



ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

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Parish Staff & Leadership

Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Bishop

Bradley Pace, Rector

Jason Fortner, Curate

Teresa Lohrman, Parish Administrator

Michael Bennett, Director of Music

Becky Dick, Senior Warden

Bruce Johnson, Junior Warden

St. John's is a parish of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Indianapolis.

From the Rector

I recently came across an absolutely magnificent little book (“little” only because it’s short) called *Walk Humbly: Encouragements for Living, Working, and Being* by the Anglican priest and theologian Sam Wells. The book contains brief reflections on a number of exhortations meant to encourage us to live with a sense of humility, praise, and wonder. In one particular reflection titled “Know your own size,” Wells says that “truth can only begin with taking in the enormity of that banquet of which you are the very tiniest ingredient. To pretend you are in the center, to imagine you are the link in the chain that connects all the others, to suppose that the theater is so small that everyone can see you, to occupy yourself so fervidly that you forget the extent of the universe beyond — all these are understandable reactions amid the panic of infinitesimal presence and utter insignificance; but they are all constructed falsehoods. They are houses built on sand ... We are,” he goes on

to say, “surrounded by a magnificent and almost infinitely extended orchestra, but we insist on playing our lone instrument ... In so doing we forget who we are, how much we matter, and what size we are.”

I found this way of putting it so insightful and poignant. I heartily commend the book to you and will almost certainly reflect on it in further *Eagle* articles or sermons. But it put me in mind of something I’ve said more than a few times. Knowing our size goes both ways. On the one hand, we must recognize how small we are in the grand scheme of things. Everything we do and everything we are is ultimately ephemeral. It will disappear given enough time. (As Wells puts it in a different chapter, “in the light of the breadth and longevity of the universe,” the laudable aspiration to “make a difference” is “a sentiment of either hubris or narcissism.”) To put this in the language of the Lenten season, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Of course, the flip side is also there in our Lenten journey as well. At the same moment that we remember our mortality — at the same time we recall our insignificance, our “size” — we are reminded that we are also filled with the breath, of God. Here is a crucial tension. You are dust, and to dust you shall return. But in the meantime, you are animated by the breath of God, you are beloved of God.

This puts me in mind of an old Jewish practice of carrying two scraps of paper in separate pockets. One scrap is supposed to read “I am but dust and ashes,” recalling God’s pronouncement to Adam in Genesis 3. The other scrap says, “the world was created for me,” recalling a line from the Talmud, one of the great Jewish wisdom texts.

I love the idea behind this practice because I need both pieces of paper. Some days, when things are going well, I can feel pretty full of myself. Look at all I have accomplished. Look at how well things are going. It is helpful to have that reminder — that little piece of paper in my pocket — that “I am but dust and ashes.” Other days, I look at the paperwork and the bills piling up on my desk, and I can’t help but

“Great and Small” by Butterflyfish

I originally learned about the practice of the two papers from the song “Great and Small” by the bluegrass band Butterflyfish. Their music is great, especially for kids.

Deep down here inside my pocket
There’s a little piece of paper
Take it out and read it
When I’m feelin’ out of shape or
To keep my fears at bay
It says: “You are great!”

Deep down in my other pocket
There’s another piece of paper
Take it out and read it
When I’m gettin’ into shape or
When I’m walkin’ tall
It says: “You are small!”

Cause you are great and small
You are tiny and tall
Remember through it all
You are great and small!

Heard it said that we are made
In the image of the Maker
So I wrote that down
On a little piece of paper
Read it every day
Remember you are great

Then again, I know we built a
Lot of tall, tall steeples,
(But the) Whole wide world is
More than just us people
So through it all
Remember we are small
Dust to dust, we shall return
Whole wide world was made
For us to learn

Cause you are great and small
You are tiny and tall
Remember through it all
You are great and small!

imagine that I am a fraud just waiting to be exposed. My so-called accomplishments are just smoke and mirrors. So, I need that other scrap of paper to remind me that I was created in the image of God, that I am loved beyond all measure and deserving.

Perhaps you are also like me. Perhaps you need both pieces of paper. If you are, sometimes you need to be reminded that you are dust, that you miss the mark in all sorts of ways, that you are frail and broken. That you are ultimately a small, insignificant speck in this magnificent cosmos. But if you are like me, you also need to be reminded that you are God's beloved child, that God is always ready to do more for you than you can ask or imagine, that every breath you take is God's Spirit flowing through you. Yes, I do need that message as well.

And by the way, some of us need one piece more than the other, at least some of the time. Some of us

From the Curate

On Feb. 22, we will enter the liturgical season of Lent by means of corporate confession and the imposition of ashes. We will confess our sins as a worshipping community. As we feel the ashes being made into a cross on our foreheads, we will each probably consider our personal shortcomings. The 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, not counting the Sundays because they are feast days, offer Christians a chance to consider our spiritual wellness, to repent of the sins the holy spirit convicts us of, and to prepare our hearts to more fully embrace the paschal mystery we will celebrate during the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

Confessing our sins and repenting of them, changing our behavioral and spiritual direction, is tough work. Even though it can be difficult and humbling, we Episcopalians don't shy away from it. In fact, we confess our sins a lot! There's a confession included in Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline, and nearly always at Holy Eucharist. The prayers of confession in the Book of Common Prayer and Enriching Our Worship are

may get so bogged down in the past, so beaten down by the weight of our sin, so tired of being oppressed or abused, or so tired of pain and disappointment, that we only ever imagine that we are unworthy, that we are victims of a cruel world or sinners in the hands of an angry God. Perhaps you may want to hold on to that one piece of paper a while, to remember that the world was created for you, you are God's beloved child. Some of us may need the opposite more often. We may be so full of ourselves, so self-centered, so oblivious to the needs of others that we would do well to remember our mortality and to remember that God demands justice, mercy, and humility. Either way, we should keep both pieces of paper handy. We're likely to need them both sooner or later.

-Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

wonderful and cover a lot of spiritual ground. They are, however, quite general. Sometimes we need to deal with personally specific sins that weigh on our conscience and our heart. That's where the rite for Reconciliation of a Penitent comes in.

Commonly referred to as "confession," this rite from the BCP focuses on what its name implies: reconciling to God a person who wishes to repent of sins that are keeping them from a full relationship with God and other people. We often hear the phrase "All may, some should, none must." Those who do go through this important rite do so for various reasons. Some confess at certain times of the church year, like Advent and Lent. Others seek reconciliation when they are moved by the conviction of the holy spirit, during times of spiritual upheaval, or before important spiritual and life events. For example, it is normal for a person to confess before she is ordained as a deacon or priest. Nevertheless, reconciliation is always available to anyone who needs it; no special occasion or catastrophic event is required.

In some ways, reconciliation is the hidden gem of the prayer book. It is a beautiful, deep, and succinct rite. There are two forms provided to meet the needs of the penitent, and there are options included for when the person hearing the confession is a lay person. The outline of the rite is simple. After a penitent confesses their sins, following the leading of the Spirit regarding which sins and the depth of detail, there is time for the priest to offer counsel, direction, and comfort. A psalm, prayer, or action may be assigned as a sign of penitence and of thanksgiving for forgiveness, not as a magical key to guarantee forgiveness. If a priest has heard the confession, she will pronounce the absolution of the aforementioned sins. If a lay person has heard the confession, she will offer a declaration of forgiveness. Form One ends with a subtle, but powerful theological statement. The priest says, “Go in peace, and pray for me a sinner.” After its conclusion, the contents of the confession are not normally discussed again, and the secrecy of it must not be broken.

Episcopalians, as well as Anglicans worldwide, are famous for straddling the line between being Protestant and Catholic. Within our own community some of us lean more in one direction than the other. I can imagine the more Protestant of us asking



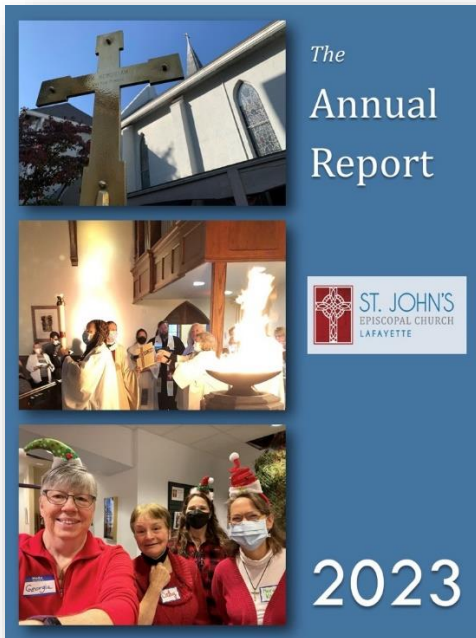
why a person would need to confess their sins in front of another human when we can speak directly to God through Jesus Christ. I would agree that it is not strictly necessary, but I would also note that it is very beneficial to one’s soul. There is a special spiritual self-awareness to be gained through the preparation for Reconciliation. The process produces spiritual growth, and there is release from shame and freedom from guilt to be found as we are assured of God’s love for us and the absolution of our sins by a priest.

As we prepare for Lent, I encourage you to consider whether you should reach out to one of your priests to set up a time for you to confess and be reconciled to God through Jesus. A quick word or brief email is all you need to begin the process. Bradley or I can offer ideas for preparation and encouragement along the way. (I have used the workbook *Joy in Confession: Reclaiming Sacramental Reconciliation* by Hillary Raining and found it to be helpful.) Reconciliation can be daunting, but it should not be feared. I pray that we who worship together at St. John’s will embrace the Lenten call to repentance corporately and individually so that we might be ready to follow the call to do the work God has given us to do in our community. — Jason Fortner, jason@stjohns-laf.org

Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America—Film Discussion

Racial Reconciliation of Greater Lafayette and Church of the Good Shepherd are two of twelve organizations that are bringing the film and discussion of *Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America* to Tippecanoe County this February. Jeffery Robinson, a former ACLU deputy legal director and narrator of the film, grew up in Memphis, TN when Martin Luther King was assassinated there. He shares some of his personal history, the history of slavery and its aftermath, as well as reflections on times our nation could have changed but failed to make real change stick. We are at another “tipping point”, but, he asks, “Will we do anything differently?”

A link for the film will be available from 12 noon on February 5 to 12 noon on February 8. An in-person community discussion of the film will take place at the Arts Federation (TAF) from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 9. To request a link to view the film, please contact Adelia Sorge at adeliays@mymetronet.net. The film and participation in the discussion are free. —Adelia Sorge, adeliays@mymetronet.net



St. John's Annual Meeting Sunday, Jan. 29, at 4 p.m., via Zoom

The St. John's Annual Meeting will be at 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 29, via Zoom. Copies of the 2023 Annual Report will be available to pick up at church that Sunday, on the website at www.stjohns-laf.org, and through the parish email newsletter.

Like last year, gift bags will also be available for those attending church that Sunday. These will include St. John's swag, prizes, and other surprises. Each household can pick up their bag on Sunday morning, Jan. 29 (or a few days before when the office is open). If you have questions, please call the office at 765-742-4079. – *Bradley Pace*, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

Parish Brunch & Ministry Fair Sunday, Feb. 5

A parish celebration, brunch, and ministry fair will be held the following Sunday on Feb. 5. Look for more information coming soon. – *Bradley Pace*, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org



Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday on Sunday Returns!

Sunday, Feb. 19, from 5-7 p.m.

We will celebrate Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday on a Sunday with our annual Pancake Supper on Sunday, Feb. 19 from 5-7 p.m. We'll have a live jazz band, a float parade, and loads and loads of PANCAKES!

Tickets will be available in advance in St. John's Commons or at the door for \$5 each, \$13 for families of 3 or more. Kids under 5 eat free. For more information, contact the St. John's office at 765.742.4079. – *Bradley Pace*, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, Feb. 26 at

Noon, 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 22. We will have three services this year:

- 12 (noon) at St. John's – Joint service with downtown churches at St. John's
- 5:30 p.m. Service for children and youth focusing on the traditions and meaning of Ash Wednesday
- 7 p.m. Traditional liturgy with the St. John's choir

Each service will include the imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist. Let us come together and begin a Holy Lent. – *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*



Deaths

John C. Lindenlaub, December 29, 2022
Longtime member and leader at St. John's
and husband of Debby Lindenlaub





A Beautiful Way to Celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord....

Many thanks to everyone who helped the Good Shepherd & St. John's communities celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Thanks to Katie Elder and Michael Bennett for their direction. Thanks to Hugo Davis who was an exceptional Baby Jesus. Thanks to all the children who participated in the service and to their parents, grandparents, and guardians who supported them. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the festive reception afterwards. And thanks to those who came afterwards to help clean up and put away our Christmas decorations. Thank you for making the Advent and Christmas seasons joyous!!! – *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

December 2022 Vestry Notes

The St. John's Vestry met on Wednesday, Dec. 14, for our regular meeting.

- We did some discussion and work on the 2023 budget.
- Announcement of candidates for the new vestry class: George Moore, Jennie Stein, Jack Sullivan
- Planning for the annual meeting. Father Bradley says online works best for the meeting. The vestry would still like a community in-person celebration. Can we do both? The vestry would also like to see a ministry fair type of event.
- An article on Green Church (environmentally responsible) was discussed. A desire was expressed to form a team to look at what we do and what can be done at St. John's.
- Father Bradley discussed the possibility of holding a parish retreat at Waycross in the fall of 2023. The retreat would be for all who would like to attend.
- Father Bradley said that he is working to obtain nursery care on Sundays.

St. John's Episcopal Church

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Save the Date

- **St. John's Annual Meeting**, Sunday, January 29, 4 p.m. via Zoom
- **Celebration Brunch & Ministry Fair**, Sunday, February 5
- **Mardi Gras/Shrove Sunday Pancake Supper**, Sunday, February 19, 5 p.m.
- **Ash Wednesday Services**, February 22, 12 noon, 5:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m.