



From the Rector

The Vestry continues reading Andrew Root and Blair Bertrand's new book *When the Church Stops Working* (Baker, 2023). The book is a reworking of Root's *Ministry in a Secular Age* series where he applies social theory to make sense of the crisis of declining church attendance and of religious observance more generally. Writing for church leaders, Root and Bertrand offer an analysis of the decline and a prescription (of sorts) for a different future.

I wanted to share one particular story from the book that I think captures a core idea. Root and Bertrand tell the story of the Book of Acts ("the Acts of the Apostles"). Acts is the sequel to Luke's Gospel, and it begins in a strange way. Jesus is with the disciples for 40 days, speaking about God's Kingdom. The disciples want to know when the Kingdom will come, what they're supposed to do next, how they can help make it happen, and how they will reap the benefits. Jesus brushes all of their questions aside. His only charge to them is that they must wait. As Luke tells the story: Jesus "ordered them not to leave

Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1.4). "John baptized with water," he tells them, "but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1.5). Jesus tells the disciples to wait. Specifically, he tells them to wait for God to act, for the Holy Spirit to come and inspire them (literally) with God's power.

We all know, however, that waiting is really hard. It's frustrating. It's particularly difficult when we have a million other things to do. When we're forced to wait (in a traffic jam, for instance), it can be rage-inducing. When we're already anxious about something, waiting can be intolerable.

In Acts chapter 2, the disciples realized that they needed a twelfth apostle to replace Judas Iscariot. They nominated two men, cast lots (the equivalent of flipping a coin or drawing names from a hat), and landed on Matthias. Now Matthias may have been a wonderfully faithful disciple. But he isn't mentioned again in the book of Acts. He simply disappears from

the story. Instead, the bulk of the story centers on someone else. As Root and Bertrand describe it:

In Acts 9, with no apostles present, we're told of God's own action of choosing. God elects the twelfth not by rolling dice but through an interrupting encounter with words and visions. On the road to Damascus, a zealot named Saul is knocked to the ground and addressed by Jesus. The rest of Luke's sequel is about this Saul, renamed Paul. The one chosen by the Spirit, not by the disciples' casting of lots, is at the center of Luke's acts of God. The acts of the apostles choose Matthias; the act of God elects Paul. The dice choose Matthias; the living, resurrected Jesus chooses Paul. (Root and Bertrand 69)

Despite Jesus' instruction, the disciples didn't wait but took their own initiative. But because they were out in front of God's action, because they hadn't waited to see where God was moving, their action did not bear any fruit. The real story of the early church follows Paul, the disciple chosen by God. (Interestingly enough, as Paul's own story plays out, he learns to wait. He waits to be healed by Ananias who had himself been waiting in prayer. He waits a long time to gain the trust of those he had persecuted. Ultimately, he waits for further direction from God.)

This is a really important message to us. Paul is chosen and then sent into the world after an encounter with the risen Christ. This means, as Root and Bertrand point out, that the title of Luke's sequel is all wrong. It shouldn't have been the Acts of the Apostles but rather the Acts of God. The apostles are supposed to wait for God to act. Only then can they get down to business. After God shows up in the story (at Pentecost and again at other times), a lot happens, a lot of amazing, Christ-like, Spirit-led ministry. They begin healing the sick, caring for one another in community, welcoming new converts to the faith. God had acted by sending the Spirit. Now the early Church acts by following God's lead. "With great

power," Luke writes, "the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" (Acts 4:32-35). In all of this, they were following God's lead and not their own initiative.

As Root and Bertrand summarize this story, "the church begins with the command to wait.... For the disciples, waiting becomes a kind of being, filled with eating and storytelling, praying and remembering, all in anticipation and as preparation for God's action" (Root and Bertrand 70). But it's the same for us. "Through waiting, the church is sent out into joining the acts of God" (Root and Bertrand 63). This can be anxiety producing if we're worried that there aren't enough people in the church, that we don't have enough resources, that the church doesn't have the reach or influence it once had, that we're not doing enough, and so on. Waiting can be difficult, frustrating, and anxiety producing. It can even make us angry. We're supposed to be *doing* something. The problem is, when we're busily *doing*, we often miss what God is doing. Too often, we miss God's action because we are too busy, too caught up in our own initiative.

What does waiting look like? Actually, it looks a lot like the historic witness of the Church. Our waiting is grounded in being together, in breaking bread together, in telling the story of God's people and our own stories, in prayer, in remembering, in rehearsing again and again the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and its meaning.

I know, I know. That's why I said it was a "prescription" of sorts. Rather than a list of things to fix the Church or even our local church, Root and Bertrand remind us to readjust our focus from doing more and to waiting to see where God is headed.
-Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

From the Curate

From “the Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism”

Q. What are the Ten Commandments?

A. The Ten Commandments are the laws given to Moses and the people of Israel.

Q. What do we learn from these commandments?

A. We learn two things: our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbors.

Q. What is our duty to God?

A. Our duty is to believe and trust in God; to love and obey God and to bring others to know him; to put nothing in the place of God; to show God respect in thought, word and deed; and to set aside regular times for worship, prayer and the study of God’s ways.

Q. What is our duty to our neighbors?

A. Our duty to our neighbors is to love them as ourselves, and to do to other people as we wish them to do to us; to love, honor, and help our parents and family; to honor those in authority, and to meet their just demands; to show respect for the life God has given us; to work and pray for peace; to bear no malice, prejudice, or hatred in our hearts; and to be kind to all the creatures of God; to use our bodily desires as God intended; to be honest and fair in our dealings; to seek justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people; and to use our talents and possessions as ones who must answer for them to God; to speak the truth, and not to mislead others by our silence; to resist temptations to envy, greed, and jealousy; to rejoice in other people’s gifts and graces and to do our duty for the love of God, who has called us into fellowship with him.

Q. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?

A. The Ten Commandments were given to define our relationship with God and our neighbors.

Q. Since we do not fully obey them, are they useful at all?

A. Since we do not fully obey them, we see more clearly our sin and our need for redemption. (BCP 847-8)

The Book of Common Prayer has contained a section regarding the Ten Commandments since the 1549 version (Hatchett 575). So, it’s safe to say that the importance of this portion of Hebrew Scripture has been highlighted in our branch of the Christian faith for many centuries. The previous section of the Catechism dealing with the Old Covenant (addressed in the most recent issue of *The Eagle*) is a theological introduction to the Ten Commandments and is new to the BCP in the 1979 revision.

And so, in our current prayer book we find the Ten Commandments within helpful context both in the Catechism and in the Decalogue which begins

with the introductory phrase from Exodus 20: “Hear the commandments of God to [God’s] people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.” We see here that these are not commandments given to us arbitrarily by a random deity. It is the God who loves and liberates us who gives us these instructions to live by so that we might live well and fully.

The Catechism divides the Commandments into two categories: those outlining our duty to God and those defining our obligations to our neighbors. The first four commandments fall into the former category, and the last six into the latter. Hatchett notes that the 1979 Catechism broadens and deeps

the meaning of the Ten Commandments to include social concerns and to emphasize spiritual values. For this reason, the commandments are presented in the Catechism as explanations of our responsibilities rather than actual commandments.

The Decalogue (BCP 317 and 350) provides us with the Ten Commandments in words that may be more familiar to many of us. The Decalogue is part of the Penitential Order which is a liturgy used to provide us with an opportunity to acknowledge, reflect upon, and turn away from our sin and toward God. In it we pray that God would enable us to keep the Commandments. We acknowledge that we have invariably failed to do so, and we humbly repent. This liturgy of repentance can be used as a separate service by itself but is most commonly used as a prelude to Holy Eucharist. Many parishes do this during Lent when penitence is particularly appropriate.

Recognizing our failure to fully obey God's commandments is the focus of the final question in this section of the Catechism. In a style that is atypically direct for Episcopalians, the question is raised: "Since we do not fully obey [the Ten Commandments], are they useful at all?" The answer, of course, is yes. At the very least, the Ten Commandments highlight our need for God's mercy and redemption because we seem to be, as a species, incapable of keeping them. However, I would add that the Ten Commandments also continue to be aspirational for us. With God's help, our hearts are ever more inclined to keep this law and to want to keep it. And thanks be to God for that fact because these succinct statements about how to relate to God and to one another show us the best way to do so. If we follow them, we can learn how to flourish during our time on earth.

With this illumination of the meaning of the Ten Commandments, the Catechism has raised the issue of sin, our failure to do as God has directed us for our own wellbeing. Because the Catechism is

constructed in a logical progression, the next section discusses sin and redemption. We will look at that in the next installment of this series. – *Jason Fortner, jason@stjohns-laf.org*

Marion J. Hatchett. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*. Seabury Press, 1980.

The Decalogue: Contemporary

Hear the commandments of God to his people:

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage. You shall have no other gods but me. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not make for yourself any idol. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not invoke with malice the name of the Lord your God. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Honor your father and your mother. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not commit murder. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not commit adultery. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not steal. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not be a false witness. **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. **Amen. Lord have mercy.** (BCP 350)

Considering Matthew Shepard

Sunday, October 29, 3 p.m., St. Thomas Aquinas Church

On Oct. 6, 1998, 21-year-old Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was kidnapped, robbed, beaten and left tied to a fencepost outside Laramie, Wyoming. He died six days later, the victim of a hate crime. Now, 25 years later, the Lafayette Master Chorale and the Purdue University Choir will present *Considering Matthew Shepard*, a three-part oratorio, to mark this anniversary. And the week prior to the concert will feature several events that focus on the community coming together and learning from this horrific tragedy.

Considering Matthew Shepherd will be performed on Sunday, October 29 at 3 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in West Lafayette. Purchase tickets and learn about additional events marking the occasion at www.lafayettemasterchorale.org. St. John's is a proud sponsor of this event.

The Feast of All Saints at St. John's

Sunday, November 5, 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.

On Sunday, November 5, we will observe the Feast of All Saints. At our services that day, we will dedicate special time to remember those saints of St. John's who have died since last year. There will also be time for each of us to remember the saints who have been the chosen vessels of God's grace in our own lives. Please join with the whole church as we remember the saints of God who have come before and welcome new saints into the Body of Christ.

If you would like to add names to the Necrology — the list of names to be remembered on All Saints Day, please go to www.stjohns-laf.org/necrology or call the church office at 765.742.4079. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*



Evensong is back!

All Saints Sunday, November 5 at 5 p.m.

It has, literally, been years since St. John's has had a service of Choral Evensong. And what better time than All Saints Sunday to reintroduce ourselves to the beautiful service. The feast of All Saints is a special day in the liturgical year when we remember all the saints who have gone before through special prayer, candles, and music.

On November 5 at 5 p.m. the choir will lead us in Choral Evensong: a service of prayers, canticles, and hymns. It is a brief service but a rich part of the Anglican tradition. We will be joined by a guest organist from St. Christopher's in Carmel. I hope you can attend as we remember all the saints. — *Michael Bennett, michael@stjohns-laf.org*



The St. John's Stewardship Campaign

Through our service and sharing, we create the community of St. John's. In this season of stewardship, the Stewardship Committee invites you to give generously to make our service, sharing, and community flourish. **Many thanks to everyone who has already pledged. Remaining pledge cards have gone in the mail, but you can also pledge online using the QR code or go to www.stjohns-laf.org/giving.**

For more information, contact the chair of the Stewardship Committee, Bill McInerney, at billmcinerney45@gmail.com.



Service Sharing Community

Pledge Reports

Pledge reports for the current year (2023) are in the mail. Please take a moment to review your 2023 giving as we move into the last part of the year and see if your pledge is up to date. Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministry of St. John's. –*Finance Committee, stjohns@stjohns-laf.org*

Beware of SCAM emails

Another batch of scam emails are going around claiming to be from me. The emails may simply ask if you have some time or may ask for assistance with gift cards, etc. In some cases, the emails are increasingly sophisticated as the scammers mine information from the St. John's website, emails, newsletters, or elsewhere online. (I have also received emails that ask for login information and look exactly like secure emails from Microsoft.) While we try our best to make things secure, scammers are always two steps ahead.

Please be careful about clicking on links from emails or text messages. Never send money, gift cards, or personal information by email or text unless you are certain it is going to the right place. I will never ask you for that kind of information via email/text.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office directly. Maybe try a phone call. That's still reasonably secure. – *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

Children's Chapel

Beginning Sunday, November 12 at 10 a.m.

Children's Chapel will meet on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. We will worship together in a way designed to introduce children to the traditions of Episcopal worship. During our time together, we hear the Gospel, sing, say the Creed, and share Prayers of the People. We will return to the church at the Peace and in time for Eucharist. Look for more information coming soon. –Amanda Yauney, amanda@stjohns-laf.org



Greater Lafayette Episcopal Youth Group

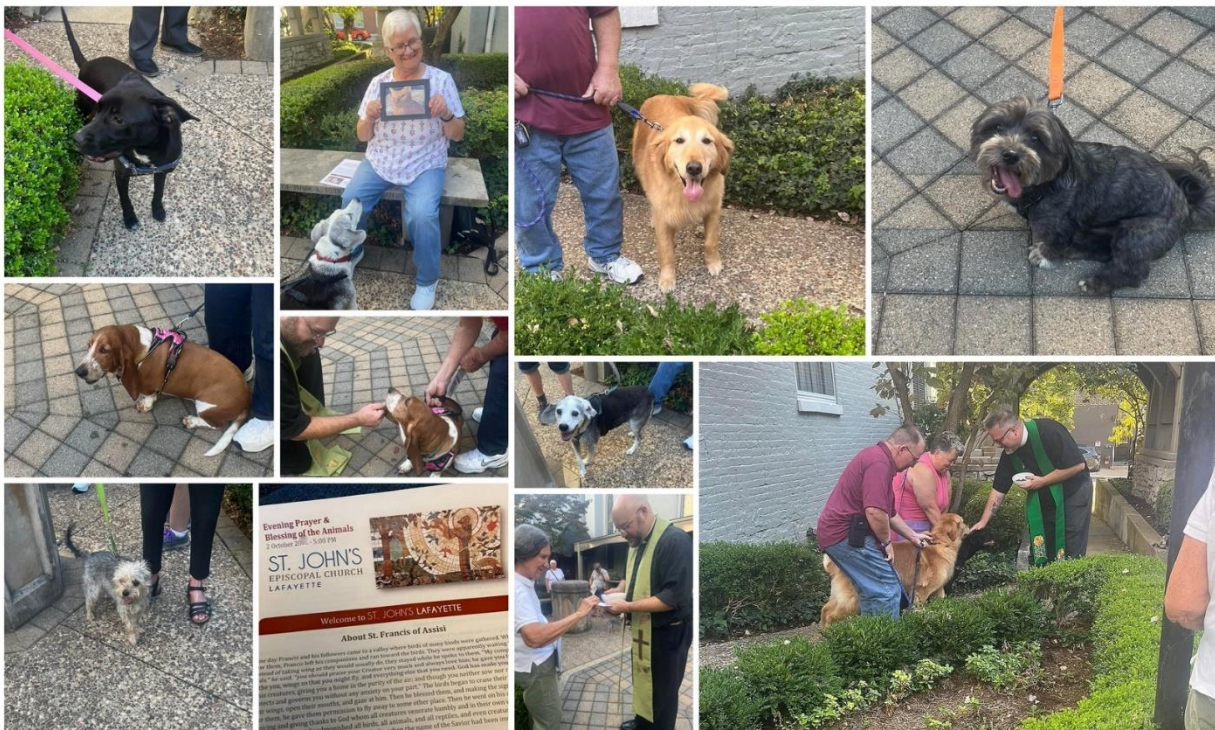
Youth in 6th through 12th grades are invited for fun and fellowship.

- Sunday, November 5, 2-4 p.m. at St. John's
- Sunday, November 19, 2-4 p.m. at Good Shepherd

In December, we'll meet to shop for Jubilee Christmas and for a pre-Christmas party. For more information, go to www.stjohns-laf.org/youth or contact the church office. –Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

“Who’s a good dog?”

On Sunday, October 1, St. John's celebrated the Feast of St. Francis with our annual pet blessing. We had several well-behaved dogs, a few pictures of pets, and a tray of lemon bars.



Deaths

C. Wesley “Wes” Shook, September 21, 2023

Longtime member and friend of St. John’s.

St. John’s Financial Summary, September 2023

| INCOME | Jan-Sept. | Operating Budget | % of Budget |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Operating Income | \$340,495.02 | \$495,730.62 | 68.7% |
| Non-Operation Income | \$30,352.05 | \$58,557.40 | 51.8% |
| Transfer Income | \$19,938.39 | \$42,100.00 | 47.4% |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$390,785.46 | \$596,388.02 | 65.5% |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Outreach Program | \$49,894.05 | \$86,001.00 | 58.0% |
| Administration | \$18,571.56 | \$28,620.00 | 64.9% |
| Personnel | \$2,508.96 | \$4,450.00 | 56.4% |
| Office | \$187,730.23 | \$342,185.51 | 54.9% |
| Property | \$21,079.82 | \$28,912.00 | 72.9% |
| | \$89,639.63 | \$106,219.51 | 84.4% |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$425,171.27 | \$596,388.02 | 71.3% |
| Net Income (loss) | \$-34,385.81 | | |

ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

600 Ferry Street · Lafayette, IN 47901-
1142 765.742.4079 · www.stjohns-laf.org
stjohns@stjohns-laf.org · @stjohnslaf

Parish Staff & Leadership

Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Bishop

Bradley Pace, Rector

Jason Fortner, Curate

Teresa Lohrman, Associate for
Administration & Finance

Michael Bennett, Director of Music

Amanda Yauney, Director of Christian
Education

Becky Dick, Senior Warden

Bruce Johnson, Junior Warden

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



Mark Your Calendars

The Feast of All Saints, Sunday, Nov. 5

Choral Evensong, Sunday, Nov. 5, 5 p.m.

Diocesan Convention, Friday, Nov. 10-
Saturday, Nov. 11

Children's Chapel begins, Sunday, Nov. 12

Holy Eucharist at Westminster Village,
Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2 p.m.