

# LOGOS

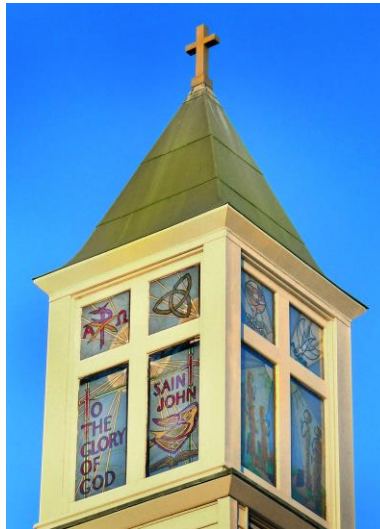
The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

*"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1:5*

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February 2022

**Plan to Attend St. John's Virtual Annual Meeting on Feb. 13**



(Photo by Gerald Martineau)

Mark your calendar now to attend St. John's virtual Annual Meeting on February 13 at 11 a.m., immediately following the Sunday worship service. The Zoom link and call-in information for the worship service and Annual Meeting will be distributed by email the week before and posted on the St. John's website at [stjohnsarlingtonva.org](http://stjohnsarlingtonva.org). Financial and other reports for the meeting will also be posted in advance on the St. John's site. Please review the material and come to the meeting with any questions or comments you may have.

Sunday services continue at 10 a.m. on Zoom until further notice. Join us as we worship, pray, listen to glorious music, and share in fellowship with one another as an extended family. Rev. Larry Packard continues to serve as St. John's Supply Plus Minister and provide pastoral care. You may contact Rev. Larry at [minister@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:minister@stjohnsarlingtonva.org) or 703-425-8315 or 703-606-3109 (please note this is a cell phone number without voicemail).

If you have any requests for Sunday prayers, intercessory prayers, or a card for someone who is sick, please contact Barbara Olivere at [prayers@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:prayers@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).

See you online on February 13 as we look back at 2021 and to the year ahead!

## Words on Hymns: *On Eagle's Wings*

*On Eagle's Wings* is a favorite hymn among many denominations. In the decades since its publication, the hymn has achieved global popularity, been translated into a variety of languages, and become a Christian funeral classic (if not a staple).

Father Jan Michael Joncas wrote the song after he and a friend, Doug Hall, returned from a meal to learn that Hall's father had died of a heart attack. Father Joncas doesn't recall if he ever met Hall's father, but he remembers wanting somehow to console his friend. "I knew this was a hard, hard experience in anybody's life, [and I] just wanted to create something that would be both prayerful and then comforting," Father Joncas told *America* (a Jesuit publication) in a Skype interview.

In the days preceding Hall's father's wake, Father Joncas returned to his parents' house in Minnesota and composed the song on his guitar, sketching out a melody line and accompanying chords. The now-famous hymn debuted at the wake.

Father Joncas kept the song under wraps for some time after that—he was wary of liturgical music publishing following an earlier negative experience. *On Eagle's Wings* joined a group of compositions he held onto for several years before submitting them to the St. Louis Jesuits' publisher, North American Liturgy Resources, which then offered Father Joncas an album deal.

"I think they had already tagged *On Eagle's Wings* as the [song] that was going to have the most legs," Father Joncas said.

He didn't pay much attention to the hymn after that, but became aware that the song was gaining popularity outside of Catholic circles when his publisher sent him requests from other denominations to reproduce the song.

Then, following the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Cathy Keating, the then-Oklahoma governor's wife, requested that *On Eagle's Wings* be played at a memorial for those killed. Father Joncas recalled thinking, "Wow, this was way beyond even denominational stuff. This is becoming part of the culture." Two years later, Michael Crawford, who originated the leading role in *The Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway, sang *On Eagle's Wings* on national television, surprising Father Joncas again with how far his song had reached.

But the crowning moment came when Father Joncas tuned into a broadcast of the funeral of one of his heroes, the famed operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti. "Suddenly the soprano [stood] up from the parish choir and...[sang] *Sulle Braccia dell'Aquila, On the Arms of the Eagle*...It was now in Italian," Father Joncas remembers. He recalls thinking to himself: "They're singing *Eagle's Wings* at Pavarotti's funeral. Wow." The whole experience was rather surreal for Father Joncas, who thinks of *On Eagle's Wings* as a callow effort. He draws a parallel between *On Eagle's Wings* and Ravel's *Boléro*: It's not his best work, but he doesn't mind it being his most popular composition. "I think I've written deeper and better pieces, but this one, for whatever reason, touched people's hearts, and I'm not gonna yell about that."

He has been overwhelmed by the wide-ranging positive reception of the hymn, especially in unexpected places: The song has become a sort of signature selection at the U.S. Air Force Academy's Cadet Chapel, as well as in Native American communities, where the eagle holds an important place in the spirituality of several tribes. President Biden

referenced and recited the hymn in his presidential victory speech on November 7, 2020. He said the song was important to his family and his deceased son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015.

“The number of times people have come up and talked about the song touching them at really tough moments—I am pretty much just blown away by the experience that God can still use that [song] 35 years, 40 years after its creation and still have it impact people’s lives,” Father Joncas said. “But I don’t think it’s me. I really think it’s the fact that it’s Scripture, that the melody then allows this incredibly important scriptural text to hit the heart in a

way that it wouldn’t, maybe, if you were just reading it.”

Father Joncas’s musical style ranges widely, from his popular folk-inspired *I Have Loved You* (1977) to a breathtaking *Salve Regina* canon for double choir (2008). He cites among his musical influences the Gregorian chant and polyphony he heard as an altar server, his classical background—his mother was a lyric soprano and he was trained in 20th century piano technique—and the folk music revival of his young adult years.

Carol Dunlap

### LOGOS

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

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org). The deadline for the March issue is Feb. 24.

### 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.

### St. John’s Staff and Leadership

#### Staff

Supply Plus Minister: The Rev. Dr. Laurence K. Packard  
 Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson  
 Organist: Judith Marcinko  
 Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson  
 Sexton: Julio Sorto

#### Vestry

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden  
 Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden  
 Jeff Aitken  
 Dave Dunlap

#### Parish Leaders

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

Diane Henderson  
 Peter Olivere  
 Lisa Pope

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

- St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, March 1**, at 7 p.m. to discuss *The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse* by Charlie Mackesy. This beautifully illustrated book tells the tale of a curious boy, a greedy mole, a wary fox, and a wise horse. Details about whether the meeting will take place in the undercroft or on Zoom will be announced closer to the date. All are welcome!
- Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on **Wednesday, March 2**, at 12 noon in-person at the church unless otherwise announced.

### Thank You to:

- Lynn Robinson for filling in as the prayer ministry coordinator while Barbara Oliveri was out.
- All of the volunteers who participate as readers and prayer leaders in the Sunday services.

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

Michelle Aitken, Dennis Albrecht, Carey Blount, Lisa Broida, Nella Candelieri, Robert Carter, Tina Cavey, Peyton Del Gallo, The Rev. Amanda Eiman, Henry Held, Carole Hunt, Heather Kollath, Lin Novak, Jeff Petrich, John Restall, Anne Stenger, Eileen Tallent, and Colin White.

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

Bryan and Carrie Harbin; Kaipō and Keith McCartney.

