



# 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/March 2025

## 2025 Annual Meeting Preparations Underway

St. John's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 23, following the regular 9 a.m. service. St. Patrick's Annual Meeting will follow on Sunday, March 2, after its 11 a.m. service. Ministry Reports are being compiled for each congregation and vestry nominations are open.

The Canons of the Diocese require that each parish have at least three vestry members to facilitate the ministry of the parish and coordinate lay leadership, with one of these vestry members serving as Senior Warden. Another vestry member may serve as the Registrar, who maintains minutes and other records of meeting actions and ratifies reports for the diocese and other entities with whom the vestry may work. The third vestry member may serve as the Treasurer, although the vestry can also designate a Treasurer from outside the circle of elected members.

When a congregation is served by part-time clergy, such as in the case of St. John's and St. Patrick's, the vestry oversees a larger share of congregational administration and facilities concerns, allowing the clergy to focus on worship, pastoral care, and teaching.

The diocese had asked St. John's and St. Patrick's to "freeze" their vestries while searching for a priest to lead them as collaborative but distinct parishes. Because this search period was longer and more complicated than hoped, it was not possible for all members of the vestries to continue. However, each vestry stayed at or above the minimum three members during that period of time by appointing new members when circumstances warranted change. Now it is time to let the long-serving members get some rest, particularly as many of them had previously agreed to extend their terms during the COVID-19 pandemic to enable congregational continuity and stability.

St. John's and St. Patrick's each need to elect three new members to their vestries. At St. John's, one person would serve for a single year, while the other two new members would serve for a period of three years. This will reset the staggered three-year terms that are typical across the diocese. At St. Patrick's, three persons will be elected to varying terms that will allow a reset to the typical staggered three-year terms.

If sufficient vestry candidates are not identified, some of the current long-serving vestry members who are overdue to step down may need to continue, though they may long to try out another type of ministry altogether. When a sufficient number of persons do not stand for election, it can result in what are known as "perpetual vestries." While such long-term service is a gift that benefits their fellow congregants, the practice often leads to fatigue and discouragement. *(Continued on Page 2)*

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In conversation with The Reverend Shirley Smith Graham, Minister for Congregational Vitality, I was able to confirm the diocese's hope to encourage and guide congregations toward more robust leadership. While there is no punitive action taken against congregations unable to meet the Canonical standards, there may come a time when their ministries and independence are altered so that they can partner or share ministry rather than continue to depend on a minimal number of engaged lay people.

Vestry members meet regularly to consider and plan their common work, manage the church's financial and physical assets, and identify the needs of their community and assess their response. They share responsibility for the well-being of their church assets and for seeing that their congregations are focused on discipleship and utilizing the spiritual gifts in their midst. They gather in prayer and commit to serving God by watching over and modeling for their congregants a way of life based on hope and promise.

After two years of sharing a Rector and learning about one another, the St. John's and St. Patrick's vestries are now memorializing their collaborative work, refining the goals they share, and planning how they might go forward together. This is a season of reflection and creativity for these leaders, and a chance to practice resilience and faithfulness in charged times throughout this community and region.

If you would like to serve on the vestry or have a name to nominate, please speak to either Deacon Mary or myself. Thank you for your consideration and for your prayers for St. John's and St. Patrick's.

Julie +

### **St. John's Staff and Leadership**

#### **Staff**

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

#### **Parish Leaders**

Peter Olivere, Treasurer  
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

#### **Vestry**

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden  
Patricia Broida  
Dave Dunlap  
Diane Henderson

Peter Olivere  
Lisa Pope  
Christine Williams

## **Bishop Stevenson to Visit St. John's and St. Patrick's on March 9**

Bishop Mark Stevenson will join St. John's and St. Patrick's on Sunday, March 9 for worship. The morning service will begin at St. John's at 9 a.m., pausing at the Peace so that the congregation can move to St. Patrick's to continue with the Eucharist and then conclude with fellowship time and a discussion forum. Bishop Stevenson will then spend some time with the combined vestries of St. John's and St. Patrick's. As this will be his first visit to the two congregations, he will be eager to learn about their histories and current ministries.

Bishop Stevenson served as the Most Right Reverend Michael Curry's Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Ministry Within the Episcopal Church prior to his election as Virginia's 14th bishop. Previously, he was Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, leading a dedicated team in executing a national program of refugee resettlement, which followed his ministry as Domestic Poverty Missioner for the Episcopal Church. He was Canon to the Ordinary in Louisiana during the Hurricane Katrina recovery period and also served congregations in New Orleans and Florida.

## **Come Celebrate at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

St. John's will host its annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on March 4 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and invite the community to join us. Traditionally, the menu has also included sausage and apple sauce (and some Mardi Gras beads and surprises!). There is no charge for the Pancake Supper. If you are able to help with the event, including set-up and decorating, cooking and serving, or clean-up, please contact Peter Olivere at 703-626-2520 or [treasurer@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:treasurer@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).



## Lent Is on the Horizon



As we prepare our hearts and minds for the season of Lent, Ash Wednesday services have been scheduled for noon at St. Patrick's and 6:30 p.m. at St. John's on March 5.

The two congregations' Ashes to Go offering was facilitated last year by a member of St. Patrick's, who arranged for a prayer and imposition station at a large meeting of colleagues. This station also attracted members of the staff at the venue where the conference was being held. How might we offer this practice outside the church buildings this year? If you know of a setting where the opportunity to mark the beginning of Lent would be welcome or have another idea for observing Ash Wednesday, please speak to Rector Julie Bryant or Deacon Mary Cushing.

Our Lenten Study this year will consider excerpts from several contemporary Christian leaders, including Bishop Mariann E. Budde (*How We Learn to Be Brave*), Walter Brueggemann, Nadia Bolz-Weber, and the late Rachel Held Evans. These readings will be interspersed with poetry and prayers composed by an array of authors. The Lenten Study will be offered on Wednesdays at both mid-day and in the evening. Watch for the full schedule to be published later in February.

## Join St. John's Volunteer Night at AFAC

On the second Friday evening of every other month, volunteers from St. John's gather at the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) to bag bulk food items. Come spend an hour helping our neighbors who are in need on Friday, March 14. If you would like to participate in this ministry, please contact Faye Pritchard at 703-931-2168.

You can also leave nonperishable grocery items for AFAC at the back of the sanctuary, or write a check to St. John's and include a note in the memo line that the donation is for AFAC. Thank you for continuing to support this valuable ministry!



## Words on Hymns: *Here I Am, Lord*

Composed in 1979 and published in 1981 as a Catholic hymn, *Here I Am, Lord* has crossed denominational lines to become one of the most popular contemporary hymns. It is found on Page 812 of our hymnal *Wonder, Love and Praise* under the title *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky*. Aside from having a dynamic tune, the text is evocative and memorable. Most Catholics can probably sing it from memory. In fact, an Army captain serving in Afghanistan wrote that the troops would gather in a field for Mass, near where they were fighting, and their chaplain would lead them in singing *Here I Am, Lord*. The service members who had grown up with the song could all sing it by heart. “We stand here in this awful place, where we are asked to serve our country but fear for our own lives, and we sing *Here I Am, Lord*,” the composer Daniel Schutte recalled the captain saying. I first encountered the hymn at a Catholic funeral for a fellow high school band parent some 30 years ago. I was completely captivated and was delighted to find it in our new hymnal when St. John’s purchased *Wonder, Love and Praise*. While many people love the hymn, others hate it and say they would pay big dollars never to hear it again. It has also been labeled “liturgical junk food.”

The story behind the hymn is told by Colleen Dulle in the Jesuit review magazine *America*:

“Mr. Schutte was a 31-year-old Jesuit studying theology in Berkeley, Calif., when one of his friends asked him to write a song for an upcoming diaconate ordination Mass. ‘I sort of had to catch my breath, because he was knocking on my door on Wednesday and I knew the ordination was on Saturday,’ Mr. Schutte, who has since left the Jesuits, told *America*. His friend wanted the song to include the images of the word of God, the light of Christ and the bread and wine—images that would eventually appear at the ends of the verses: ‘Who will bear my light to them?’ and ‘my word to them?’ and ‘my life to them.’ At the time, Mr. Schutte had no idea how to work the images into the song. He recalled thinking, ‘Gosh, I don’t know what to do with that.’”

“On top of the short notice, Mr. Schutte had been suffering from the flu for several days. He sat at his desk with his guitar and a blank sheet of staff paper in front of him, praying, ‘God, if I’m going to do this for my friend, you’re going to have to help me.’”

“Mr. Schutte said he often uses Scripture as the basis of his songs, so as he thought about the idea of vocation for the ordination Mass, He turned to the stories of the prophets, like Jeremiah, who asked God to give him the right words to say. ‘In all those stories, all of those people God was calling to be prophets have expressed in one way or another their humanness or their self-doubt,’ Mr. Schutte said. That, combined with feedback from the other St. Louis Jesuits—a group of young Jesuit songwriters who popularized folk-influenced liturgical music in the 1970s—was why Mr. Schutte changed the lyrics from a confident ‘Here I am, Lord; here I stand, Lord’ to the self-doubting final version: ‘Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?’”

“Mr. Schutte sketched out *Here I Am, Lord* over the course of two days. On Friday evening, he walked to his friend’s house to deliver the song, pencil in hand, scribbling edits along the way.

“At that point,” he told me, “I really had no sense that the song would be any good, and I was actually very nervous.” Mr. Schutte said he does not remember much from the diaconate ordination, except that people seemed to relate to the song. “I couldn’t figure it out,” Mr. Schutte said. “If only they knew the story of the last two days of my life trying to make this work!””

Born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1947, Schutte has written more than 165 hymns and Mass settings. As a Jesuit seminarian, he was one of the founding members of the St. Louis Jesuits. He left the Society of Jesus in 1986. Schutte presently is Composer-in-Residence at the University of San Francisco. He continues to compose new music and write about spirituality.

Carol Dunlap

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m.** to discuss *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu. Winner of the 2020 National Book Award for Fiction, this darkly comic novel explores the themes of pop culture, assimilation, and immigration. Pick up a copy now and plan to join the discussion!

### Thank You to:

➤ All of the St. John's vestry members for their service over the past year: Senior Warden Sandy Winger, Treasurer Peter Olivere, Patricia Broida, Dave Dunlap, Diane Henderson, Lisa Pope, and Christine Williams.

➤ Eileen Tallent and the Altar Guild for the beautiful Christmas floral decorations.

➤ Everyone who has contributed Ministry Reports for the 2025 Annual Meeting.

➤ All those who continue to support the Little Free Food Pantry with your food and monetary donations and to the volunteers who regularly check the pantry to see when it needs to be restocked.

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

Justin Cohen, Carole Hunt, Pierce Kaufman, Lin Novak, Peter Olivere, Geoffrey Pennoyer, Cristina Tallent, Eileen Tallent, and Nora Wien-Herman.

#### 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 April/May issue is March 28.

#### 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.