



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
LAFAYETTE

The Eagle

St. John's Episcopal Church | Lafayette, Ind. | September 2020



From The Rector: What do we do now?

The phrase “in these difficult and uncertain times” has become the cliché of our time. Everything is “weird” and “up in the air.” I’m trying to make plans for the fall (for St. John’s, for my family, etc.), but I don’t really know what will be advisable or even possible. It’s a pain in the neck, but it’s our current reality. You’ll notice that there isn’t a lot of certainty here in this issue of the Eagle — most of the dates are tentative, most events could be in-person but may end up online. We may be able to have in-person worship or small group meetings in September, but that’s not a given. Honestly, it seems pretty unlikely given the current numbers in Tippecanoe County and the state of Indiana.

So what do we do now? How do we move forward while everything remains so fluid, so up in the air? I imagine that each of us is asking this question in our own ways, about our own lives, about our own families. I’m thinking about this question specifically as the rector of St. John’s, as a leader of our church community (again, if I’m honest, I have no idea what I’ll do if Major League Baseball shuts down again). How do we continue to be the Church now? What does it even mean to be Church “in these difficult and uncertain times”?

It occurred to me that one thing we can do as Church is to live with and into the tension of our time. As Episcopalians, as Anglican Christians, we ought to be good at that. After all, many of our most cherished beliefs as Episcopalians contain,

at least by some lights, contradictions. Many of our practices embody paradox. What is “mystery” if not a shorthand for a certain kind of uncertainty. It’s both an altar and a table. I’m a priest; and yet each of us is a member of the priesthood of all believers. We receive simple bread and wine that is somehow transformed into the body of Christ. We are Catholic and Reformed (and always reforming). We are sinners and yet we bear the image of God in the world. Contradictions, paradox, mystery. Tension abounds.

It’s even true of the whole Christian worldview. Think of it this way. Many of us go to church for respite, to find solace and comfort, and that seems meet and right (in the traditional language of the Prayer Book). But being the Church is somewhat different. As the Body of Christ we live with and in all sorts of tension. Theologically, we live in the “now and not yet” of the Kingdom of God. Since “the Kingdom of God has come near,” since Christ has risen and the new creation has dawned, we are called to live as if the Kingdom of God has fully come. And yet we know that the “creation waits with eager longing” as Paul puts it, that things aren’t as they should be, that God is still in the process of putting things to rights. This tension drives us, as the Church, as the Body of Christ, to simultaneously work for justice and to pray that “God’s will be done on earth as in heaven.”

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Perhaps this is the most important thing we can do right now. Perhaps the Church, that is, each of us gathered in our several homes, can be a sign to the world of what it means to live with and in this tension. Our work continues. We can continue to show compassion and work for justice (whether that's by wearing masks and continuing to worship online, by caring for members of our church who are in need, by feeding the hungry, by showing up for racial justice, etc.). Our prayer continues. We can continue to pray that God will heal those who are sick and bring an end to the pandemic (whether by leading our political leaders to wise decisions, by inspiring scientists to create an effective vaccine, or by a divine miracle — whatever it takes).

Perhaps this is what we can do now; perhaps living with and in this tension is the Church's job right now. "In these difficult and uncertain times" we can live with and in the tension of that uncertainty as a sign of God's love for the world. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

Youth Confirmation Classes

Beginning Sept. 19

Confirmation is the sacrament of initiation into the communion of the Episcopal Church and the community of St. John's. Youth confirmation classes will begin Saturday, Sept. 19 at 10 a.m. We will decide soon whether we are meeting in person or online, but we will let those interested in participating know as soon as possible. Youth and leaders from Good Shepherd will be joining us.

If you are interested in youth confirmation, please contact me. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohnslaf.org*

Thank You for Your Ministry

Now that our new Curate, Andrea Arsene, is here, I'd like to thank the members of the interview committee for their work interviewing the candidates and making a recommendation to the Vestry and me. Many thanks to **Greg McClure, George Moore, Rachel Ravellette** and **Emily Umulis** for their help. St. John's will benefit greatly from their work and from Andrea's ministry with us.

I would also like to thank the members of the Regathering Task Force for their help creating a regathering plan. As you may know, Diocesan directives require that congregations create a regathering plan that incorporates provisions for good hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing procedures, physical distancing, and other best practices. The task force served as a wonderfully non-anxious presence in the midst of a great deal of uncertainty. Many thanks to **Michael Bennett, Anna Burman, Gretchen Freese, Bruce Johnson, Maggie McClure, Tom Melville, Mary Anne Robinson, Annie Schreiber** and **Cynthia Stauffacher** for their work.

Many thanks to these folks for all the ways they have contributed to the life of our church community. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohnslaf.org*

Death

*Stephen Gast, August 8, 2020
Husband of Lee Gast*

September Celebrations

Birthdays

1 Jennifer Chandler | **3** Becky Dick, Margot Marlatt, Isaiah Pace | **5** Giff Scarlett | **8** Ed Helgerman, Franklin Mason
10 John Lindenlaub | **13** Victoria Stroud | **14** Maria Wiltse | **16** John Behrndt, Brien Dick | **17** Heather Johnston Nicholson, Kathleen Williams | **19** Carl Taylor | **20** Jeanine Parsch, Esperanza Wiltse Tineo | **22** Linda Lawson | **23** Knox Stevens
26 Thomas Bailey, Shawn Deignan | **30** Steve Brewer, Lyle Cates

Anniversaries

2 Jan & Bill Shoemaker | **4** Kristine & Bill Kealey, Carolyn & Jim Roth | **12** Kathryn & Merrill Nielsen |
16 Becky & Damon Yuill | **18** Debra & Matt Murawski | **21** Cresta Coulter-Cates & Colleen Coulter,
Dorinda & John Kueberth

Baptisms

6 Carolin Freuh | **16** Mary Campbell | **18** Charlie Shook | **19** Greg McClure | **24** Dennis Sorge | **28** Sarah Byrn

How do we gather now? What we've lost — and gained — through virtual worship

When the news broke in March that COVID-19 was closing churches in my state, it took a few days for the reality to sink in: How, if at all, should the church gather? Like other church leaders, I felt caught between congregational expectations, denominational restrictions, and the pressure to reinvent the liturgical wheel. My midsize, suburban congregation had been trying to nurture the full participation of the people in worship. How would we continue this effort without meeting in person?

Something adaptive was in order, a wedding of the scattered accessible pieces of the liturgical storehouse and the brave new world of video conferencing and social media. My church decided to use Zoom — and soon made some surprising discoveries about our common prayer. At the heart of liturgy lie the people's work and public service. To even try to engage these things, we needed to gather and greet one another in real time. On this front, it turns out Zoom is an improvement on the banks of forward-facing pews in our church building. Instead of the back of so many heads, we see a sea of faces — which casts in digital relief the idea that the church is simply people joined in common prayer and purpose. The 10 minutes we give to gathering and greeting one another helps to build the relational component that shifts a group from a social gathering to an assembly ready to do its work.

What's more, in the absence of table, bread, wine, water and font, that primary symbol of the liturgy — the assembly — has no competitors. Yes, without gathering in person that symbol is limited in the shapes it can reveal. Yet the absence of the building and its hierarchical sorting of people — pews for some, chairs for leaders, all in greater or lesser proximity to the table — also serves to level the assembly: on Zoom, everyone gets the same box. My collar might mark me as presider, but most screens only show a few people at a time anyway and won't always show me. I may speak more often than most, but when I am not leading prayer, my image settles among the rest....

While the expansion of voices on Zoom has been a happy surprise, there are some limits, too.... [It] is hard to call our Zoom service ritual.

The absence of bodies rules out their movement together, along with any touch associated with the sign of peace, blessing, or communion.... [It is also impossible] to blend our voices in song, though we are singing together on mute.

The question I have been asking myself through all this boils down to something like this: But is it liturgy? Is it liturgy as my congregation has understood and practiced it — the full, conscious and active work of a Christian assembly that makes present, renews, and carries forward in a living symbol the saving work of God in Christ? ...

Do our Zoom services function as public service, the way liturgy should? They are certainly prayer, and they are reasonably public (though you do need the link to join). Livestreaming the Zoom gathering on Facebook allows another form of participation: less active than Zoom itself but more outward-facing even than our in-church gatherings. And here is where I see public service at play: the image that appears on Facebook is precisely that sea of faces gathered for prayer, no longer hidden in a building. It reveals a church not hierarchically ordered — not even particularly organized at all — yet still able to do its work, modeling a kind of fundamental equality while doing so.

[Liturgical theologian Aidan] Kavanagh says that Christian liturgy is not prayer so much as a way of "church doing world." If so, I think my congregation and others are getting at some new form of the church's common prayer. It's a form that proposes in its primary symbol a discipleship of equals emerging into a new space for mission. — Bryan Cones is interim rector of St. Simon's Episcopal Church in Arlington Heights, Ill., and author of *This Assembly of Believers*, forthcoming from SCM Press.

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Regathering Survey Results: A Brief Overview

During July 2020, 88 people from the St. John's community responded to a survey about regathering for in-person worship. This survey also collected information about current participation in online worship and desires for other kinds of church programming. Highlights include:

1. The St. John's community misses and deeply values Eucharistic participation as well as time spent in fellowship with one another.
2. Respondents were equally split between comfort with in-person gatherings now, sometime soon and post-pandemic. Thus, when determining a timetable for offering in-person worship, it will be important to continue offering online worship as well.
3. Respondents over 60 were more likely to be comfortable with in-person gatherings sooner than younger survey respondents.
4. Zoom worship services are effectively reaching most people in the community. Further, Zoom is the preferred online worship technology for most respondents.
5. Almost all respondents expressed a desire for St. John's to offer educational and/or social gatherings — both online and in person — in addition to worship.
6. While Sunday mornings remain the preferred time for in-person worship, many people would be interested in attending a weekend or weekday evening service.

For more details on the regathering survey, please refer to the leaflet distributed by email. — *Rebekah Sims, rebekah.e.sims@gmail.com*



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Deadline for the October Eagle is
Monday, Sept. 14. Submit items to
 eagle@stjohns-laf.org.

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St. John's Financial Summary July 2020

INCOME

	Jul-20	Total 2020	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Pledge Income	\$26,305	\$195,407	\$376,080	52.0%
Operating Income	\$3,625	\$15,968	\$95,207	16.8%
Non-Operating Income	\$0	\$55,065	\$17,200	320.1%
Transfer Income	\$0	\$30,276	\$47,360	63.9%
TOTAL INCOME	\$29,930	\$296,716	\$535,847	55.4%

EXPENSES

	Jul-20	Total 2020	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Outreach	\$7,203	\$46,244	\$94,374	49.0%
Program	\$100	\$5,187	\$27,250	19.0%
Administration	\$0	\$650	\$4,400	14.8%
Personnel	\$19,106	\$138,133	\$267,017	51.7%
Office	\$1,376	\$9,824	\$25,800	38.1%
Property	\$3,549	\$78,599	\$117,006	67.2%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$31,334	\$278,637	\$535,847	52.0%
Net Income (Loss)	-\$1,404	\$18,079	\$0	