



ST. JOHN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
LAFAYETTE

# The Eagle

St. John's Episcopal Church | Lafayette, Ind. | August 2021

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## Vestry News

During the past year, the St. John's Vestry has been working hard to keep St. John's on a clear path through the pandemic. Together, we worked to keep the parish connected and, with the help of the Regathering Task Force, to keep everyone safe. Since last March/April, we have met exclusively via Zoom. Over the past few months, we have been discussing ways we can regather safely, restart programs, and think about new ways forward for the parish. We have also had to approve several repairs/replacements to our HVAC system (St. John's has 14 ACs/furnaces, all of which were originally installed in the mid-'90s).

This fall, the Vestry will meet in person for the first time since early 2020. We are also planning a retreat to begin moving out of "pandemic" mode and back to our role as the spiritual leadership of the parish. This is critical for the life and future of St. John's, and we ask for your prayers. In addition, we invite those who would like to consider Vestry service to reach out to a member of the clergy (Bradley, Andrea or Gretchen) or to one of the Wardens (Greg McClure, gmclure@purdue.edu or Charlie Shook, cshook@shook.com). — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*



## ***Welcome back, Gretchen***

Our Associate Rector, Gretchen Freese, will be back at St. John's on Sunday, August 1. While Gretchen's leave didn't work out as planned (the family never made it to Germany after all), she spent the spring and summer with her family and doing supply work for churches in the area. Originally, Gretchen was called to St. John's to cover for Bradley's 2020 sabbatical. Last year however, Bradley and the Vestry asked Gretchen to stay on as the director of Christian Formation. Welcome back, Gretchen!

## ***Deaths***

Larry Robinson  
May 14, 2021  
Husband of Mary Anne Robinson

Virginia Severs  
June 15, 2021

## ***Jubilee Christmas: Save the Date*** **Saturday, Dec. 11**

Jubilee Christmas will be held this year on Saturday, Dec. 11. This is a special program of Lafayette Urban Ministry for families of children ages 12 and younger. Along with Chapel of the Good Shepherd, in past years we have hosted 30-40 families, providing toys, gift cards, food cards and other items to make the Christmas season special.

Details for Jubilee have not been determined, but plans are in the process for sharing the joy of Christmas with local families in need. As in the past, volunteers will be needed and donations of toys, clothing, household products and cash will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Maggie McClure at [magamclure@gmail.com](mailto:magamclure@gmail.com) for more information.

## ***That You May Be In Good Health***

*Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. — III John 2*

Greetings in the name of Christ! As we continue to negotiate the opening of society, we have new options on how we can spend our time that we didn't before. Many of us were isolated, or nearly so. Have you noticed how many more people are on the sidewalks, in the grocery stores and driving on the highways?

Have you also noticed that tempers seem to flair over things that once seemed trivial? I have. I was the recipient of a minimalist handwave recently. You know, the wave that only uses one finger instead of all five! Sometimes, I recognize that it takes a bit more grace for me to negotiate my needs and the needs of those around me.

Last month, we considered the importance of water for our hydration. How did you do? This month, I encourage you to consider how you are breathing. Anxiety can make us hold our breath or take breaths that are too shallow. The business of our lives can move us along at paces that are too rapid to enjoy the moment.

So, will you join me at setting aside one minute when you awaken to take three-four deep breaths before you get up and start your day? Consider changing your phone alarm to something peaceful instead of irritating. Breathe in the gift of this new day.

The people we encounter may be as stressed as we sometimes become. The "take a deep breath" advice is still useful. When God breathed over the waters, incredible things happened. I wonder what creation would unfold for us if we took the time to breathe over the situations that surround us?

A fun way to incorporate more deep breaths throughout the day is to pick a color you love. Whenever you see it, take one slow deep breath.

My best starting color was yellow.  
Favorite color was red.

Biggest mistake: Brown. It was everywhere! What was I thinking??

Disclaimer: None of this information should be construed as medical advice. Please always check with your health care provider for what is best for you. — *Andrea Arsene, andrea@stjohns-laf.org*

## ***Save the Date: Anniversary Organ Concert*** ***Richard Elliott, Mormon Tabernacle Principal Organist*** **7:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10**

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Principal Organist Richard Elliott will be performing the inaugural Anniversary Organ Concert on our Quimby organ. Originally scheduled for April 2020 (one year after the organ dedication), Elliott will finally be coming to Lafayette. He has been at the Tabernacle for 30 years and is the senior organist of the five on staff. The concert is free — more details forthcoming next month.

In the meantime, you can see him perform here:  
[www.thetabernaclechoir.org/videos/organ.html](http://www.thetabernaclechoir.org/videos/organ.html). — *Michael Bennett, michael@stjohns-laf.org*



# *How I Learned to Love Church Coffee*

*by Kay Lynn Northcutt*

One Sunday, about 10 months into my first pastorate, as my congregation gathered around the coffeepot, I wondered, “Why are these people here?” Sunday morning conversations revolved around the previous day’s Texas Christian University football team’s fate and who’d been kicked off “Survivor” that week. People were gathered 10 and 15 deep around the coffee urn and the donuts. They could have coffee and donuts at home, I thought to myself. Why come to church for mediocre coffee and cold donuts and stand around chewing the fat about yesterday’s football game? Can’t we talk about God? Ecclesiology? Inclusive language? Justice? Liturgy? Anything that matters?

The confounded equation of coffee + donuts = Christianity had long bothered me. It had even driven me to divinity school, where, in the first minute of the first day of Introduction to Ministry, the professor had asked each of us what we hoped to accomplish in our ministries. “I’m hoping,” I awkwardly began, “to help rescue the mainline church. From irrelevancy. I hope to make worship as attractive as football, donuts and TV.”

“That’s quite a trinity,” the professor quipped. Gathering steam, I quickly clarified that I was “pretty certain the revitalization of worship has something to do with deconstructing the ubiquitous church coffeepot.”

“Do not interfere with a Christian’s coffee,” he implored.

But, frustrated that God had to compete every Sunday with something so mundane as coffee (and as deadly as deep-fried, sugar-glazed donuts), I researched my course paper believing I could convince the professor (and mainline Protestants generally) to sideline the coffeepot and frontline God. I read Clifford Geertz’s *Interpretation of Cultures* with an eye toward mastering the function of symbols, specifically the symbolism of the coffeepot. Geertz persuasively demonstrates that religious symbols not only function within a culture but are themselves shaped by culture.

Geertz would have recognized that the coffeepot as a cultural symbol is as important to North American Christianity as the religious symbolism in the sanctuary is to worship. Reading him, I had to admit that my wanting to kick the coffee and donuts to the curb reflected my desire for a purer, cleaner symbol system in church, something set apart and “superior” to the cultural context of football and “Survivor” and coffee. It was disheartening, to say the least, to admit that for cultural anthropologists the

coffeepot was not competing with God but was part of a complex system of religious and sociological meaning.

But four years later, I was serving a congregation in the heart of Texas that was, by all standards, too much in love with coffee and donuts. I offered classes on mystics and being-in-love-with-God (poorly attended). I offered classes on parenting (well attended, but the evaluations were filled with complaints about my failure to provide “treats and coffee”).

I did a six-week study of liturgy for the most influential adult Sunday school class in the church. (One had to wait for an invitation in order to speak to the class — even if one was the pastor.) The five women who were already compelled by liturgy took copious notes and were on fire by the end of my course. But no one else in attendance seemed to have noticed a word I’d said on the topic. I began to wonder if, as my ministry studies had suggested, my congregation expected me to do the heavy lifting God-wise, and they would dutifully remove themselves from the coffeepot when the preaching was about to commence in order to discover what my heavy lifting had wrought that week.

Twenty years later, as a professor of preaching and worship, I was reading Tom Long’s engaging book *Beyond the Worship Wars*. In it he tells the story of a young Jewish man who accuses his father of hypocrisy: His father is agnostic but faithfully attends temple. His father responds, “There are many reasons to go to temple. Take Goldman. He comes to talk to God. Me? Well, I come to talk to Goldman.”

Talking to God, talking to Goldman: two great but differently motivated impulses for attending church. This tiny parable held for me the missing link. Although Geertz had helpfully explicated how religious symbols functioned within my congregation, the mystery of why worshipers gathered remained. The why was (and is) community. One subset of my community gathered each Sunday to talk to God, but the other (much larger) subset came to church to talk with one another.

Until the Eucharist, that is. At the Eucharist, I realized, everyone talked to God. The sanctuary was so pin-drop silent I could hear my pulse. Then? A closing hymn, benediction, rapid obligatory shaking of the pastor’s hand on the way to coffee. At least the coffee hour after worship included finger sandwiches and fruit platters.

But it wasn't until the second Easter in the second COVID-tide of not being in church for 14 months on end that I finally understood.

I awoke, greeted the day, said my morning prayers. Then I cried out to my husband, "I want church coffee. Not our coffee. Not McDonald's coffee. Not Starbucks coffee. Not espresso or latte or macchiato or Americano or cappuccino. Only church coffee will do!" My voice grew louder and more urgent as I continued to enumerate every particular kind of coffee that was not satisfying this Easter.

My husband asked if I was "quite OK." I bellowed, "No, I am not OK. I want church coffee."

"But dearie," he began, "you despise church coffee. Church coffee — in all its manifestations — is anathema to you!"

"Not since not-having church coffee for almost two years. Now I thoroughly understand its importance. And, anyway, the coffee is much, much better now that we attend a Lutheran church. Lutherans have coffee down pat. It's an art. I need Lutheran church coffee." I was wailing now.

Truth be told, I wanted to see Paula and Helen and Ted and Stephen and Jolene and Allyson and Ricky and Phyllis and Scott — and to have a cup of coffee with them in the context of the church. I'd even like to see a hologram of Geertz there, sipping coffee with us, smiling. A few of us (very few) would be talking about God. Most of us would be talking about the drought and our governor's brilliant handling of COVID and how to finance the much-needed new church roof.

I closed my eyes, at home with my kitten and my husband on the Best Day of the Year When We Ought to Be Able to Be in Church, and I sobbed. For the missing of almost two years of our lives. For want of church coffee and conversation. For the longing to be held in a cultural context of symbols that can see us through to eternity. But most especially: For the ache to be held within the human-divine embrace that is church.

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## ***St. John's Hosts the LUM Protein Pantry***

In May, the St. John's Vestry agreed to host Lafayette Urban Ministry's "Protein Pantry" in our first floor outreach area. Since the St. John's/LUM Food Pantry closed in 2018, LUM has been operating a small pantry out of the Ewry Center on Fourth Street. This was never a viable solution because of the lack of storage and the number of other programs run out of the Center. On June 10, LUM began serving local residents out of the outreach area on Thursday mornings. We have coordinated with LUM to make sure that the pantry does not interfere with the 12-step groups that meet at St. John's, and we will remain in conversation with LUM about the space. However, this is a rather easy way for us to assist LUM in their mission to serve the community.

If you would like to support or volunteer for the pantry, you can find information at [www.lumserve.org/programs/food-programs/food-pantry/](http://www.lumserve.org/programs/food-programs/food-pantry/). We will invite the congregation to make donations to the pantry in the coming weeks. Look for more information in our weekly emails and in the Sunday bulletin. — *Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)*



**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
600 Ferry Street  
Lafayette IN 47901-1142  
(765) 742-4079  
www.stjohns-laf.org

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Cindy Gerlach

Deadline for the September Eagle is  
**Monday, Aug. 8.** Submit items to  
eagle@stjohns-laf.org.

**St. John's Financial Summary May 2021**

**INCOME**

	Jun-21	Total 2021	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Pledge Income	\$22,271	\$187,294	\$391,080	47.9%
Operating Income	\$378	\$27,326	\$91,101	30.0%
Non-Operating Income	\$3,101	\$18,605	\$51,270	36.3%
Transfer Income	\$0	\$300	\$0	

**TOTAL INCOME**

\$25,750      \$233,525      \$533,451      43.8%

**EXPENSES**

	Jun-21	Total 2021	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Outreach	\$5,537	\$39,856	\$91,998	43.3%
Program	\$853	\$3,791	\$13,650	27.8%
Administration	\$0	\$868	\$4,400	19.7%
Personnel	\$24,328	\$145,629	\$312,519	46.6%
Office	\$1,253	\$6,299	\$23,950	26.3%
Property	\$8,846	\$37,421	\$86,935	43.0%

**TOTAL EXPENSES**

\$40,817      \$233,864      \$533,451      43.8%

**Net Income (Loss)**

-\$15,067      -\$339      \$0

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