



The Eagle

The monthly newsletter of **ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE**

December 2015



Christmas at ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

Thursday, December 24

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols

9:00 p.m. Carol Prelude

9:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 25

10:15 a.m. Christmas Day Service

Sunday, December 27

8:00 & 10:15 a.m. 1st Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, January 3

8:00 & 10:15 a.m. 2nd Sunday after Christmas

The St. John's office will be closed on Friday, December 25, Monday December 28, as well as Friday, January 1.

Rector's Message

by Bradley Pace

I try to be very mindful of the context of Scripture. That's why I've never liked just throwing out passages to make a point. Sometimes, the context makes all the difference in how we understand something (and this is as true outside of the Bible as it is inside). I once saw an inspirational calendar that had the following quotation from Matthew's Gospel: "All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me." A beautiful sentiment? Inspirational? Well, not when we realize that these are Satan's words to Jesus during the temptation story. Context matters.

The other day, when thinking about the Paris attacks and the backlash toward Syrian refugees, I almost tossed out the following passage of Scripture: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34). I hesitated because I wasn't sure of the context. And I was right to look. The surrounding verses talk about not trusting mediums and wizards, about relationships with slaves, about not eating fruit from trees less than three years old, and other such anachronisms. So the context makes this passage suspect. Maybe the context just shows it's irrelevant to us.

But remember, context matters, the whole context. There is always the big picture, the larger story. So much of the time, the early Christians and their ancient Israelite forebears understood themselves to be not just heirs of the ancient stories, but actual participants in the story. At the Passover meal, the son asks the father, "Why is *this night* unlike any other night?" When we celebrate the Eucharist, the Christian memorial of the Last Supper, we are there with Jesus and his disciples. "Alleluia," we say, "Christ our Passover *is* sacrificed for us." We are not just remembering the Last Supper; we are participating in it. We remember these stories, not as history, but as our continual past, present, and future. And this idea of the stranger in a strange land recurs over and over again in Scripture. It isn't just an anachronistic detail buried amongst the hundreds of laws in the Torah. It's a thread that runs through the whole story. It shows up when the Israelites get to the Promised Land, when they are exiled in Babylon, when they are repatriated to Judah, when Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, when Mary and Joseph go to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath and return to Nazareth. And it goes back to the very beginning. "You shall love the stranger as yourself, *for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*" At our core as the people of God, we were

once strangers in a strange land, strangers freed by God's grace and love. (Of course, for almost everyone of us, either our ancestors were or we ourselves are strangers in America. So that story adds its own layer.) This is not just ancient history; these are not just old, forgotten memories. They tell us something important about who we are.

So as our national and state leaders think about our role in the current refugee crisis, there is an additional layer to the story for those of us who profess Christian faith, those of us who claim to follow the God of refugees and exiles. We must love the stranger as ourselves because we were once strangers in the land of Egypt.

As we await the coming of Christ, as we await the birth of God in our midst, let us remember that we were once strangers. As we celebrate Christ's birth, let us also welcome and love the stranger as we love ourselves, as Christ loves the stranger, as Christ loves each of us.



Faithfully yours,

Handwritten signature of Bradley Pace.

Bradley+

Reminder: "Longest Night" service by Hilary Cooke

If in this season of "MERRY" you are feeling sadness, loneliness, grief, loss, despair, anger, frustration, or anything but merry, we would like to invite you to a Longest Night service—a service of healing and comfort—on Sunday, December 20 at 5:15 p.m. This service is a time and place to acknowledge, own, and offer up everything you feel that seems contrary to the celebrations swirling around you. Come and find: comfort, healing, and hope.

Even if you aren't feeling particularly "out of sync" with the feelings swirling around us, this service offers an opportunity for quiet and contemplation in the midst of a hectic world.

Update from the General Theological Seminary

by Alissa Goudswaard Anderson

Dear St. John's Community,

Hello again from the Big Apple! I am thinking of you as I work through my middler year of seminary. This is the most academically demanding year, with courses in liturgy, church history, systematic theology, and ethics, but I am still finding some time for fun and exploration. The classes I'm enjoying most are preaching (particularly because it reminds me of the process of creative writing) and a "group spiritual guidance" elective that I'm taking. The chapel choir is also technically a class, and it's a nice change of pace, and fun—even though I'm currently the only alto.

In addition to academic work, I have begun my first year of field education at Grace Episcopal Church in Brooklyn Heights, a beautiful historic church with a thriving congregation and great clergy mentors. Fun fact: I actually first met the rector way back in 2012 when I attended General Convention—he and Hilary work together in the House of Bishops Secretariat. While four services make for a rather long Sunday, I'm enjoying seeing how each service has a distinct personality. I'm still getting to know the church, but I enjoy the responsibilities I have, both in services and behind the scenes, and I'm looking forward to the work I'll be able to do this year. I'm also enjoying my explorations of the neighborhood around the church, with its strollers and children, tree-lined streets, and neat little row houses.

I am very pleased to announce that Josh began a new job in September as a program associate at the Episcopal Church Foundation. This job is proving to be a much better fit for him than the last one, and offers great opportunities to learn and grow.

Josh and I also celebrated our first anniversary in August—while we're still fairly new to married life, I am thankful every day that he is here with me. He helps me make the most of living in this one-of-a-kind city, planning adventures and getting me out of the apartment. One of the highlights of the last few months for me was seeing *Hamilton*, a new(ish) musical that is totally amazing. If you have any interest in American history (or even if you don't) I would suggest finding the cast recording and giving it a listen.

We've made our holiday plans: we'll be spending Thanksgiving in the city again (though I think this year we'll watch the Macy's parade from the comfort of our living room). We'll be traveling back to the Midwest for Christmas, and we're excited to spend the holiday with Josh's family in Michigan and Indiana—including, we hope, a Sunday stop at St. John's! In January we'll visit

with my parents in Florida to celebrate a belated Christmas with my parents as well as enjoy some sun.

Thank you all so much for your prayers and support. I so appreciate knowing that we have such a fine support network upholding us.

Jubilee Christmas Needs You

by Angela Mosier

December 12 is rapidly approaching, and there is still much to do in order for us to serve the 38 families we have been assigned. For more information about Jubilee Christmas, check out the lattice on the wall by the kitchen in the Commons. With your continued help and support, Jubilee Christmas will once again be a wonderful event. Thank you for all you do to support this ministry.

St. John's needs:

Monetary donations used to help pay LUM for hams, grocery gift cards, and gift cards for 17 teenagers which totals up to \$1830. Please use the envelopes found in the bulletin and on the lattice marked Jubilee Christmas. Make checks payable to St. John's writing Jubilee Christmas on the memo line.

New toys: 3 per child for **84 kids** including 18 children 0-2 years old, 16 children 3-5 years old, 22 children 6-8 years old, and 28 children 9-12 years old. The Jubilee Christmas lattice has a ready supply of bells indicating the age and gender of a gift needed for one of our guests. Feel free to take a bell or two, purchase your toys, attach the bell, and place the toys in the collection bins placed around the Commons.

Your time: See our Volunteer Sign-ups on the lattice outside the kitchen door.

We need volunteers on Wednesday, December 9 and Thursday, December 10 for set up from 6:15 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, December 9 is family night. Child care is available for real little ones while older kids can help with the set-up.

More importantly, volunteers are needed on December 12. We need a host to escort every family and make them feel at welcome and to act as a guide. This is an experience you will never regret. It is such a rewarding way to spend a Saturday morning. Child care is provided during Jubilee Christmas for all of our volunteers.

We are also looking for help in the kitchen! Please consider donating small treats, cookies, and appetizers that we can serve our guests.

Sharing God's Love and Our Lives at
ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

**Jubilee Christmas
at St. John's**

Jubilee Christmas is a program sponsored by Lafayette Urban Ministry (LUM) designed to make parents the heroes at Christmas. Through **Jubilee Christmas**, member churches set up Christmas "stores" for families in need. Parents select gifts for children 12 years and younger. Teenagers receive a \$30 gift card. Jubilee Christmas gives parents an opportunity to make Christmas special even when times are tough.

Jubilee Christmas sign-up sheets are up in St. John's Commons!! Sign-up to host one of our **38 families**, wrap gifts, provide rides for those needing transportation, and more. **Volunteers will be needed from 9 a.m. to about 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 12.**

Our **Jubilee Christmas** ministry also needs **cash donations** for hams, food cards, family gifts, and gift cards for teenage family members as well as **new, non-violent toys to stock the store**. Monetary gifts can be placed in the offertory plate or sent to the St. John's office. Mark checks for **Jubilee Christmas**. Toys can be placed in the collection bins in St. John's Commons.

If you have questions, please contact Maggie McClure at agamclure@gmail.com or Angela Mosier at angelajomosier@gmail.com.

Death

Ann Powell
October 11, 2015
Wife of Tim Powell



The St. John's/LUM Food Pantry is in need of several food items at this time. Please consider donating any of the following items to the pantry over the next several weeks.

**Spaghetti Sauce • Canned Tuna
Peanut Butter
Canned Vegetables • Canned Fruit**

In addition, as of the end of October, we are just over halfway (about \$6,500) toward our \$12,000 commitment to the St. John's/LUM Food Pantry. Please consider making a financial donation to this critical ministry.

Thank you so much for your support of the St. John's/LUM Food Pantry.





Living Well in the Midst of Grief and Loss



When someone you love dies, you experience grief in a number of ways. Grief is a natural emotion, and it is experienced differently by each person. Depending on your relationship to the person who died, how death came to him or her, whether you were able to say goodbye, your beliefs, your background, and your personality, each of us reacts and processes the grief in a different way. As you walk through your season of grief and loss, you may find yourself feeling a range of emotions including sadness, regret, anger, guilt, relief, and a yearning to see the person again. All of these emotions, which are natural and normal, are given to us by God to help us understand our world.

Through Living Compass—a wellness program offered based on the work of Episcopal priest and counselor Scott Stoner—St. John’s will be offering a four-week class **“Living Well in the Midst of Grief and Loss”** that provides an opportunity to explore grief and wellness in a group setting. **Classes will meet between services on Sundays in Advent (11/29, 12/5, 12/12, and 12/19) in the Bishop’s Parlor.**

Living Compass is based on the belief that there is a deep, life-giving connection between faith and wellness. Our faith acts like a compass to help us check our bearings while at the same time providing ongoing direction for our lives. For more information, contact Bradley Pace at bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org or at www.livingcompass.org.

Prayer Card Ministry by Marylin Howland Ross

A ministry to contact people whose names have been placed on our Prayer List due to illness or other misfortunes is continuing. A St. John’s note-card with the notation that “St. John’s is keeping you in our prayers today and always,” followed by a short collect, is sent.

To accomplish this requires the person submitting the name to include the last name and address. The privacy of the information is guaranteed, and the only other guidance we need is the permission of the named person. We feel that this can give the receiver some comfort and support, and we have had very positive responses.

Book Group by Mary Campbell

It is our custom to take off the month of December, both to savor Advent and to cut back on busy-ness. So, no meeting this month.

As time permits, I am working on compiling our “Favorite Mysteries” list from the November meeting. Look for it, eventually, on a table in the Commons. Also, check out our selections for January through May 2016. They are on a bright green half-sheet of card stock—bright green to remind us that winter does not last forever.

We hope you can join us starting in January.



**All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine
own have we given Thee.**

**Thank you for sharing God's blessings and
supporting the mission and ministry of
St. John's Episcopal Church.**

*Thanks to the following members and families who have already made a financial commitment to
St. John's mission and ministry for 2016.
Names included as of November 16.*

Jon & Betty Amy
Pat Annis
Karen Atallah
Tony & Kelley Bailey
Thomas & Sally Bane
Priscilla Bain
John & Liz Barrett
Dick Barman
Patty Barrett
Jac & Kathie Basden
Joanna Benskin & Brian Koczan
Jim & Sandy Bodenmiller
Nancy Bowker
Karl & Nancy Brandt
Steve & Lloyd Brewer
Randy & Georgia Brist
Tom Brush & Whitney Walton
Mary Ann Burns
Greg Buzzard & Hilary Cooke
Steve & Sally Byrn
Mary Campbell & Joe Jackson
Peter & Linda Cooper
Shirley Curry
Mary Lou Davis
April Delancy
Dennis & Kristin Dell
Donald & Heather Drinkwater
Sue Eichhorn
Sharon Evander
Jessie Farrington
Dotty Gist

Sally Goeke
Hilary & Rosemarie
Goonewardene
Faye Groves
Bob Harrington
Sally Hastings
Ed & Carol Helgerman
Jim & Barbara Hess
Susan Hockings & Joe Kappock
Dan Hogan & Nolie Parnell
Marylin & James Howland-Ross
Ginny Hull
Linda & Arliss Jeffries
Bruce & Kathy Johnson
Bill & Kristine Kealey
Kaye Kleine-Ahlbrandt
John & Dorinda Kueberth
Robert & Carol L'Homme
John & Deb Lindenlaub
Greg & Maggie McClure
Bill & Olynn McInerney
Katie McMillin
Jim & Shirley Marciniak
Neil & Katie Mascarenhas
Caryl Matthews & Don Nead
Gaye Matthews
Roy & Fran Meeks
Sylvia Miessler
George Moore
Alison Moss
Courtenay & Dave Murakowski

Matt & Debra Murawski
Heather Johnston Nicholson &
Cliff Kiefer
Kenneth & Jackie Paar
Bradley Pace & Katie Elder
Ted & Amy Paget
Barbara Penney
Raymond Polstra
Doug & Barbara Powell
Marcia Powell
Jeffrey & Rachel Ravellette
Jean Redd
Matt & Catherine Riehle
Paul & Jo Roberts
Stuart Robertson
Ken & Catherine Sandhage
Robert Schoenhals
Sven & Annie Schreiber
Charlie Shook
Steve & Rachel Shook
Bob & Helen Slagel
Peggy Smith
Tim Smith
Dennis & Adelia Sorge
Cynthia Stauffacher
Jane Thompson
Ned & Amanda Tomlinson
Amy Van Epps
Betsy Vanable
Joseph & Jane Vanable
Mary Weeks

*If you or your family's name should be included and is not,
please contact the church office at 765.742.4079 or stjohns@stjohns-laf.org.*

Liturgical Calendars

Follow the course of the church year at home with the Episcopal Church Calendar for 2016. The calendar is edited to conform to the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, with the calendar dates in the proper color for the day.

On the back of each month's calendar sheet are printed the lessons and psalms for each Sunday and major feast days, along with liturgical notes and suggested concluding collects for the Prayers of the People. Under the calendar pad is found Tables of Feasts and Fasts, together with useful information about lessons and psalms.

Call the parish office, 742-4079, to reserve your calendar at the cost of \$5.00 each.

Year End Planning

Each week throughout the year contributions that are delivered to the office, either in person or through the mail, are counted and then deposited with any offerings received on the following Sunday. December 27 will be the last opportunity to have your contributions counted and deposited for 2015. Hand delivered contributions should be delivered to the office by December 24. If you are mailing your contribution, please allow five to seven days for delivery. Mailed contributions should also reach the parish office by December 24.