



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 2019

Go to Mars and Beyond at VBS 2019



As in past years, VBS 2019 will feature nonstop games, food, outdoor fun, crafts, and Bible stories.

Calling all preschoolers through rising fifth graders for another fantastic week of fun at St. John's Vacation Bible School (VBS) 2019! Come explore the wonder of God's universe from July 15-19, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Dinner will be served nightly. Participants will become voyagers on a journey through space, discovering where God's power can take them. Along the way they'll learn that God walked with the heroes of the Bible, and God is always with them too.

The cost is \$20 for the week (\$5 for each additional sibling). Scholarships are available. For additional information or to reserve a spot at VBS 2019, please email familyprograms@stjohnsarlingtonva.org or call the church office at 703-671-6834. More details on registration will be available on the St. John's website at stjohnsarlingtonva.org later this month.

From the Rector: The Gifts We Give

We have all been asked to give of our time, talent, and treasure many, many times. Giving is a spiritual discipline that empties us of things we hold onto too tightly, so that we can serve God's people in the world. When we give, we share ourselves with others and we receive an abundance of blessings.

But time, talent, and treasure are not the only things we have to give. There are other things that God wants us to give to God, so that God can give us something better.

"Cast your burdens on the Lord," the Bible says. We all have burdens. Our shoulders and back and neck are literally or figuratively tight and stressed with the weight of carrying them. It would be great if we could just drop them, even for a little while. And we can. God wants them because they are part of us. Some of us carry around the burden of not-good-enoughness. We are always striving to catch up to those people we think are doing the good things, the right things. We carry ourselves heavily, always having a large list of "to dos" that will improve us and make us enough. We may carry a burden of sadness. We may have lost something or someone important to us—a loved one, a marriage, or a job—and we are not moving through those endings to new beginnings. Instead we are stuck, often because the "stuckness" keeps us from having to face difficult feelings. We may carry a burden of caring for a loved one. On the one hand, we are glad to be of service, but on the other hand it is draining all our resources—energy, money, time. I have a friend who goes to see her mother, who has Alzheimer's, nearly every day. She is always stressing over the lack of appropriate help her mom is getting. When I talk to her while she is driving home, she is exhausted.

There are many other burdens we carry that keep us in bondage. God wants us to give

God what weighs us down so that God can give us freedom. Freedom to change and grow even if the situation doesn't change. Freedom to live and love rather than be consumed by our burdens. Freedom to know that we are good enough. Freedom to begin to put our losses in their rightful position as a part of us rather than our defining characteristic. Freedom to balance our care-giving role with other things in our life that give us joy. Freedom to be God's beloved children, rightly related to God and neighbor.

We all have weaknesses, and God wants us to give those to God too. One of God's promises is to strengthen and uphold us with God's powerful hand. We try to hide our weaknesses and do life all by ourselves—get what we need, go where we want, achieve our goals. But we can't. God didn't make us to be self-sufficient, to "pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps." Radical independence is part of American heritage, but it is not part of the Christian faith. On the other hand, we may trade on our weaknesses. One way we can do that is to make excuses for ourselves about why we can't get out and do whatever we need to do, why we aren't living up to our potential, why we really can't take any risks. We try to control and manipulate others to do what we wish, to help us even when we don't need it.

When we give God our weaknesses, God will give us God's strength. It is in the strength of God that we can become the people God made us to be, following Jesus and helping him spread the kingdom's message. It is in the strength of God that we can be ministers in all areas of our lives and see what we are doing right now that is of benefit to the world. It is in the strength of God that we can face the challenges we all have in life and surmount them.

Most if not all of us have doubts. Doubting is part of faith. In the Easter season, we may have our doubts about the resurrection. What did it look like? How did God do that? Did God really do what the Bible says? We may wonder at the violence and harshness of God in the Hebrew Bible and Jesus's nonviolent stand. We may be unsure of just what we believe at some times in our lives.

God wants our doubts. They are a valuable part of us. Doubts let God know we are thinking seriously about our faith and asking good questions. God wants to help us do that, and God gives us trust. We can trust that God loves us unconditionally. We can trust that we are redeemed by Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. We can trust that we are important to God. People in the Old and New Testaments wondered and questioned all the time. Can God do this thing God promises? Sharing our doubts with God releases us from

the need to have 100 percent faith 100 percent of the time to be a good Christian. It gives us the grace we need paradoxically to trust the God we are sometimes unsure of because God is always sure of God's love for us.

Burdens, weaknesses, doubts. Often they are parts of ourselves we are sure we have to carry ourselves; they are things that we're not sure God wants. But God made us with weaknesses, God made us without certainty. And God made us to need help in carrying heavy loads. God regards us with love when we give these things back to God.

Jesus showed us how to live a life wholly dependent on God and then stride out in confidence that we are doing God's will for us in the world. Trust Jesus's example. Remember that God keeps God's promises. And keep on giving.

Ann †

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
 Jeff Aitken
 Diane Henderson

Parish Leaders

Peter Olivere, Treasurer
 John Restall, Pledge Clerk
 Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Peter Olivere
 Bill Thomson
 Sandy Winger

The Reason for God: Join the Adult Sunday Seminar Discussion

The adult Sunday Seminar is now discussing the book *The Reason for God* by Timothy Keller. Its subtitle is “Belief in an Age of Skepticism.” Please join the group at 9 a.m. in the parlor for these lively discussions!



Take the Spring Tea Challenge

Help promote the upcoming St. John's Spring Tea! Please invite at least three people you know to join us on Saturday, May 11, from 1 to 3 p.m. for the annual Spring Tea. The cost is \$20 per person (\$10 per child 12 and under). Admission includes ample food, fine teas, a complimentary glass of champagne, and accompanying piano music. Thank you for your support in spreading the word! Please also plan to come and enjoy a relaxing afternoon yourself.

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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 (preferred) or left at the church office. The deadline for the June issue is May 21. 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.

Words on Hymns: *Rejoice and Sing!*

Our processional hymn for May 12 will be the upbeat waltz *Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!* (verses 1, 3, and 5). While headmaster of Eton College, author Cyril A. Alington (1872–1955) wrote this text for Melchior Vulpius's tune *Gelobt Sei Gott*. The hymn was published in *Songs of Praise* (1931). Stanley L. Osborne has written of Alington's stanzas, "They vibrate with excitement, they utter the encouragement of victory, and they stir the heart to praise and thanksgiving" (*If Such Holy Song*, p. 469).

Educated at Trinity College, Oxford, England, Alington was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1901. He had a teaching career that included being headmaster at Shrewsbury School and Eton College. Alington also served as dean of Durham from 1933–1951 as well as chaplain to the king of England. His writings include literary works and *Christianity in England, Good News* (1945). Although this is his only hymn text that appears in our hymnal, many of his hymns appeared in various 20th-century editions of the famous British hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. (Personal note: I have a problem with Mr. Alington's rhyme in the third verse of "victory" with "die" and "high.")

The fifth verse was added in our hymnal, praising the Trinity in a doxology. It is attributed to American Norman Mealy (1923–1987). Mealy was active in developing new music within the Episcopal Church, serving on the Standing Commission on Church Music for 15 years and as a liaison to the Liturgical Commission. He also served as Chairman of the Committee on Service Music for 10 years. Mealy collaborated on several Episcopal Church publications, including *Hymns and Carols* (1966), *Songs for Liturgy and More*

Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1971), *Book of Canticles* (1979), and *The Hymnal* (1982).

The tune was composed by Melchior Vulpius (c. 1570–1615). He composed this tune as a setting for Michael Weisse's hymn *Gelobt sei Gott in höchsten Thron*. Weisse's text was published with the tune in Vulpius's *Ein Schon Geistlich Gesangbuch* (1609). Because the text dates from the early 16th century, some scholars think the tune may have older roots.

Born into a poor German family named Fuchs, Vulpius had only limited educational opportunities and did not attend university. He taught Latin in the school in Schlesingen, where he Latinized his surname, and from 1596 until his death served as a Lutheran cantor and teacher in Weimar. A distinguished composer, Vulpius wrote a St. Matthew Passion (1613), nearly 200 motets in German and Latin, and over 400 hymn tunes. Many of the tunes became popular in Lutheran churches, with some of them introducing lively Italian balletto rhythms into German hymns.

Vulpius's music was published in *Cantiones Sacrae* (1602 and 1604); *Kirchengesangund Geistliche Lieder* (1604 and then enlarged as *Ein schon geistlich Gesanglmch* in 1609); and posthumously in *Cantionale Sacrum* (1646). He has four hymn tunes in our hymnal, although *Good Christians All* is the only one we use.

An exuberant tune, *Gelobt sei gott* (also known as *Vulpius*) is in triple meter. It reveals a Baroque playfulness in the syncopations in Lines 2 and 3 ("of our" and "news we" in Verse 1). Although the refrain is barred in triple meter, Germans would have sung it in duple meter with an accent on the second syllable of "alleluia."

Carol Dunlap

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ Join the St. John's Book Club on **Tuesday, May 7**, at 7:30 p.m. as they discuss *The Last Runaway* by Tracy Chevalier. The novel tells the story of a young English Quaker woman in 1850s Ohio who is drawn into the clandestine activities of the Underground Railroad. The **June 4** selection is the classic mystery *Gaudy Night* by Dorothy L. Sayers. All are welcome!

Thank You to:

➤ Everyone who made St. John's wonderful Easter celebration possible—Eileen Tallent and the altar guild, the musicians, the egg stuffers, the egg hiders, Sandy Winger and Linda Simmons for organizing the eggs before and after the hunt, Maddie Harbin for leading the hunt, Lisa Pope for preparing gift bags for visitors, and Virginia Pearson for all her work to get the bulletins ready.

➤ Anne and Paul Stenger for coordinating the Loaves and Fishes dinner on Maundy Thursday.

➤ Diane Henderson, Pete Olivere, Lisa Pope, Bill Thomson, and Sandy Winger for taking turns being present in the church from 1-7 p.m. on Good Friday so it could stay open for prayer and meditation.

➤ Valeria Antelo for agreeing to coordinate Vacation Bible School and Patricia Amaya, Stacy O'Connor, and Sandy Winger for committing to lead the activities.

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, Maegan McDonald, Robert McDonald, Bill Schenck, Owen Tallent, and Barbara Wien.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in May:

Peggy and Carey Blount; Leslie Mead and Jeff Petrich; Christopher and Laura Van Wyk.

