

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

May 2016

Between Hope and Fear: A Conversation on Muslim-Christian Relations



Salih Sayilgan spoke at St. John's on April 17 about moving beyond fear to embrace healthier Muslim-Christian relations.

No one should be blamed for another person's crime and no community should be judged for the actions of a minority, scholar and speaker Salih Sayilgan said in "Between Hope and Fear," a presentation at St. John's on April 17. The talk drew more than 30 attendees from the St. John's congregation and the community.

Popular political rhetoric in the United States and elsewhere tags all Muslims as "bad guys and criminals," Sayilgan, who is Muslim, said. In fact, "no one is facing danger more than the Muslim people," he said, referring to millions displaced by war in Syria. The

overwhelming majority of victims of ISIS are Muslim, he also noted.

The issue today is how to make the global community healthier, peaceful, and harmonious, said Sayilgan. Fear emerges when something is foreign to us. What is the healthy approach? What matters, said Sayilgan, is personal responsibility. What can we do on a daily basis? Discussions with our family, our neighbors, and our community are all important. We need to learn about what is different, as well as the things that we share. Sayilgan noted that the Qur'an and the Bible

tell similar stories. For example, the story of Mary is deeply touching to Muslims, he said. She was young, single, and pregnant—a scandal in the highly patriarchal society of her time. But her life is also a message of hope because she gave birth to Jesus, whose life then transformed the world.

Sayilgan and his wife Zeyneb have spoken widely on Muslim–Christian relations across the United States and overseas. They had planned to give a joint talk at St. John’s, but Zeyneb was unable to attend. Salih Sayilgan is a Ph.D. candidate in Religious and Theological

Studies at the Catholic University of America. He also teaches courses on Islam, the Qur’an, and world religions at the university. He is originally from Turkey.

Zeyneb Sayilgan has a doctorate in Religious and Theological Studies from Georgetown University. She is Luce Muslim Visiting Scholar at Virginia Theological Seminary, teaching courses on Islam and Christian–Muslim relations. She grew up in Germany.

St. John’s Hosts Spring Tea on May 7

Sit down, relax, and enjoy both tea and treats as St. John’s hosts its annual Spring Tea on May 7 from 1 to 3 p.m. In addition to a wide choice of teas, attendees can choose from an impressive array of scones, finger sandwiches, pastries, cake, and cookies. Other treats include a glass of champagne and live piano music. Come socialize with friends or family, make new friends, or share a memorable experience with your child or grandchild. The cost per person is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under.



Join the Sunday Seminar in May

What do Revelation, evolution, and C.S. Lewis have in common? The adult Sunday Seminar will discuss all of these topics in May. On May 1, Bill Schenck will lead a talk on music that has been written based on the Book of Revelation, accompanied by a DVD. On May 8 and 15, Bill Pritchard will lead two sessions on evolution, the world, and the divine, as seen through the eyes of Father Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit and scientist. On May 22, the Rev. William Wiler will lead a seminar on C.S. Lewis. “All these topics promise to be good discussion starters,” said Rev. Ann Barker. Join the seminar at 9 a.m. 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.

From the Rector: Out of the Dark

Brother Mark Brown of the Society of St. John the Evangelist says, “For Jesus to stand up to his full height, he had to leave the small, dark place of the tomb. For us to rise up to our full stature, we must leave the small, dark places of our life. We must leave the many and various tombs of this earthly life and find our way to the broad, open and light-filled places.”

It’s true, you know. All of us have places that hurt, places that cause fear, places of resentment, places of loneliness that we have to get out of to be all God wants us to be.

We have to get over our fear of God. Many of us may inhabit a tomb that believes—at least in part—in a judgmental God. This God may be around because of our parents’ personalities, or it may be something we were taught in church. It may be life experiences we have had. But whatever the reason, God is sometimes someone to be feared and avoided, especially when we are angry or we complain or we indulge in self-pity. But we can say anything to God. The psalmists complain all the time. They usually end up on a thankful note, but they still share their feelings—all of them—and we can too without fear of reprisals. When we are bombarded with “should” either from ourselves or others, we can always feel free to ask God for a second opinion.

We have to be able to trust God to do what is in our best interests because God loves us. There are so many things we can’t do under our own steam, and we need help. We need to learn to ask for that help and expect it. Then we can feel the light of God’s love in our hearts.

Another dark place is broken relationships with our neighbors. We need to break down the fences that divide us from others—race, class, gender, sexual preference—and treat everyone as a child of God. That includes individual

people we see as our enemies or at least someone who opposes us. One of the best ways to do that is to pray for them, wishing them all good things. It is important to be honest with our neighbors because we would like them to be honest with us. Not about things like “Does this dress make me look fat?” necessarily, but about issues that may be dividing us, whether it is borrowing and not returning tools or noisy parties or a difficulty at work. Mending these broken relationships is a way to the light as well.

One of the darkest places many of us have is the way we feel about ourselves. We are sure that we are not good enough because someone has told us that in so many ways, or because someone has told us we should be doing something we are not, or because we feel like we should be perfect and we are not. Something a spiritual director told me that might help in getting out of that attitude is to imagine that you are the president and the other people are members of the board of directors. The ultimate decision of what you do is up to you and God. You can also ask God to help you see yourself as God sees you.

Another dark place is the ruts we live in. Routines are comfortable and can be good, but they can also be traps. Perhaps we hate our jobs, but are afraid to try for new ones. Perhaps we are in a relationship that is pulling us down. Perhaps we spend so much time taking care of others that we don’t take care of ourselves and get the food, exercise, and sleep we need. Perhaps we have a bad habit we need to get rid of. With God’s help, changing all this is possible, and it will bring us further into God’s loving light.

Finally, there is that control thing. All those parts of us and others we want to have control over that we cannot because we only have so much influence. At some point we

have to let go of them, or fear, anxiety, and frustration will result.

This Easter season, let God help you out of the dark places of your life, so you can stand

in the “broad, open, light-filled places” that are God’s and feel love and care beyond your wildest dreams.

Ann †

Vison Committee Work Begins

St. John’s is starting a visioning process to help us discern where the church is going in the next few years. A new Vision Committee will collect data on who we are now as a parish, what the congregation wants to accomplish, demographic studies, what the organizations in our community need, and who we think God is calling us to be. The committee will meet about three times and then will bring the information to the congregation with the intention of clarifying values and beginning the goal-setting process for short-term and long-term goals. Members of the committee are Teresa Birmingham, Dave Dunlap, Pete Olivere, Lisa Pope, Faye Pritchard, and Bill Thomson. Please keep the committee in your prayers.

St. John’s First Quarter 2016 Revenue and Expenses

OPERATING BUDGET	Year-to-date	Budget
OPERATING INCOME	\$29,709.00	\$34,536.00
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$36,694.00	\$43,009.00
INCOME LESS EXPENDITURES	-\$6,985.00	-\$8,473.00
FUNDS DESIGNATED FOR SPECIFIC USES		
Designated Funds In	\$7,429.00	
Designated Funds Out	\$6,124.00	
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	\$218,486.00	

For details see posting on the bulletin board outside the nursery, or contact Bill Thomson.

Words on Hymns: *St. Patrick's Hymn*

Our gradual hymn for May 22 will be *Saint Patrick's Breastplate*, also known as "The Deer's Cry" or "The Lorica of Saint Patrick" or "Saint Patrick's Hymn." It is a lorica or incantation whose original Old Irish lyrics were traditionally attributed to Saint Patrick during his Irish ministry in the 5th century. In 1889 it was adapted into the hymn *I Bind Unto Myself Today*. A number of other adaptations have been made.

The prayer is part of the *Liber Hymnorum*, a collection of hymns found in two manuscripts kept in Dublin and published in 1903 in the *Thesaurus Paleohibernicus*. The document gives this account of how Patrick used the prayer: "Patrick sang this when an ambush was laid against his coming by Loegaire, that he might not go to Tara to sow the faith. And then it appeared before those lying in ambush that they [Patrick and his monks] were wild deer with a fawn following them."

The description concludes "fáeth fiada a hainm," which the *Thesaurus Paleohibernicus* translates as "Its name is 'Deer's Cry.'" However, the phrase "fáeth fiada" is used elsewhere in Irish mythology to mean a mist of concealment.

If the description above is accurate, then the prayer would date from the 5th century, the time of Saint Patrick. However, it has been dated as from the 8th century by modern experts. Although Christian in content, it shows pre-Christian influence in that it calls for Christ's protection using the form of a pagan invocation of the gods or lorica (shield or breastplate). It is for this reason that it is also known as "The Lorica of St. Patrick" or "St. Patrick's Breastplate." On the other hand, this may be a Scripture reference from Ephesians 6:10-17 ("God's shield to protect me...from snares of devils").

Each verse of the prayer begins "Atomruig indiu," which means "I arise today" or "I bind unto myself today," and this phrase is repeated at the beginning of most of the verses. This is followed by a list of sources of strength that the prayer calls on for support:

Verse 1: The Trinity.

Verse 2: The baptism, death, resurrection, ascension, and future return of Christ on the last day.

Verse 3: The angels, patriarchs, saints, and martyrs.

Verse 4: The natural world: Sun, moon, fire, lightning, etc.

Verse 5: Various aspects of God—his wisdom, eye, ear, and hand.

Verse 6: The things against which protection is required: Snares of devils, temptations of nature, those who wish ill.

Verse 7: More things requiring protection: False prophets, heathens, heretics, women, druids (druad), and smiths (gobann). (Some versions substitute "witches" for "women" in verse 7, but we won't go there.)

Verse 8 calls for Christ to be in all things—Christ in me, all around me, in the eye and ear and mouth of the people I meet.

The last verse returns to the theme of the Trinity.

H.H. Dickinson, Dean of the Chapel Royal at Dublin Castle, requested of C.F. Alexander (1818-1895), a well-known Irish hymn writer, "that she should fill a gap in our Irish Church Hymnal by giving us a metrical version of St. Patrick's 'Lorica' and I sent her a carefully collated copy of the best prose translations of it. Within a week she sent me that exquisitely beautiful as well as faithful version which appears in the appendix to our Church Hymnal."

As was her practice, Alexander wrote the poems only. The music to the hymn was originally set for chorus and organ in 1902 by Charles Villiers Stanford, a celebrated English composer, using two traditional Irish tunes, *St. Patrick* and *Gartan*. Stanford took these tunes from his own 1895 edition of George Petrie's *Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (originally published in 1855). The hymn is known by its opening line "I bind unto myself today." It is currently included in the American

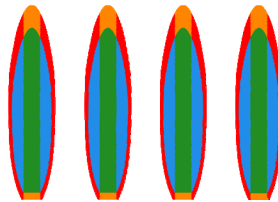
Lutheran and Episcopal hymnals, the English Hymnal, and the Irish Church Hymnal. It is often sung during the celebration of the Feast of Saint Patrick on or near March 17, as well as on Trinity Sunday. In many churches it is unique among standard hymns, as the variations in length and meter of verses mean that at least three different tunes must be sung by the congregation.

Carol Dunlap

Are You Ready for VBS?

Surf Shack
Vacation Bible School (VBS)
July 18-22
5:30-8 p.m.

Look for more information in the June issue of *LOGOS*!



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

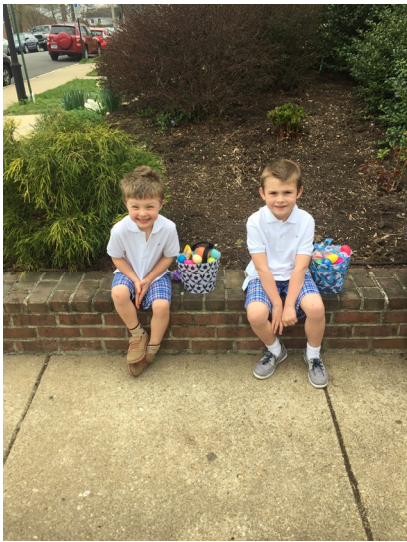
Vestry

Bill Thomson, Senior Warden
Sandy Winger, Junior Warden
Jeff Aitken
Teresa Birmingham

Parish Leaders

Bill Thomson, Treasurer
John Restall, Pledge Clerk
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Del Hunt
Lisa Pope
John Restall



The children of St. John's celebrated Easter on March 27 with a festive egg hunt.

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ Join the St. John's Book Club on **Tuesday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m.** as they discuss *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* by Reza Aslan. This thought-provoking biography examines the life of Jesus in the context of the era in which he lived. The **June 7** selection is *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. The book tells the thrilling story of an American quest for gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. All are welcome!

Thank you to:

➤ All who have helped with the nursery renovations: Teresa, Mike, and Jack Birmingham; Del Hunt; Pete Olivere; Bill Pritchard; Lynn Robinson; and Anne Stenger.

➤ Pete Olivere and Lynn Robinson for chairing the spaghetti supper on April 23. We also thank all those who contributed food and set-up and clean-up help.

➤ Salih Sayilgan for leading us in a discussion of Muslim-Christian relations on April 17.

➤ Sandy Winger for faithfully sending out the church press releases.

➤ Teresa Birmingham, Debbie Carter, Beth Fowler, Pete Olivere, and Barbara Wien for being St. John's links to the neighborhood list servs.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in May:

Patricia Bleicher, Debbie Carter, Andy Del Gallo, Jane Edwards, Rob Hardman, Kim Houghton, Alice Kniskern, Abigail Kollath, Romana Martin, Bill Schenck, and Owen Tallent.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in May:

Leslie Mead and Jeff Petrich; Christopher and Laura Van Wyk.

LOGOS

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

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

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

Material for the June issue should be submitted by May 20. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.