



# 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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June 2022

## Renewing the Bonds of Fellowship

St. John's held its first Sunday fellowship since 2020 on May 1, meeting outdoors after the worship service. The rain fortunately held off until later in the day as congregants gathered for treats and conversation. Outdoor fellowship will continue after the Sunday services, so please plan to stick around and catch up with other members of the St. John's community!



## Words on Hymns: *I Am the Bread of Life*

*I Am the Bread of Life* is another well-loved Catholic contemporary hymn. It was written by Sister Suzanne Toolan, who gave the following account of its creation:

I wrote “I Am the Bread of Life” for a San Francisco archdiocesan event in 1964. I was teaching high school at the time and wrote the song during my free period. When the bell rang for the next class I decided I didn’t like the music, so I tore it up and threw it in the wastepaper basket.

My classroom was next to the infirmary, where the girls who didn’t want to take tests or were otherwise unprepared for class went for a period or two until they were tracked down by an exasperated teacher. As I left my classroom, a freshman girl came out of the infirmary and said, “What was that? It was beautiful!” I went back into my classroom, took the manuscript out of the basket and taped it together. It has had a life of its own ever since.

*I Am the Bread of Life* began to appear in archdiocesan liturgies. There were many purple ditto copies going around. Not everyone liked the hymn. One liturgist gave talks on why it shouldn’t work, saying: “It is not metric; its *tessitura* [vocal range] is too high. Its *tessitura* is too low.” Others objected to it because they felt by placing the words of Jesus into the mouths of the assembly, those words were being attributed to the assembly.

Sister Suzanne also talked about the impact of her hymn:

Travelers to Europe and Asia in the 70s and 80s would tell me about hearing “I Am the Bread of Life” in different countries. I have a copy of it in a Slavic language, in Korean and Spanish, but it has been sung in so

many other languages. It is included in hymnals of other Christian faith traditions. I remember being introduced to a woman who was Episcopalian. When she heard my name she said, “Oh, number 335!”—the number of the hymn in the Episcopal Hymnal.

I could never figure out how the hymn became popular. I know in our Roman Catholic tradition it came at the beginning of our use of the vernacular, and we simply didn’t have much to sing in our own language. But I also think its popularity stems from its message of resurrection, which is so strong in these words of Jesus. We so need that message of hope. I am always touched when people tell me that at the funeral of a mother, father or friend, these sung words of Jesus gave them consolation. Then I know the hymn has done its work.

Thank you, young freshman way back in 1964! I’m sorry if you were not feeling well that day and had to go to the infirmary—or, I’m glad that you decided to sit that class out. I hope your teacher didn’t scold you too much.

Born in Lansing, Michigan in 1927, Sister Suzanne moved to Hollywood at 17, before she became a professed Sister of Mercy in 1950. She earned a master’s degree in humanities and then began her teaching career, directing choirs for high schools, colleges, parishes, and seminaries. She continued her music studies, which included composition work at Michigan State University, liturgical study at the University of Notre Dame, and choral work with Robert Shaw at San Diego State University. She also received a second master’s degree from San Francisco State. She brought

the music and prayer of the Taizé ecumenical community from France to the Mercy Center, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in Burlingame, California, in 1982.

On her 80th birthday, she released an autobiography, *I Am the Bread of Life*, which includes the story behind her beloved hymn.

She presented the hymn in its final form at a diocese music educators conference in 1966.

Sister Suzanne is the resident liturgist and directs Taizé prayer at the Mercy Center. She has written 18 other hymns.

Carol Dunlap



### LOGOS

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

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org). The deadline for the July/August issue is June 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, June 7**, at 7:30 p.m. in the undercroft to discuss *1776* by David McCullough. The Book Club will then take a hiatus until September. Over the summer they will be reading *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie R. King. In this suspenseful mystery, 15-year-old Mary Russell becomes the unlikely protégé and sleuthing partner of Sherlock Holmes. Please plan to join the June gathering and also start reading ahead for September. All are welcome!

➤ St. John's Virtual Bingo has permanently moved to the second Saturday of each month, starting on **Saturday, June 11**, at 7 p.m. To join the fun and obtain game cards and the Zoom link, contact Sandy Winger at [srwarden@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:srwarden@stjohnsarlingtonva.org) or 703-498-5990.

### Thank You to:

➤ All who continue to bring donations for the Arlington Food Assistance Center.

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

Sienna Baynham, Judith Marcinko, Leslie Mead, Stacy O'Connor, Lisa Pope, Faye Pritchard, James Robinson, Jones Tallent, and Matthew Tallent.

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

Peter and Patricia Broida; Ray and Stacy O'Connor; Barbara and Peter Olivere; and Eileen and Bob Tallent.

Please send requests for Sunday prayers, intercessory prayers, or a card for someone who is sick to Barbara Olivere at [prayers@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:prayers@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).

