



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

November/December 2023

Shining Our Light: St. John's 2024 Stewardship Campaign



St. John's kicked off its 2024 Stewardship Campaign on Sunday, November 5, with the theme of *Shining Our Light*.

After more than 130 years in Glencarlyn and decades of changes both large and small, including a global pandemic that closed the physical doors but never interrupted the true life of the church, St. John's is still *Shining Our Light*.

In 2023 our new rector Rev. Julie Bryant led us in a revitalization of ministry, including outreach events to the community and shared worship and fellowship with our partner congregation, St. Patrick's. We continued to build on long-standing ministry efforts such as supporting the Arlington Food Assistance Center, Bailey's Crossroads shelter, local schools, and the Angel Tree project. We welcomed new members and celebrated the many talents and gifts that make our community a mosaic of connection and support. We are a small congregation, but we know that *we shine brighter together*.

As we look toward 2024 and the promise that a New Year brings, we know that continuing to shine St. John's light depends on all of us. Stewardship may sometimes sound like an abstract idea, but at its core is *using the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do*. Our time and talents make St. John's ministries a reality every day, from the music that lifts us in worship to the welcoming faces at the door on Sunday mornings to the prayer ministry that helps sustain us through the valleys of life. In the same way, our giving makes everything that St. John's does possible. We ask that congregants prayerfully consider increasing your pledge for 2024 *so that St. John's may continue to shine bright*. If you have not pledged in the past, please pray about taking that important step.

The 2024 giving campaign will conclude on Sunday, December 3. You can place your pledge card in the collection plate on Sunday mornings or mail it back to St. John's in the envelope that was provided. Thank you for your continued support of St. John's and for continuing to be a *light bearer*!

Reflections from the Rector

"It isn't love AT all, if it isn't love FOR all."

That statement jumped out at me as I sat in the cathedral in Honolulu a few weeks ago, listening to Canon Heather Patton-Graham's homily. It has come back to me in the weeks since as I have tried to comprehend the enormity of loss and potential impact of the Holy Land conflict now raging. This is one more segment aflame with war, and my capacity to take it in is strained almost to the point of breaking.

The Scriptures we study in pursuit of right relationship with God and one another describe persistent conflict over homeland and autonomy. Mapping population and occupancy of the last century describes internal and external forces contributing to continued turmoil across the Land that is Holy to Christians, and to Jews, and to Muslims.

Neither my analysis of the politics at play today nor the hope of enforcing international agreements regarding combatants and civilians eases the anguish I feel, knowing that the places I have stood, because they are likely the places where my Savior stood, once again run with the blood of those whom God's love created. I cannot muster support for one side nor the other. My heart whispers as I pray that "two wrongs don't make a right," and I cannot dismiss the culpability that reaches far beyond any boundary ever drawn between the members of the Creator's single family now declaring others as disowned.

I am lighting more than my usual share of candles these days, because even in the brightest daylight, there is a different light moving at the impulse of the wind, moving at the impulse of the Spirit. That is the Light I seek, that is the Light to whom I pray, that is the Light that knows no boundary, that is the Light that beckons us all.

That which moves among us at the impulse of the Spirit, that is Love.

Light a candle, literally and metaphorically, and pray fervently for peace. Each bit of light ignited finds the next, and builds toward an end of conflict, and peace grows closer to reality. As we rehearse the Advent hymn "Come, O Come, Emmanuel," let us move the needle toward peace, degree by degree, until our compass guides us to the heart of God.

Julie +



Schedule for Christmas Services

Sunday, December 24, is both the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. There will be one combined worship service that morning at St. Patrick's at 10 a.m. This service will also be accessible via livestream at <https://youtube.com/user/StPatsEpiscopal>.

During the evening, there will be a 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service at St. John's. Christmas Eve worship will begin at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's with special music of the season, followed by the Eucharist at 7:30 p.m.

On Christmas morning or any time thereafter, you are invited to tune into a prerecorded offering of Lessons and Carols featuring members of St. John's and St. Patrick's. More information on the service will be available in the worship bulletins, weekly email updates, and on the St. John's website.

Join the Early Celebration at the St. John's Thanksgiving Service

Tuesday, November 21 at 11 a.m., followed by Lunch

Whether you are expecting a quiet Thanksgiving Day, joining family, or preparing for guests, you are invited to start the celebration around the altar at St. John's and then by sharing a common table on Tuesday, November 21, starting at 11 a.m. If you would like to bring a side dish or dessert to share, please do so, but the only thing you need to bring is yourself!



Support the November Thanksgiving Food Drive for AFAC

Please remember those in need as Thanksgiving approaches. Thank you to everyone who helped St. John's donate more than 100 pounds of food to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) in October. Now St. John's is aiming for an even more generous November with its Thanksgiving food drive for AFAC, which runs through November 19. You can pick up a bag to be filled with food at the church during Sunday services, from the church office during the week, or by contacting Faye Pritchard at 703-931-2168. A shopping list and instructions are attached to the bag. Your filled bag can be returned to the church or left on the Pritchard's porch at 5713 Fifth Street South, half a block from the church.

You can also choose to send a check to AFAC. It can be made out to AFAC and sent directly to 2708 South Nelson Street, Arlington, VA, 22206, or it can be dropped by the church for forwarding. As a guide, a \$35 donation will provide the basis for a Thanksgiving meal for one family. Please be generous this holiday season!



Angel Tree 2023

"When did we see you in prison...?"

This question is in the middle of an exchange between Jesus and his followers in the 25th chapter of Matthew, as he points out that loving each other is loving him. When much of the world is gathering as family or friends to celebrate Christmas, or mark the miracle of Hanukkah, or remember the gift of African heritage through Kwanzaa, those who are separated by imprisonment know loneliness keenly, and can despair over the distance. We have a chance to help bridge the distance between those in prison and those who await their return.

This year, St. Patrick's and St. John's will partner with an Angel Tree project from Prison Ministry, which coordinates care for families when parents in the household are incarcerated. Amidst the complexity of circumstances that lead to incarceration, trying to maintain or repair relationships during that time can be overwhelming. In order to keep parents and children from losing connection, this Angel Tree project includes personalized messages from the incarcerated person to their child, gift suggestions made by the child and caregiver, and then shopping and delivery to the household.

Julie Tran of St. Patrick's is facilitating this year's effort, having participated in this offering through her own children's community outreach projects.

Look for stars at church listing children's names, ages, and preferred gifts. Please note on the accompanying chart which children you will shop for, and then return your gifts to the church by Sunday, December 3. St. John's hopes to deliver gifts to families on St. Nicholas Day, December 6, or shortly thereafter.

There will also be a need to sort the gifts, do some additional shopping to supplement as needed, supply gift wrap materials, and then deliver gifts to caregivers. If you can help with those aspects of the project, please indicate that on the chart.

Thank you to everyone for participating in this important Christmas ministry!

Join the Holiday Celebration at St. Patrick's...

Saturday, December 9

Swing dancing and jazz will light up your spirits for the holidays! Everyone is welcome to attend a swing dancing lesson on Saturday, December 9, at 2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's, followed by the Starlight Jazztet playing favorite holiday tunes from 3 to 5 p.m. The celebration will conclude with Yuletide refreshments. (There is no fee to attend; donations are appreciated.)

...and the Caroling Party at St. John's!

Sunday, December 10

The annual Glencarlyn Luminaria celebration will continue with a festive Caroling Party on Sunday, December 10, at 7 p.m. at St. John's. This family-friendly event will include everybody's favorite carols and songs for the season and conclude with cookies and treats for all. Thank you to Mariko Hiller of St. Patrick's, who will play the piano for this joyous sing-along!

A Gentle Approach to Christmas at the Blue Christmas Service on Dec. 19

*Comfort, comfort ye my people,
speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them!
Tell her that her sins I cover,
and her warfare now is over.*

Hymn 67 features the 40th Chapter of Isaiah and declares hope at the end of a lengthy struggle (J.G. Olearius's text of the hymn is translated by Catherine Winkworth). This hope is at the heart of the Blue Christmas Service that will be held at St. John's on Tuesday, December 19, at 7 p.m.

The holidays are difficult some years and for some are difficult every year because of grief, worry, health issues, isolation, or any number of other reasons. The Blue Christmas Service offers a gentle approach to Christmas and room for those difficulties to be acknowledged and soothed by hope being born into a world rife with unimaginable pain and longing. Come heavy-hearted, or ready to shoulder the weight of sorrow that may be dragging someone else down. When we need each other the most, it is a particular blessing to meet alongside a manger laid ready for the one gift we might not imagine could be for us.



Gather for Online Advent Devotions in December

The days before we mark the birth of Jesus are full of anticipation and excitement, while at the same time we are asked to hold space in our hearts for a new life to be born in us as well. In order to keep focused on that hope, you're invited to a season of deliberate prayer by participating in Compline services at 8:30 p.m. each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening from December 4 to 22 on Zoom. These brief services will conclude the day and begin the great silence in which we rest and dream; let us gather to make that transition together.

Gathering by Zoom allows each of us to participate from home with opportunities to share readings and prayers and to know that we are part of a circle keeping watch for Christ. More information on the Zoom link will be provided by early December.

**Save the Date: Saturday, March 9,
A Wee Glimpse of Celtic Spirituality Practices**

Explore Prayer in the January Prayer Practices Series

St. John's and St. Patrick's will join together on two Saturday mornings in January to explore a few of the many forms prayer takes in our broad and lengthy Christian tradition. The January Prayer Practices series will begin on January 6 and conclude on January 20, with the weeks in between sessions being used for reflection and practice. Both sessions will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Patrick's and will include lunch. Sessions will be facilitated by Rector Julie Bryant.

Called to pray at all times, stretching to enlarge our prayer practice equips us to rise to that directive. Touching on movement, visual arts, and journaling, as well as the contrast of poetic flourish and restraint and the balance between silence and sound, the series will also look at how we seek to converse with the very voice of God because prayer is both expressed and received communication. Mark your calendar now to join these thoughtful and rewarding conversations.

St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Julie D. Bryant
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
Sexton: Julio Sorto

Parish Leaders

Peter Olivere, Treasurer
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Vestry

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden	Peter Olivere
Dave Dunlap	Lisa Pope
Diane Henderson	

Words on Hymns: *My Song Is Love Unknown*

The text for the haunting song *My Song Is Love Unknown* was written by Samuel Crossman in 1664. Seventeenth-century devotional poetry enriched hymnody in the days before such 18th-century hymn writers as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. Though devotional poetry during this era was not typically written to be sung by congregations, verse from this century found its way into hymnals later on.

Samuel Crossman (1624–1684) received a bachelor of divinity degree at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He then served both an Anglican parish at All Saints, Sudbury, and a Puritan congregation. He participated in the 1661 Savoy Conference, which attempted to revise *The Book of Common Prayer* so that it could serve both Puritans and Anglicans. The Conference was unsuccessful, and the 1662 Act of Uniformity expelled some 2,000 Anglican ministers, including Crossman. He recanted and was soon ordained in 1665, becoming a royal chaplain. He became Dean of Bristol Cathedral in 1683.

His poignant meditation on the Passion of Christ was published in *The Young Man's Meditation* (1664). The poem appeared for the first time as a hymn in the *Anglican Hymn Book* in 1686. The original poem had seven stanzas, taking the singer from Palm Sunday through the Crucifixion. But its purpose is not simply to retell the events of the Passion. This is a love song—sung to the Savior who demonstrated pure love.

The first stanza says:

*My song is love unknown,
My Savior's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take frail flesh and die?*

The final stanza continues the metaphor of song:

*Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine:*

*Never was love, dear King, Never was grief
like thine!*

*This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise I all
my days could gladly spend.*

Hymnologist J.R. Watson notes that Crossman, “like other seventeenth-century hymn-writers...wrote in the shadow of George Herbert’s *The Temple*: the phrase, ‘Never was grief like thine’ [stanza seven in the original] is an echo of Herbert’s poem ‘*The Sacrifice*.’” “*Oh all ye, who passe by, whose eyes and minde to worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde; To me, who took eyes that I might you finde: Was ever grief like mine?*” What might seem like plagiarism today was in the 17th and 18th centuries the technique of imitation—a way of demonstrating one’s knowledge of the great poets, paying homage to them, and anchoring one’s own work in their heritage. Each of Herbert’s 61 stanzas concludes with the refrain: “Was ever grief like mine?” Crossman dared to answer that rhetorical question in the final stanza of his meditation, boldly stating, “Never was grief like thine!”

At St. John’s we customarily sing only three of the seven verses. It is well worthwhile though to go to the hymn (No. 458) and read the poem in its entirety. Unfortunately, editors have “updated” Crossman’s language and modified some of the stanzas.

The tune to which this poem was originally set is forgotten. The composer of the tune used today, John Ireland (1879–1962), studied at Durham University in England and became a church organist, choirmaster, editor, and lecturer, eventually teaching at the Royal College of Church Music. He was a gifted composer of music for voice, piano, organ, chamber music, and orchestra that was recognized for its excellence during his lifetime. *Love Unknown* was his only hymn tune and is found today in numerous hymnals.

Carol Dunlap

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, December 5**, at 7:30 p.m. in the undercroft to discuss *The Guncler* by Steven Rowley. This heartwarming and funny novel tells the story of a gay former sitcom star who becomes the unexpected caretaker of his niece and nephew one summer. All are welcome! The selection for the **January 2** meeting is *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto.

Thank You to:

- Everyone who donated food for AFAC in October.
- All those who helped organize the reception on October 22 following the funeral for long-time St. John's member John Restall. Thank you also for lifting up John's family and friends on that day and sharing your memories of all that he meant to St. John's over the years.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in November and December:

The Rev. Catherine Campbell, Dave Dunlap, Galen Henderson, Michelle Lewis, Roger Ludwig, Barbara Olivere, and Camron Tallent.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in November and December:

Ginger and Marshall Adair; Jeff and Michelle Aitken; Carol and Dave Dunlap; and The Rev. Larry and Melissa Packard.

LOGOS

LOGOS has a bi-monthly publication schedule.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org.
The deadline for the January/February issue is Dec. 23.

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.