



# 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*

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January 2019

## The Christmas Story Comes to Life



The children of St. John's (and a few adults who joined in on the fun) presented a memorable Christmas Pageant on December 16. Many thanks to director Jonathan Muehlke, pianist Roger Ludwig, and the entire cast and crew!

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## From the Rector: Ask, Seek, Knock

Jesus tells us to ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. God wants to give to us. God wants to provide us with good things. God wants God's children to trust God to be faithful. Here are a few ways we can do that.

Ask for help. We all have weaknesses. We all need help. Acting as if we are independent doesn't make things different. It just makes them harder and sometimes impossible. When I read my sermon notes, I am never sure exactly how I am going to use them. Sometimes they just seem like so much gobbledygook. But when I am ready to write, I always pray about it and it always comes out okay. I am given the ideas I need to craft the sermon. Sometimes I ask for help to find things that I have mislaid. Most often it is my car keys or some little piece of paper I have scribbled a note on that looks like all the other little pieces of paper I carry around. You might need help with a big project. You might need help planning a trip. You might need help being patient with your children or other people who surround you. Maybe you need help to do the righteous thing when it is the hard thing. God is there for big weaknesses and little weaknesses. All we need to do is ask.

Ask for peace. This world sometimes seems to be one big ball of anxiety. The papers are scary, the newscasts are sensational, online information is not necessarily the most accurate, and we're not sure whom we can depend on to help us cope. Ask God. God is the giver of peace that passes understanding. Though peace in the world would be ideal, it is virtually never a reality. But we can have peace anyway. God will give us the peace we need to discern what we can do to make peace. Brother Curtis Almquist of

the Society of St. John the Evangelist says we have to be peace receivers before we can be peacemakers. Not just in the world, but in our hearts and minds.

Seek abundance. Abundance is a way of looking at things that God blesses us with. We should rejoice in wanting what we have rather than complain about what we don't. We all have something in abundance. Maybe it is not money; maybe it is love. Maybe it is not possessions; maybe it is the abundance of nature. One of the ways to see abundance in our lives is to be grateful for all that God has given us, not only the special joys of the day but also the gifts of our lives, such as our senses, our ability to laugh, our friends and family, our passions. A sense of abundance breeds more abundance. Seeing things from a glass half-full perspective instead of a glass half-empty one improves our lives tremendously. Even when it is hard to do, thinking abundantly is still possible with God's guidance.

Seek balance. I practice balance by standing on one foot, first with my eyes open and then with them closed. I can do the first one, but I can only manage a few seconds on the second one. We are like that. Some things we balance well and others we need help with—work and play, alone time and together time, being and doing. Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves. He wanted us to balance self-focus with a focus on those who share our world. This balance does us and others the most good as we seek to help God bring in the kingdom.

Then there is knocking on God's door. The first thing we have to do is find God's door. God's light shines out brightly, but we can be blocked by the fog of fear, says Brother Almquist. Maybe we are afraid that we won't like what God expects us to do. Maybe we are

afraid that God will put us through trials and suffering. Maybe we are afraid that God won't help us with a particular problem, expecting us to do it ourselves. Or maybe the fog is fear of God judging us as harshly as we judge ourselves.

Whatever it is, God is always working to lift the fog so we can see the door of God's heart. When you see it in your life, knock on the door and ask for growth. Growth means change, but it also means acquiring more wisdom and discernment. It means understanding who we are in a more mature way—a way that helps us be true to ourselves and serve others. Growth means better relationships, fuller lives, and clearer purpose.

Always knock on God's door and ask for love. It's not that God's door is not wide open and God's love is not radiating out on everyone, it is that knocking on the door opens us to love in a wider way. Think of God as an electrical outlet and us as a plug. To function at our best—or really at all—we have to plug in to that outlet. Making a request for the love that surrounds us helps us take more joy in God's giving heart.

This year, make a promise to yourself to ask, seek, and knock. It is a joy to God to open God's hands and God's heart to fill us with good things, and it is our joy to receive them.

Ann †

### **Adult Sunday Seminar Begins New January Study**

On January 6, the adult Sunday Seminar will begin a new study. The seminar has two to choose from—Eternity Is Now in Session or God's Messy Family. Either will be a spur to stimulating discussion. Come join the group at 9 a.m. in the parlor!

#### **St. John's Staff and Leadership**

##### **Staff**

Rector: The Rev. Ann B. Barker  
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson  
Organist: Judith Marcinko  
Interim Family Programs Director: Jonathan Muehlke  
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson  
Seminarian: Chip Russell  
Child Care Provider: Kaitlyn Osteguín  
Sexton: Julio Sorto

##### **Vestry**

Lisa Pope, Senior Warden  
Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden  
Diane Henderson  
Del Hunt

##### **Parish Leaders**

Peter Olivere, Treasurer  
John Restall, Pledge Clerk  
Dave Dunlap, Chair, Finance Committee  
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Peter Olivere  
John Restall  
Bill Thomson

## Words on Hymns: *How Bright Appears the Morning Star*

Our gradual hymn for January 20 is the Epiphany hymn *How Bright Appears the Morning Star*. There are a large number of translations of this beautiful hymn. One is *How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*. Known as the “Queen of the Chorales,” this Lutheran hymn by Philipp Nicolai was written in 1599. (The “King of Chorales” being Nicolai’s *Sleepers Wake!* or *Wachet Auf!*) Unusual for this time period, Nicolai also composed the tune *Wie Schön Leuchtet*. Hymnologist Scott Aniol said, “As is often true of German chorales, *How bright appears the Morning Star* masterfully combines rich incarnation theology with devotional warmth, as the singer cries, ‘Jesus, Jesus, holy, holy, yet most lowly, come draw near us.’”

Nicolai was born on August 10, 1566, at Mengerhausen in Waldeck, Germany. He studied theology from 1575 to 1579 at the University of Erfurt and Wittenberg and earned a doctorate in divinity in 1594 from Wittenberg University (the same city where legend has it that Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of All Saints Church in 1517). Nicolai then returned home where he assisted his father as a preacher for four years.

Nicolai was then appointed as the Lutheran pastor at Herdecke. Two years later, he became the head pastor in Waldeck for Countess Margaretha and also tutored her son, Wilhelm Ernst. While in this position he ran into opposition from the Calvinists. Nicolai used the Formula of Concord (1577) in his defense of Lutheran practices.

His next appointment was in Unna in Westphalia, beginning in 1596. During his appointment, the city fell to the Black Plague. According to biographer and hymn translator Catherine Winkworth, the city lost more than 1,400 people. At this point in his life, Nicolai turned to the teachings of St. Augustine and the “contemplation of eternal life,” according to Winkworth. Here Nicolai produced his

acclaimed *Frewden-Spiegel dess Ewigen Lebens* (1599) or “The Joyous Mirror of Life Eternal,” where our hymn was first published. In the preface, Nicolai states that he would want God “to leave [it] behind me (if God should call me from this world) as a token of my peaceful, joyful, Christian departure, or (if God should spare me in health) to comfort sufferers whom he should also visit with the pestilence.”

Later, Nicolai was forced out of his position by the Spanish and in 1598 was appointed to St. Katherine’s in Hamburg, by far his most prominent appointment. He would serve the rest of his years in Hamburg, where he died in 1608 from a fever. Upon his death, he was regarded in Hamburg as a “second Chrysostom”—a reference to John Chrysostom, who was the 4th century archbishop of Constantinople and an influential early church father.

One of Nicolai’s first great proponents was Winkworth, who more than any other brought the German chorale tradition to England. In 1856 she published *Lyra Germanica*, containing 103 translations of German hymns gathered from an 1833 collection, *Versuch Eines Allgemein Gesang-und Gebetbuchs*, compiled by Christian Karl Josias Freiherr von Bunsen (1791–1860). The success of this first volume would lead to the publishing of a second volume containing 123 translations and also spurred Winkworth to publish other books on the subject.

Though *How Bright Appears the Morning Star* was used for many years in weddings and funerals in Germany, it often appears today in the Epiphany sections of hymnals because of the imagery of light in the text.

The arrangement and harmonization by J.S. Bach in our hymnal first appeared in his Cantata 172, *Ring Out, You Songs; Sound, You Strings!* For his cantata he wrote a descant that he indicated was to be performed by a

violin. Take a look at the bass line in the hymn, which is played on the pedals. It gives

the organist a real workout. On the other hand, you can't do better than Bach!

Carol Dunlap



Top: Faye Pritchard, Lesli Pacheco, Eva Sandoval, and Norca Antelo enjoy Bingo Night in November. Bottom left: Rev. Catherine Campbell holds up raffle prizes. Bottom right: Dave Dunlap is a winner.

### LOGOS

LOGOS is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except for a combined July/August issue.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Articles for LOGOS may be emailed to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org) (preferred) or left at the church office. The deadline for the February issue is January 22. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

### St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

### St. John's Mission Statement

St. John's mission is building a strong spiritual community in Christ; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ Join the St. John's Book Club on **Tuesday, January 8**, at 7:30 p.m. as they discuss *The Bookshop* by Penelope Fitzgerald. Set in a small seaside town in 1950s England, the novel tells the tragic and yet comic tale of a widow who sets out to open the first and only bookstore in the area. All are welcome!

➤ Bring your favorite board or card game, invite a friend or neighbor, and come join the fun and fellowship at Game Night on **Saturday, January 19**, from 7 to 9 p.m.

➤ Mark your calendar for the St. John's Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 27**, at 11:15 a.m. The congregation will elect vestry members, and the 2019 budget will be presented. This is also an opportunity to hear about everything that has been happening in the church over the past year and to thank the many volunteers so vital to St. John's ministry and activities. Please plan to attend this important gathering!

### Thank You to:

➤ Jonathan Muehlke, St. John's Interim Family Programs Director, for coordinating the Christmas Pageant and to all the cast members and behind-the-scenes support.

➤ Roger Ludwig for playing the piano for the Christmas Pageant.

➤ Lynn Robinson for organizing the Christmas cookie exchange.

➤ Eileen Tallent, Barbara Olivere, and Lynn Robinson for taking care of altar guild duties for Vernon Martin's funeral.

➤ Lynn Robinson for coordinating St. John's monthly game nights in 2018.

➤ Seminarian Chip Russell for teaching an adult Sunday Seminar class on The Way of Love.

### Rest in Peace:

➤ James Vernon Martin, who entered the Life of the Resurrection on December 3.

### We celebrate with all who have birthdays in January:

Patricia Broida, Keelyn Del Gallo, Don Hess, Tony Kollath, Mary Mackin, Janet Spence, Paul Stenger, Cynthia Todd, and Vlad Wien-Kandil.

### We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in January:

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