funds and how they interact with the operating budget is complex, this approach seemed to provide a better understanding of the budget.

Junior Warden Lenore Schmidt reported on the state of the buildings and grounds, beginning by thanking everyone for their help during the year

with projects around the church. She noted the particular success of parish cleanup days and the ongoing effort to clean out storage spaces and get rid of items that have been “dumped” and will not be used again. She said this year’s agenda includes painting the undercroft, continuing to install new florescent bulbs and ballasts, and upgrading the heating/air conditioning for the rector’s and secretary’s offices. Lenore also noted that a new



Before the annual meeting, members nibble snacks and read handouts in preparation.

sexton will be hired soon who will take care of basic inside and outside cleaning, mowing, and raking.

Senior Warden Faye Pritchard reviewed the goals developed for 2013, our progress toward meeting them, and what we learned from the effort. Faye noted that we had made the most progress where a 2013 goal had an active champion who led our efforts. Faye then presented proposed focus areas for St. John's in 2014 (see below). The congregation approved the proposed focus areas with a minimum of discussion.

Beth Cavey reported on the family ministries program in 2013 and outlined ambitious plans for the coming year. Beth stressed that the families ministries program needs parish involvement – she can not do it all by herself. She handed out a Sunday School schedule for the first half of 2014, discussed ideas for more “family friendly” services, reviewed the success of last year's Vacation Bible School, and spoke of her interest in doing more projects in partnership with other small parishes.

Finally, Beth said that if we are to continue the annual tea, it requires more involvement. She felt it was a worthwhile fundraiser, but is more work

than one person or even a small group can handle. A decision will be made later as to whether the tea can be continued.

Faye Pritchard reported on outreach activities in 2013 and the support for packing produce at the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) on a bi-monthly basis. Faye said she would like to have the church involved in at least one outreach activity per month, whether it is working at AFAC or taking part in another project. She noted that St. John's members were signed up for two activities in February – packing food for AFAC and preparing oral rehydration packets.

The outgoing Senior Warden then turned the meeting to the vestry election. Three members of the vestry are going off this year: Senior Warden Faye Pritchard, Junior Warden Lenore Schmidt, and Carrie Harbin. She introduced the nominees for the vacancies: Sandy Winger and Bill Thomson nominated for three year terms, and Lizzie Miller, nominated to fill out the year remaining on Lenore Schmidt's term. The nominees were elected by acclamation.

The meeting closed with profuse thanks for who volunteered their time and effort on behalf of St. John's during the past year.

Focus Areas for St. John's in 2014

- A. Family Programs: *Enhance Family Programs to support our children and youth and to draw in new families.*
 - 1. Involve 30 of our parishioners in helping at least once with a Family Programs activity.
 - 2. In addition to the Christmas pageant service, create at least three other worship services that will engage children and youth.
 - 3. Set up at least two joint activities with other churches, one for children and one for youth.

- B. Outreach: *Provide focus for and expand outreach activity.*
 - 1. Arrange for four service projects in addition to the already established outreach activities.
 - 2. Carry out at least one additional outreach activity with Family Programs.

- C. Worship: *Further enliven worship to uplift our spiritual lives.*
 - 1. Join with Family Programs in creating services that engage children and youth.
 - 2. Provide at least two innovative worship services or worship-related events aimed at a broader audience.

- D. Parish Support and Development: *Support and expand our parish community.*
 - 1. Provide at least two events (such as Friends and Family Sunday) and at least one service project to which prior and inactive members, new prospects, friends, and family would be invited.
 - 2. Reach out to inactive and prior members still in the area to find out what might encourage their re-involvement with St. John's.

Tuesday Lenten Program Begins March 11

This year the Arlington's Episcopal churches are trying something new for Lent! We will come together each Tuesday during Lent at Saint Mary's for a light dinner (suggested donation \$5.00), followed by a program and Compline. Nursery care will be provided. The program is targeted for teens and adults.

The topic for the series is "Hope, Faith and Love in Harry Potter: A Lenten Series on the Power of the Imagination" with Patricia Lyons, Harvard University M.A., Virginia Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry.

The *Harry Potter* series is the best selling book series of all time and it is packed with theological questions and ideas. This five-week Lenten series will survey the *Harry Potter* books, alongside similar narratives by C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, in order to find and understand how Christian dogmas and doctrines create much of the

architecture of any epic story. This Lenten series will study J. K. Rowling's portrayals of creation, being chosen, fear, sin, grace, love, death and resurrection. The goal of this lecture series is to make the most of the meditative metabolism of Lent by discovering and integrating the inestimable role of the imagination more into our personal lives of faith.

Dinners will consist of pizza and salad. The region will order the pizza. The participating Arlington churches will take turns sponsoring the dinner and will be responsible for bringing bagged salad and dressing, as well as setting up, serving, and cleaning up.

St. John's is tentatively signed up to sponsor the dinner on April 1. Mark your calendars for each Tuesday in Lent, and plan to help out April 1 when we sponsor the dinner!

Words on Hymns

Why do we not use the "Gloria" and "Alleluia" from the service during Lent? We omit the Gloria during Advent and Lent because both are penitential periods, and that is why the priest's vestments are purple. The Gloria is a joyous hymn of praise to the Trinity. In addition, since Lent is a stricter period than Advent, we omit the Alleluia. The Alleluia comes to us from Hebrew, and it means "praise Yahweh." Traditionally, it has been seen as the chief term of praise of the choirs of angels as they worship around the throne of God in Heaven. It is, therefore, a term of great joy, and our use of the Alleluia can be looked at as a way of participating in the angels' worship. It is also a reminder that the Kingdom of Heaven is already established on earth through the Church, and that our participation in the worship service is a participation in heaven. The joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice.

The omission of Alleluia during Lent goes back

at least to the fifth century in the western church. A custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages. The hymn "Alleluia, song of gladness" contains a translation of an 11th century Latin text that compares an Alleluia-less Lent to the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. The text then anticipates the joy of Easter when glad Alleluias will return in all their heavenly splendor. (For those interested in pursuing this, the version in the 1982 Episcopal hymnal is numbers 122 and 123.)

Along with a sung farewell to Alleluia, some congregations have embraced the practice of physically "burying" the Alleluia. An Alleluia made from paper, fabric, metal, wood, or some other natural material may be carried in procession or might lead a parade accompanied by instruments and singing. The Alleluia could be in the form of a cloth banner or could be attached to the processional cross. A large paper Alleluia could be placed rolled or folded into the container, which could be a mailing tube.

Burial can take place in the ground, or the Alleluia can simply be placed in a suitable container that will remain in the worship space as a visual reminder of Alleluia's absence during Lent. The burial typically takes place on the Sunday preceding Ash Wednesday (Transfiguration Sunday, also called the last Sunday after the Epiphany). This is the last Sunday when Alleluia will be used until Easter Sunday.

If the Alleluia was buried as part of worship on the last Sunday after the Epiphany, the resurrected Alleluia may appropriately be carried in a festive procession during the hymn of praise or as part of a gospel procession on Easter Sunday.

All of these changes are designed to focus on minds on the nature of the season. The Ash Wednesday service in the Episcopal Prayer Book states: "I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." Our worship helps us to recall that Advent and Lent are times of preparation—not only for the greatest feasts of the liturgical year, Christmas and Easter, but for the end of our lives and the Second Coming of Christ.

Carol Dunlap

January 2014 Vestry Highlights

The vestry approved four areas of focus for 2014:

- A. Enhance Family Programs
- B: Expand outreach activity
- C: Further enliven worship to uplift our spiritual lives
- D: Support and expand our parish community.

The vestry approved a Family Sunday on June 15.

St. John's is in the process of hiring a new sexton. The current sexton(s) are not interested in outside work (mowing, raking, snow removal, *etc.*) and Junior Warden Lenore Schmidt feels we will be better served by having a sexton to deal with both inside and outside work. There are three applicants for the job, and a hiring decision will be made soon.

The Rector's 2014 housing allowance was approved.

Christmas Eve late services will remain at 11:00 pm.

At the time of the vestry meeting there were two nominees for the three vacancies on the vestry. Two of the vacancies are for full three-year terms, the third is a one-year term.

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 March issue should be submitted no later than February 21.



Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the manger – a family portrait from the Christmas pageant.

From the Rector: Creating Possibilities

Not too long ago, a friend and I made a change in my house. We switched the bed in the guest room for the bed in my room. Though it is uncomfortable sleeping in a new bed at first, I am confident that I will get used to it. The change creates a new possibility – that I will not get up aching every morning.

Creating possibilities for good is what we are all about on our Christian journey. God has made all things new through Jesus's life, death and resurrection. To be Jesus's disciples, we are called to create new things too.

One tool we can see immediately for creating new possibilities is technology. Because of technology we are in better health and we can communicate better than ever before. We have access to more information to generate new ideas.

Brother Mark Brown of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) says that another way to move forward into new creation is the “unsettling, destabilizing energies” that come to us all – frustration, lack of fulfillment, discontent. Seeking a remedy for these feelings transforms our own experience and leads to new things.

Creative sparks can also be ignited by hope. Brother Curtis Almquist (SSJE) says hope is a gift from God that makes our incompleteness bearable. Hope is an “expectant desire” that something will come, something will change, new possibilities will be born. We can use our gifts to bring hope to others too, says Brother David Vyrhof (SSJE). Bringing hope where there is despair “creates possibilities where all seems dead and lost.”

Some of us have a list of self-improvement projects that is just overwhelming. We try and we fail to create new things out of this list of wishes because we are constantly falling short and beating ourselves up about it. Ironically, it is not wanting to make ourselves better that creates new possibilities for our lives; it is acceptance of who we are now. Acceptance does not mean accepting defeat. It means loving ourselves, which makes us breathe a sigh of relief. As soon as we love ourselves for who we are we make change

possible, and it is change out of love, not fear, that creates new possibilities.

Trust is a powerful tool for creating possibilities. Jesus prayed to his Abba for guidance and did what God told him to do. New life was created. When we put God in charge of our lives, we can trust that good things will come of it, whether the result is what we expected or not. We are freed to take risks, to put ourselves out there in the world, to try new things. And it takes risk to create new possibilities in our lives.

Forgiveness provides fresh options. Brother Mark Brown says it “sets us free for the future”. It is about “neutralizing the toxins of shame...(and) liberating us from the paralysis of guilt so we can move on.” That's what God does for us in Jesus. Knowing we are forgiven by God helps us to forgive others. When our hearts are full of resentment, they cannot take us to new places. We are so caught up in past hurts that there is no room for fresh expressions of who we are in the world.

It takes struggle to create new possibilities. Struggle is no less than the process of the internal redefinition of the self, says Joan Chittister. “When our expectations run aground of our reality, we begin to rethink the meaning and shape of our lives.” New possibilities often come about when old ones no longer work – when we lose control of our lives and have to trust, when our failed hopes leave us in despair, when God's plan for us is not our plan for us. To keep on living, we find we must change, and it is painful, but we can take heart because God is with us in the midst of our struggle, in the midst of our change.

God constantly creates new possibilities for us as we go through life. God wants us to be fully human and that means taking advantage of God's possibilities and creating our own with God's help. Growth and change and moving forward are the essence of the Christian journey. Creating new possibilities keeps us open to God's life in us and draws us closer to being the people God wants us to be.

Ann †

Parish Notes

We thank all who serve at St. John's. This month we give special thanks to

- All the vestry members, especially outgoing members Faye Pritchard, Lenore Schmidt, and Carrie Harbin, as well as our newly-elected members – Sandy Winger, Bill Thomson, and Lizzy Miller
- Faye Pritchard for presiding over the annual meeting due to Rector Ann Barker's injury from falling on the ice
- Lenore Schmidt for shoveling the snow from the church's sidewalks and steps

February Birthdays

Michelle Aitken, Dennis Albrecht, Robert Carter, Tina Cavey, Lynn Christopher, Peyton Del Gallo, The Rev. Amanda Eiman, Henry Held, Carole Hunt, Heather Kollath, Alexis Lodsun, Jeff Petrich, Anne Stenger, Eileen Tallent and Colin White

February Anniversaries

Bryan & Carrie Harbin, Keith & Kaipo McCartney, Bill Schenck & Lynn Christopher

Coming Up at St. John's . . .

- **Tuesday, Feb 4, 7:30 p.m.** – **Book Club** February's selection is *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, available at any Arlington County library branch.
- **Saturday, February 8, 6 – 7:30 p.m.** – **Spaghetti Supper** Sign up to bring your favorite spaghetti sauce or provide a side dish, or just come and enjoy good food and good fellowship!
- **Saturday, February 08, 2014 – Oral Rehydration Project** at Central United Methodist Church. Three shifts are available: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 1:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Faye Pritchard is coordinating St. John's participation. If interested helping, email Faye right away at pritchardpix@aol.com.
- **Friday, February 14, 2014 – AFAC - Bagging Groceries**, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, February 15, 2014 – Men's Fellowship**, 8:30 a.m.
- **Tuesday, March 4, 6 – 7:30 p.m.** – **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** Everyone is welcome the night before the beginning of Lent!
- **Tuesday, March 4, 7:30 p.m.** – **Book Club** The March selection is *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce
- **Wednesday, March 5 – Ash Wednesday** – Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes, noon and 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 11 – Region III Lenten Dinner**, St. Mary's Church. See the article on the Lenten program in this issue.