

# 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/February 2024

Welcome the New Year with St. John's



As we begin 2024, St. John's is looking ahead to another year of worship, ministry, community, and *Shining Our Light*. We will talk about the year to come and remember our 2023 accomplishments at the **Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 28, at 9 a.m.** Instead of taking place after the worship service as in past years, the Annual Meeting will combine a potluck breakfast, elements of worship, and the business aspects of the meeting.

The New Year also offers the opportunity to participate in the **Prayer Practices Mini Retreat on Saturday, January 20, at St. Patrick's from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. (including lunch)**. Facilitated by Rector Julie Bryant, the retreat will explore a few of the many forms prayer takes in the Christian tradition. Touching on movement, visual arts, journaling, and poetry, as well as the balance of silence and sound, we will seek to converse with the very voice of God because prayer is both expressed and received communication.

Another January opportunity is the **Tuesday, January 23 theatrical showing of the film *A Case for Love***, which was inspired by the teachings and writings of Bishop Michael Curry. The documentary examines the question of whether or not love, specifically unselfish love, is the solution to the extreme societal and political divide facing the world. The filmmakers traveled across the U.S., interviewing both everyday people from various walks of life and ethnicities and well-known figures such as Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Al Roker, Sam Waterston, Jon Meacham, and Rep. Jim Clyburn.

Tickets are now available for purchase, and we have secured a few for members of St. John's and St. Patrick's for the 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. showings at the AMC Tysons Corner theater. Please plan to attend. You may contact Rev. Julie Bryant if you need assistance obtaining tickets.

Thank you for being part of the St. John's family and for continuing to be a *light bearer!*

## Reflections from the Rector: On Being Part of the World

An essay by Nora Gallagher, tucked in a small volume of the Episcopal Church's *Church's Teachings for a Changing World*, warrants sharing. I commend the whole to you, but include here two excerpts:

*Nora's packing for vacation is interrupted by a friend calling with news of an accident in which the friend's husband dies en route to the hospital.*

When you are in the midst of this kind of trauma, you need a very big story to contain it. I didn't want a page from the *Death for Dummies* textbook or a ready comfort book. I didn't see God in that room. Not anywhere. I saw a dead man and his wife, my beloved friend, sobbing on the floor, holding tight to his arm. Jesus did not rescue me or Anne. If someone had told me that day that God was in the room, I would have gladly knocked her teeth out.

I went through the rest of that week as one does: helping, cooking, gathering. I did not find God in church that Sunday. We all got through Mark's memorial. And then my husband, Vincent, and I got on a plane and finally went on vacation. We were both so tired that once we got to my cousins' cabin in the mountains, we had a big fight.

But in the morning, the air cleared. We went for a hike in the high Cascades. On our way up there, we saw a mountain goat chewing a shrub with his fur falling off him in pieces as if he were wearing a discarded rug. From the ridge trail, we could see a circle of peaks like a necklace of jagged diamonds. We walked through columbine and icy creeks. We got to the top and smelled the den of a mountain lion. We crossed a vast snow field. In the midst of it, I knew I'd found a place big enough to sink my grief and exhaustion and fear. It was resilient and wordless and full of vitality. And it was more than that.

After a week in the mountains, my thoughts and memories of Mark's death felt as if they'd been gradually whirled in a centrifuge until each had found their proper weight and place. I was more than comforted: I felt that what had been battering me from outside myself was now part of me, because I was part of a larger order.

God *was* in that hospital room because Anne was there. Because the doctors and nurses were there. Because I was there. The kingdom of heaven was in that room because human beings who are part of the earth were there. And love was there in its final, stubborn, and most heart-breaking form: that we go on loving someone after he is dead.

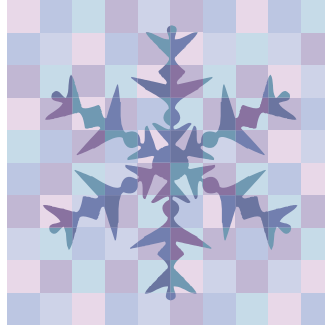
This is the story Jesus would have told Anne and me. He did not rescue her or me, because he would not rescue us from grief. He will not rescue us from grief because he will not rescue us from love. This is the visible and invisible essence of all things. This is the Spirit that Michael Curry speaks of as "fully inhabiting Jesus." It's dangerous, subversive, and alive. It offers us, always, a second chance.

With gratitude for your kindness to me and others who are mourning, I hope Nora's observation brings you comfort too. "[Jesus] will not rescue us from grief because he will not rescue us from love."

Yours in Christ, Julie +

## Preparing for the Season of Lent

As we start to prepare our hearts and minds for Lent, plan to share food and fellowship at the St. John's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 13. This will be followed by the Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 14. Mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more information to come on these important annual observances in the life of our congregation.



## Hypothermia Shelter Dinners at St. Patrick's

From February 25 through March 3, St. Patrick's will host dinner each evening for clients of the local Hypothermia Shelter. St. John's joined this effort in 2023 and will have the opportunity to again participate in this ministry. Please think about if you can help prepare and serve the dinners at St. Patrick's. There will be more information to come on the details of this joint effort and how you can contribute. Thank you!

### 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: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Our gradual hymn for January 14 will be *Of the Father's Love Begotten*. It is a doctrinal hymn based on the Latin poem “Corde natus” by the Roman poet Aurelius Prudentius. A version of this chant appears in manuscript form as early as the 10th century, although without the melodic additions, and versions with various melodic differences appear in Italian, German, Gallacian, Bohemian, and Spanish manuscripts dating from the 13th to 16th centuries.

This is perhaps the oldest hymn that many congregations sing. Prudentius (348–c. 413) was a Spanish lawyer who became a judge. He did not begin writing poetry until the age of 57 and has been described as “the first great poet of the Latin church.” The text was excised from a longer work, *Hymnus omnis horae* (a hymn for all hours), the first line of which was “Da puer plectrum,” in the *Liber Cathemerinon* (Book in Accordance with the Hours or Book of the Christian Day). The Book of Cathemerinon consisted of a collection of 12 hymns for the hours of the daily offices followed in the monasteries of the time.

During the fourth century, a number of heresies were floating around. One of the most prominent was promulgated by Arius (c. 250–336), whose most controversial position—and the one relevant to our hymn—was that God the Father and the Son did not coexist throughout eternity. This heresy states that before his incarnation, Jesus was created by God and therefore Jesus did not exist through all time. Jesus was a creature (“created being”) that, though divine, was not equal to the Father.

In a beautiful poetic form, Prudentius applies his legal skills to make a case for what has become the orthodox understanding of the Trinity. From the first line of stanza one, “Of the Father’s love begotten”—literally translated “Born from the parent’s heart before the beginning of worlds [time]”—Prudentius sets forth his argument that

the Son has always, is always, and will always be with God and us. To emphasize this, the poet adds one of the great tautologies (a repetition of an idea in different words for emphasis) in Christian hymnody, affirming three times the premise from the first line of the hymn:

*He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending he.  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
and that future years shall see....*

The great 19th-century translator of classic Greek and Latin poetry, John Mason Neale (1818–1866), shaped Prudentius’s poetry into six stanzas, adding the refrain “*Saeculorum seculis*” (“evermore and evermore”), indicating through its repetition at the conclusion of each stanza that the coexistence of God with the Son and the Spirit has been, is, and will be eternal. The final stanza is a doxology that places Christ as a partner in the center of the Trinity.

Our hymn was not originally sung to the famous tune *Divinum Mysterium*. That melody comes from the 11th century and was used with a different text. The original text was replaced by the words of Prudentius’s poem when it was published by Thomas Helmore in 1851. In joining them, the original rhythmic pattern of the chant was disturbed, changing the original pattern of three into a pattern of two and therefore altering stresses and note lengths. The harmonization of the melody comes from *The Hymnal 1940* in an arrangement by C. Winfred Douglas (1867–1944), who was the musical editor of the hymnal. Douglas corrected this using an “equalist” method of transcription, although the hymn is now found in both versions as well as a more dance-like interpretation of the original melody. At St. John’s, we traditionally sing the hymn in even notes as in a chant.

Carol Dunlap

## Gathering in Fellowship and Thanksgiving

*Members of St. John's and St. Patrick's as well as friends and neighbors gathered to welcome Thanksgiving early at a service and luncheon on Tuesday, November 21.*



## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, February 6, at 7:30 p.m.** in the undercroft to discuss *Broken Horses* by Brandi Carlile. In this memoir, the acclaimed singer-songwriter and producer writes about faith, sexuality, parenthood, and a life shaped by music. Looking ahead, the selection for the **March 5** meeting is *The Lonely Hearts Book Club* by Lucy Gilmore. All are welcome!

### Thank You to:

- Everyone who made food and monetary donations to the AFAC Thanksgiving drive.
- All those who contributed gifts and helped in many other ways to make the Angel Tree ministry a success in December.

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

Michelle Aitken, Louisa Bennett, Lisa Broida, Patricia Broida, Carole Hunt, Lin Novak, Eileen Tallent, and Vlad Wien-Kandil.

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

Bryan and Carrie Harbin.

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

#### LOGOS

LOGOS has a bi-monthly publication schedule.  
Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor  
Email articles to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).  
The deadline for the March/April issue is February 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.