



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 2015

From the Rector: Becoming God's People

I have stacks of stuff in my guest room that I one day hope will become albums – one for Kristy and Evan and one for me. I have old boxes of photos, greeting cards, sports pictures, negatives and other memorabilia from Evan's life, from the day his dad held him in the hospital nursery to his college graduation photos. From time to time, I look at some of the photos with fond memories. As I journey through the years, I see how the child has become the man physically. Even when we stop growing physically, we don't stop growing emotionally. I know there will be more to see as my wonderful children grow and mature.

God has designed us to grow spiritually too. From those first times we pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep" to children's Bible stories to Confirmation to questioning to (we hope) finding faith again if we lost it, God has been active in our lives, giving us revelations of Godself that we are ready to receive. We are always God's people and yet we live more and more into that identity as we grow.

Here are some ways we can become more God's people. We can take risks. Zoe M. Hicks in *The Upper Room* tells about a time she ventured out on stage as an actress. She was comfortable reading her part but very uncomfortable having to memorize lines. When the performance came, her professor introduced the cast as "working without

a net" and asked the audience to send positive thoughts. Sometimes we need to "work without a net" and try something new, knowing that we always have a net in God's love for us.

We can become God's people by following Jesus' directions. An author in *Forward Movement* talks of sewing with gingham fabric because she can't sew well and needs the lines for guidance, for ways to keep her stitches straight. Jesus, the author says, gives us simple and clear directions, just as the gingham does when she sews. Some of our directions include trusting in God, keeping the commandments, and reading and learning from the Scripture.

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.

We can love. Children who are going to have new baby brothers or sisters often worry that there won't be enough love to go around, when the simple truth is the more people we have to love, the more our capacity to love expands. We make new friends and keep the old. We embrace a new stepparent. We love our enemies. When we love as Jesus loved us, we become big, says Brother Mark Brown of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE). We develop a bigger and bigger heart to encompass more and more people and God's whole creation.

We can serve. We are Christ's body, his hands and feet and ears and eyes on earth. We are "God with skin on". As we grow spiritually, we can practice looking outward at the world and looking for opportunities to serve. Whether we tutor adult learners or help out at a race benefiting a non-profit or bag food for AFAC or donate supplies to schools, service makes us more like the One who said, "I am among you as a servant".

We can pray. We can ask God for grace to do that which we cannot do ourselves. We can allow

ourselves to be "re-membered" by God, as Brother Curtis Almquist (SSJE) says. When we pray, God is reattaching us and being "put in our place" in the heart of God. Whether you are meditators, intercessors or live a prayer life based on using your gifts for God's glory, every time we pray, we draw close to God and mature spiritually.

We can be good stewards of that which God has blessed us with. When we know that the world and all its wonders and our lives in all their bigness and brokenness do not belong to us but to God, we can begin to offer them to God to use for God's glory. We see things as only temporarily ours and therefore do not get bound up with them and have to have more and more. We can rejoice in the beauty of God's world and work to take care of it.

In the new year, let's pay attention to the ways we can become God's people, the ways we can say yes to God's will for us, knowing that it is for our good. Grow spiritually and become big in heart mind and soul.

Ann †

Adult Education in January

In January, we will finish up our study of "Crashing the Chatterbox" about how to let God's voice of love overcome the negative voices in our head that make us feel worthless or afraid. On February 1, we will have a speaker on Hispanic Christianity and on February 8, someone from Iglesia de Cristo Rey will make a presentation on the same topic. Come join us!

Annual Diocesan Council

The annual council meeting of the diocese will be held from January 22-24 in Richmond. We will consider resolutions, hear from our bishops, do some interactive communicating about various issues, have the presentation of the diocesan budget and focus on churches that are doing outstanding mission work. There will also be a council Eucharist. Our pre-council meeting will be a virtual meeting, a webinar, on January 10. Our delegates this year are Ann Barker and Debbie Carter.

A Final Word

This issue marks my last as editor of LOGOS. Again, I would like to thank you all for your support and help during my time as editor. Lisa Pope takes over as editor with the February issue. Her e-mail is shown below, along with the deadline for the February issue.

Dave Dunlap

LOGOS

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

Dave Dunlap, LOGOS Editor

Articles for LOGOS may be Emailed to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org (preferred) or left at the church office.

Material for the February issue should be submitted no later than January 19.

Parish News

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

- St. John's Book Club will meet **January 6 at 7:30 p.m.** to discuss *Solar* by Ian McEwan. And don't forget to visit the library to borrow *Swamplandia* by Karen Russell, the book up for discussion at the February 3 meeting.
- The Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, **January 25 after the 10:00 a.m. service.** We will discuss the ministries of the church and the 2015 budget. We will also elect two vestry members and give thanks for those who have served faithfully in the past year.

We are always looking for people to serve on the vestry. If you want to know more about what is involved in being a vestry member, please talk to Ann or our senior warden, Bill Schenck, who will welcome your interest. You do not have to wait to be asked to serve on the vestry! Step forward and serve!

- St. John's will host a Family Game Night on **Saturday, January 31 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.** Bring your favorite games and your friends and neighbors to enjoy fellowship, friendly competition and popcorn. Also, bring an item of food for AFAC.

We thank all who have contributed their time and energy to the mission of St. John's, especially:

- The hosts and helpers at the Thanksgiving potluck: Lynn Robinson, Lisa Pope, Kaipo McCartney, Marshall Adair and anyone else who lent a hand.
- Jonathan Muehlke, our Family Programs Minister, and all who helped make the Christmas pageant such a wonderful success. It is always a highlight of our year.
- Eileen Tallent and all who helped with the greening of the Church for our celebration of Christmas.
- The many members who contributed flowers for the altar for Christmas.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in January:

Patricia Broida, Keelyn Del Gallo, Don Hess, Tony Kollath, Mary Mackin, Paul Stenger, Cynthia Todd, and Janet Spence

We celebrate with all who have anniversaries in January:

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

A Special Thank You. . . .

Thank you to whomever in the congregation provided my very generous Christmas gift. I can't believe I'm in my seventeenth year at St. John's. You have always been supportive of my music and forgiving of my mistakes. I will use your gift to get something delightful.

Carol Dunlap

Instructed Eucharist, Part VI

Following the Lord's Prayer, the celebrant breaks the bread so that we can share it and, in sharing it, partake of Christ together. The preparation is now complete. Christ is present. It is time for us all to come to Christ's table for the feast of life. We come forward bringing ourselves, our busy, joy-riddled, confusing, difficult lives. And we are fed Christ's Body and Blood. Love bids us welcome, receiving us, healing us, filling us with a life that will never end.

The remainder of the Eucharist is brief. We should not linger. We say the Post-Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving, we receive a blessing and we are dismissed. We have been fed by Christ. We

have been made one with him and with each other. Now we are sent back to our lives and our world to be Christ to those around us and to serve Christ. "Become what you eat," St. Augustine said. And so we take the love and peace we have received here out to do our part for the serving and healing of the world.

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Words on Hymns

Our gradual for January 18 is *I have decided to follow Jesus*. The story behind this hymn is unusually inspirational. The late 1800's saw an evangelistic explosion in India. Entire provinces formerly closed to missionaries were swept up in a movement perhaps unparalleled in history. Wales in particular sent hundreds of missionaries to Northern India. They were joined by Indian evangelists, as well as missionaries from England, Australia, and the United States. This movement was remarkable for two reasons: first, it was led mostly by Indians themselves, and those men became national figures. Second, this missionary endeavor was focused on Northern India, which was firmly in the grips of the most oppressive forms of Hinduism. It was a place where the caste system was entrenched, and where headhunters ruled. These provinces often prided themselves on the hostile reaction they gave foreigners. Dozens and dozens of missionaries were martyred, but despite the opposition and violence, the gospel made inroads into this previously off-limits area.

In the 1880's a Welsh missionary who had endured severe persecution finally saw his first converts in a particularly brutal village in the province of Assam in northeast India. A husband and wife, with their two children, professed faith in

Christ and were baptized. Their village leaders decided to make an example out of the husband. Arresting the family, they demanded that the father renounce Christ, or see his wife and children murdered. When he refused, his two children were executed by archers. Given another chance to recant, the man again refused, and his wife was similarly stuck down. Still refusing to renounce his faith, the man followed his family. The lyrics of the hymn are based on the the man's last words. Called to deny Jesus by the village chief, the convert declared, "I have decided to follow Jesus." In response to threats to his family, he continued, "Though no one joins me, still I will follow." His wife was killed, and he was executed while singing, "The cross before me, the world behind me." This display of faith is reported to have led to the conversion of the chief and others in the village. The name of the martyrs have been lost.

The formation of these words into a hymn is attributed to the Indian missionary Sadhu Sundar Singh. The melody is also Indian, and entitled "Assam" after the region where the text originated to make one



Sadhu Sundar Singh

of the first uniquely Indian hymns. Singh had risen to prominence in India because he was training foreign missionaries. A theme in his teaching had been the necessity of avoiding the cultural trappings of Western Christianity. He insisted that the missionaries now pouring into India focus on the essentials of the gospel while allowing the now vibrant Indian Christian community to develop their own Christian customs. The song immediately became popular in Indian churches, and it remains a mainstay of worship music there to this day.

An American hymn editor, William Jensen Reynolds, composed an arrangement which was

included in the 1959 Assembly Songbook. His version became a regular feature of Billy Graham's evangelistic meetings in America and elsewhere, spreading its popularity.

Due to the lyrics' explicit focus on the believer's own commitment, the hymn is cited as a prime example of decision theology, emphasizing the human response rather than the action of God in giving faith. This has led to its exclusion from some hymnals. A Lutheran writer noted, "It definitely has a different meaning when we sing it than it did for the person who composed it."

Carol Dunlap

Christmas Pageant Delights Everyone

The St. John's annual Christmas pageant was held on Sunday December 14 during the 10:00 a.m. service. The youth of St. John's as well as four neighborhood children made up the cast of a fun event that told the story of Jesus' birth. The cast (in alphabetical order) was: Michael Cavey, Gaby Colston, Paul Colston, Pearson Frank, Spenser Frank, Elizabeth Heim, Matthew Heim, Connor McCartney, Kenji McCartney, Laura Robertson, Wilson Robertson, and Nora Wien.

The pageant included Christmas carols and a special collection for the Heifer Project, a non-profit organization that gives animals and seeds to people in third world countries to help them becoming self-sustaining. The young people will select what kind of animals and plants they want to send with the money they collected.

Pageant pictures are on page 6.

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Organist: Carol Dunlap
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Juan Figueroa

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Pledge Clerk
Lenore Schmidt, Chair, Finance Committee
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild
Jonathan Muehlke, Minister of Family Programs

Vestry

Bill Schenck , Senior Warden
Sandy Winger, Junior Warden
Jeff Aitken
Pete Olivere

Paul Stenger
Bill Thomson
Linda Trochim

Christmas Pageant Portraits



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