



## From the Rector

*This is a complete version of Bradley's sermon from the Parish Picnic on Sunday, August 13.*

*At Horeb, the mount of God, Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."*

*He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of*

*sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9-13, the Message translation)*

When I was in the hospital back in June, a friend visited with me. We had a lengthy conversation about my physical and mental health, my workload and stress, and my vocation. She wondered whether I might benefit from a spiritual retreat. She thought about it for a while and then said, "All the retreats I can think of are silent retreats, but I think that might kill you."

She ended up recommending a retreat with the Jesuits at a retreat center outside of Cincinnati. When I got home, I looked it up, and the timing of the next retreat was perfect. So, I signed up. I did not have much information ahead of time, I only knew that I would meet with a spiritual director each day. But

that sounded great. I assumed I would spend time in prayer, but I would also get to know the others at the retreat. I love meeting new people, and I figured many of them would be working through the same things as me (why else would they be there?). I needed to work through. I got there, moved in, and went to dinner. I met the other retreatants. We talked about ourselves a bit, ate dinner, and settled in for the orientation. That is when I learned, it *was* a silent retreat. A five-day silent retreat. In fairness, I spent time reading books on the banks of the Little Miami River — there just happens to be a brewery there. But there was also a great deal of silence.

And ... it was amazing. I would even say it was transformative for me.

That experience at the retreat informs my reading of our story from the First book of Kings. Elijah was a prophet who testified against Israel's most notorious king, King Ahab, and his wife Jezebel. Ahab and Jezebel are looking to kill Elijah, so he is on the run. At one point, he becomes so discouraged, so frustrated, so exhausted that he cries out to God, "Please, just kill me now" (well, not exactly, but that's the gist of it). So, God makes Elijah take a nap/sleep. Actually, he makes him take *two* naps. And while Elijah is sleeping, God sends angels to feed him. (There is a meme running around social media that gets at an important biblical truth in this story: "Never underestimate the spiritual power of a nap and a snack.")

When Elijah wakes up, he travels to Mt. Horeb — another name in the Old Testament for Mt. Sinai, the place where the people met God during their Exodus journey. While there, God asks Elijah, "Elijah, why are you here?" Now this may sound like a straightforward question. But I think there is something deeply existential going on here. Elijah is on the run, fleeing for his life. He's gone to the mountain of the Lord, a really important place for Israel, THE place to go to meet Israel's God. So, God asks him, "why are you here?" The question has the sense of something profound. "Elijah, why are you here?" Not, just "why

are you on this mountain," but what are you on about? What is your purpose? Why are you here ... *at all*? God is asking Elijah to get in touch with his vocation, his purpose, to get in touch with his very self. Elijah says that he has been zealous for the Lord, but then he lists off all the things going wrong. I can't help but imagine that Elijah's answer to God is full of sarcasm and cynicism, loneliness and exhaustion. After all, Elijah is on the run. The other prophets of God have been killed, the world is closing in on him, and it has just been all too much. Elijah's vocation, his purpose, even seems to be the problem. He may be wondering if he's in the right line of work. Worse yet, his very self, his sense of who he is, threatens to come apart.

So, God offers a word. Actually, God offers to be with Elijah, to show up. I would argue that this is what nearly everything in the biblical story is really, ultimately about — God's intimate, real presence. Adam and Eve lost this presence when they were forced out of Eden. It was God's presence that called Abraham from his home and toward the Promised Land, drew Israel out of slavery in Egypt, and, when things were going well, sustained Israel in the land. It was God's presence that brought Israel home from Exile. Even the incarnation — the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus — is primarily about God being with his people. As John writes, "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1.14). Or as another John puts it at the very end of the Bible, "See, the home of God is among mortals" (Revelation 21.3). The story begins and ends with God's presence.

So, God says to Elijah, "I'm going to show up. Be ready." And there was a great wind. But the text says, "God was not in the wind." There was an earthquake. "But God was not in the earthquake." Then there was a fire. "But God was not in the fire." After the fire, we hear "a sound of sheer silence." There, Elijah recognizes the presence of God. So, he wraps his mantle around his shoulders and goes out.

Elijah had been going from one disaster to the next, but he couldn't feel the presence of God. He was

seeking earth-shattering moments in search of the divine, but he had become unmoored from who he was, what he was about. He was trying to put out every fire he could, but in the midst of all the busyness, he had lost access to the divine spark inside of himself. And while he needed rest — and probably a snack — what he most needed was a quiet moment to reconnect with God. The disasters, the earth-shattering moments, the fires, were all very important — critical even. But after a while, all of that got in the way. Elijah could no longer remember why he was running from one thing to the next. He had forgotten why he was there, even who he was.

But in that “sound of sheer silence,” he encountered God. And that intimate divine presence made all the difference. When God asked him a second time, “Elijah, why are you here?” Elijah offers basically the same answer the second time. But I imagine it was also completely different. The sarcasm and cynicism, the loneliness and exhaustion were all gone. Something had changed.

I don’t think I’m overstating the case here when I say this happened to me during my silent retreat. Typically, I run from one thing to the next (one disaster after another, seeking out earth-shattering moments, and putting out fires). I rarely stop to take stock of it all. Even when I have a second of downtime, I listen to a podcast or an audiobook (on double speed ... seriously). I go from book-to-book or person-to-person looking for answers and solutions. When I’m not doing that, I try to check out altogether (I have lots of escape strategies). But I almost never wrestle with my own thoughts. I almost never quietly listen for a word from God. I almost never seek out the sound of sheer silence. I’m sort of terrified of it. But when I accidentally ended up at a five-day silent retreat, I had to. And I was blown away. My spiritual director noticed it right away. He said that I had been really agitated when I showed up on the first day. By the time the retreat was over, something had changed. Like Elijah, I had let go of the sarcasm and cynicism I had when I first arrived. The frustration and

exhaustion had melted away. I had encountered God’s presence. Because of that, I was able to reconnect with who I am, what I’m about. I rediscovered that divine spark inside of myself. It was renewing and energizing. As I said at the beginning, it was transformative.

Maybe you have experienced the same thing. Maybe you’re feeling that sarcasm and cynicism, loneliness and frustration, right now. After all, this isn’t just for clergy. Perhaps you find yourself practically running for your life, trying to keep up. You feel like you’re going from one disaster to the next, desperately searching for an earth-shattering moment, putting out every fire you can. Maybe you even go to church (the one place you’re *supposed* to connect with God) only to find that it’s just more stuff to do, more disasters, more fires to put out, or just more busyness.

I realize that not everyone has the time or wherewithal to go on a five-day silent retreat. (By the way, that was the “short” retreat. They have eight and even thirty-day silent retreats. That might just kill me.) That isn’t the point. Nor is the point that you *ought* to do this or that to reconnect with God so that you can get back to work, renewed and energized for more and more busyness. Rather, the point is simply to be, to be who you are, to be in the presence of God. In his book *Everything Belongs*, Richard Rohr says that this is always a huge problem for us. We are obsessed with accomplishing things. We even want sabbath and rest just so we have the energy to do more later when we’re back at it. But the whole point of all this is that we simply need to know God’s presence. It is a presence that is already there, after all. “We cannot attain the presence of God,” Rohr writes, “because we’re already totally in the presence of God. What’s absent is awareness” (*Everything Belongs*, page 29). Elijah’s sarcasm and cynicism were born of his frustration and exhaustion. He was running for his life, running from one damn thing to the next. He wasn’t taking the time to listen, to be aware. That is what Elijah was missing. In his case, God demanded

that he stop and listen for a second. I ended up in the hospital and then, accidentally, at a silent retreat. Maybe that was God demanding that I stop and listen, too, I don't know. But in either case, I simply wasn't stopping to be aware of the presence I most clearly and desperately needed.

If you think a silent retreat would be helpful to you, I can recommend the Jesuit Spiritual Center at Milford. If you'd like to join a meditation group, there's one that meets each week at Good Shepherd. If you think you would benefit from seeing a spiritual director, I know a few in the area and several who would be happy to meet with you virtually. If you are overwhelmed with sarcasm and cynicism, loneliness

and exhaustion, maybe any one of these would be helpful to you. But all that aside, I would encourage each of you to take a moment or two, to find some quiet time. Stop looking for an earth-shattering moment or running from one fire to the other. Just turn off the TV and your phone (and maybe even the audiobooks on double-speed if that's your jam). Take a few deep breaths and listen to the sound of sheer silence. Become aware of God's presence, and when God asks, "why are you here?" you can answer truthfully in the light of God's grace and love.

– Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)

## From the Curate

**Q.** What do we learn about God as creator from the revelation to Israel?

**A.** We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and Earth, of all this, seen and unseen.

**Q.** What does this mean?

**A.** This means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains and directs it.

**Q.** What does this mean about our place in the universe?

**A.** It means that the world belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and to care for it in accordance with God's purposes.

**Q.** What this mean about human life?

**A.** It means that all people are worthy of respect and honor, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

**Q.** How was this revelation handed down to us?

**A.** This revelation was handed down to us through a community created by a covenant with God.

The Catechism found in *the Book of Common Prayer*, beginning on page 843, is intended to be a basic summary of the Christian faith and a jumping off point for discussion and further study. In a previous article for *The Eagle*, I addressed the first section of the catechism, the one concerned with human nature. This is the second installment in this sporadic series of articles, and it will take on the second section titled "God the Father".

It is both interesting and important to note that each section of the catechism is interrelated with the others and that there is a flow to the organization of this outline of faith. For example, in the section we are looking at for this article, one would presume that we would learn something about the nature of God. This is a correct assumption, but we also learn about the nature of the created universe and the place of humanity in it.

The first question and answer connect what we learn about God from the Hebrew Bible directly to the beginning of the Nicene Creed. That God is One is foundational to both Judaism and Christianity. The same is true of the notion that God is the creator of all that is, seen and unseen. Per the rubrics (the liturgical guidelines) of *the Book of Common Prayer*, Episcopalians bring these two ideas into worship each Sunday and on other major feast days.

So, as the second question asks, what does this mean for us? The answer is comforting, but also feels somewhat shocking in these times when there is so much violence and inequity in our world. “This means that the universe is good ...” Our God who is good has created a good creation. In fact, in Genesis God declares creation to be *very* good. The answer to question three clarifies that our place in creation is that we are also creatures, beings created by God. We are not God, and we are not the center of creation. We are called to enjoy creation and to care for it.

What does this tell us about human life specifically? Question four raises this important

issue. We believe that all people are created in God’s image and are “worthy of respect and honor.” This stems from our belief that God created us and that creation is good. This understanding of the intrinsic worth of human life requires us to work hard to treat everyone with the love and care they deserve. It should prevent us from seeing ourselves as superior to anyone else and from ranking others by any criteria. All people can respond to the love of God and are loved equally by God.

This section of the catechism concludes by reaffirming that the source of these beliefs about God, creation, and humanity is what has been handed down to us from the children of Israel with whom God established an eternal covenant. This final question and answer pair circles back to the first pair in this section. We are reminded that our faith comes from what God revealed to Israel. It is clearly implied that we should study and seek to understand the Hebrew Bible as foundational to our faith. For this reason, the next section of the catechism addresses that idea and is titled “The Old Covenant.” – *Jason Fortner, jason@stjohns-laf.org*

## **The Working Hungry – Screening and Discussion**

**Thursday, Aug. 31, 6:30 p.m.**

### **Long Center for the Performing Arts**

Join Bread for the World, Food Finders, and Lafayette Urban Ministry at a screening of the Emmy-nominated documentary *The Working Hungry*. This 30-minute film tells the story of three Hoosier families struggling with food insecurity and explains why systemic solutions are needed to make sure that no family experiences hunger in our communities. Join us on Thursday, Aug. 31, 6:30 p.m., Long Center for the Performing Arts, 111 N. Sixth St., Lafayette. Scan the QR code to sign up.



## **Hunger Hike**

**Sunday, Sept. 17, 1 p.m. (event at Riehle Plaza), 2 p.m. hike**

Mark your calendars — the 2023 Hunger Hike is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, Sept. 17. Hunger Hike is an annual community fundraising event whose mission is to “Raise Awareness and Make a Difference in the Fight Against Hunger” — locally, regionally and globally. The event begins at 1 p.m. at Riehle Plaza. The hike begins at 2 p.m.



If you wish to donate, scan the QR code or go to [www.stjohns-laf.org](http://www.stjohns-laf.org) and click the link for the St. John’s Hunger Hike Team page. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*





## **A Blessing for our Students, Teachers and School Staff**

**By Shannon Kelly**

God of Wisdom, we give you thanks for schools and classrooms and for the teachers and students who fill them each day. We thank you for new beginnings, for new books and new ideas. We thank you for sharpened pencils, pointy crayons and crisp blank pages waiting to be filled. We thank you for the gift of making mistakes and trying again. Help us to remember that asking the right questions is often as important as giving the right answers. We give you thanks for your children and ask you to bless them with curiosity, understanding and respect. May their backpacks be a sign to them that they have everything they need to learn and grow this year in school and in Sunday School. May they be guided by your love. All this we ask in the name of Jesus, who as a child in the temple showed his longing to learn about you, and as an adult taught by story and example your great love for us. Amen.

## **Deaths**

**Betty Flood-Amy**, June 22, 2023  
*Longtime member and friend of St. John's.*

**Diane Bottum**, July 17, 2023  
*Longtime friend of and former member of the  
St. John's choir*

**Rolland Strausbaugh**, Aug. 3, 2023  
*Former member of St. John's.*

## **Tuesday Morning Bible Study**

### **10 a.m. Tuesdays, beginning Sept. 5**

The Tuesday morning Bible study will return at 10 a.m. on Sept. 18. The Bible study will focus on topics of group interest and center on discussion of the chosen texts. The Tuesday Morning Bible Study will meet in St. John's Commons and is open to anyone including members of other churches or folks unaffiliated with any church. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Bradley. — *Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)*

## **Meditation Group at Good Shepherd**

The weekly meditation group has returned to gathering on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd. All are welcome! Please contact Hilary Cooke at [hilary@goodshep.org](mailto:hilary@goodshep.org) or Mark Thomas at [mark@goodshep.org](mailto:mark@goodshep.org) if you have questions.

## **Christian Education**

### **Godly Play Resumes Sept. 24**

Our Christian formation for children ages 3 through fifth grade will resume on Sunday, Sept. 24, on the second floor. For the fall semester, Godly Play will meet from 9:15-10:00 a.m. on Sundays. Look for more information to come. — *Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)*

## **Stewardship Kickoff Lunch**

### **Sunday, Sept. 24**

Join the St. John's congregation for the Stewardship Kickoff. There will be only one service that Sunday, but we will have entertainment and a celebratory lunch. Everyone is welcome. We will also take a moment to share the value we find in being part of this community. We hope you'll join us.

The Stewardship Committee: Bill McInerney, chair; Jamie Davis, Cindy Gerlach, Kristine Holtvedt, & Kathy Johnson.

## **The Spirituality of Howard Thurman**

### **Sept. 16 at St. Philip's, Indianapolis**

On Saturday, September 16, the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis Racial Justice and Education Team invites everyone to a daylong workshop on the Spirituality of Howard Thurman: "The Prayer that Undergirds Our Faith and Works." Howard Thurman served as spiritual advisor to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many other leaders and activists of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Thurman's message emphasized the importance of contemplation, silence, common unity and nonviolence as the foundation of social justice activism.

Documentary filmmaker Martin Doblmeier will screen his Emmy Award winning film *Backs Against the Wall*:

The Howard Thurman Story and offer reflections on the importance of prayer in Thurman's writings. The day will also include breakout workshops on prayer as fundamental for activism led by author and documentarian Cassidy Hall and the Rev. Andrea Arsene, Rector of the Episcopal Church of All Saints.

The daylong workshop is free and includes lunch. All are welcome.

### **St. Philip's Episcopal Church**

720 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indy

Saturday, September 16

10 a.m. to 4p.m. (check in begins at 9:30 a.m.)

Register on Eventbrite at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-spirituality-of-howard-thurman-tickets-690076386047>.

For more information, please contact the Rev. Cathy Scott at [catascot@sbcglobal.net](mailto:catascot@sbcglobal.net).



# EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of* INDIANAPOLIS

## **Women's Self-Care Weekend**

**Sept. 22 through Sept. 24, at Waycross**

The Women's Self-Care Weekend at Waycross Camp is sponsored by the Diocese of Indianapolis Episcopal Women's Ministries. Look for postcards, with additional information, on the table in St. John's Commons. If you have questions, please contact Charlene Watson at 765.474.9101 or [cel.watson@comcast.net](mailto:cel.watson@comcast.net).

## **2023 Diocesan Convention**

**Nov. 10-11**

### **St. Paul's Episcopal Church Indianapolis**

The 186th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Indianapolis on November 10-11, 2023. Everyone is invited. This year's highlights include:

- The theme of Rest & Liberation.
- Keynote speaker is Cole Arthur Riley.
- Workshops will be announced on the website and part of the registration process.

A preliminary schedule is available on the diocesan convention web page at <https://indydio.org/2023-diocesan-convention/>.



## **Stay up to date with IndyDio!**

If you do not receive the Diocesan newsletter, go to [indydio.org/newsletter/](https://indydio.org/newsletter/) and click subscribe.





## Emancipation Day Celebration

### Sept. 22, at Tippecanoe Arts Federation

The Underground Railroad was a network of people, safe houses, and secret routes used to ferry enslaved people out of slave states and into freedom in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Lafayette, Indiana was a site on the Underground railroad, and several local Black and white citizens risked their lives to help enslaved people escape. Members of St. John’s featured prominently in this history.

The General de Lafayette DAR will host an Emancipation Day Celebration and History Display at the Tippecanoe Arts Federation from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 22. To celebrate this local history. Local actors will portray Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Meet other historical characters from Lafayette’s Underground Railroad network. Here stories about the Rev. Samuel Rosevelt Johnson, the first Rector of St. John’s and an ardent abolitionist. The event will also feature live music from local artists Audrey Johnson and James Dekle. Local historian Sean Lutes will share information about historic Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Reservations are required. Please email [generaldelafayette@gmail.com](mailto:generaldelafayette@gmail.com) to reserve your spot. A \$10 donation to the General de Lafayette DAR is requested. There will also be a fundraiser to support renovations at Bethel A.M.E. Church.

### Did you know?

American social reformer, abolitionist, and orator, Frederick Douglass came to Lafayette twice, in 1867 and again in 1880.

*“I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong.”*

*-Frederick Douglass*

Read more at

[tippecanoehistory.org/finding-aids/the-bethel-african-methodist-episcopal-church/](http://tippecanoehistory.org/finding-aids/the-bethel-african-methodist-episcopal-church/)

### For more information

about the role of St. John’s members in the Underground Railroad, go to [tippecanoeountyfreedomseekers.blogspot.com/](http://tippecanoeountyfreedomseekers.blogspot.com/) and search for “St. John’s”.

Learn more about St. John’s history at [www.stjohns-laf.org/history](http://www.stjohns-laf.org/history).

## St. John’s Financial Summary, July 2023

INCOME	Jan-July	Operating Budget	% of Budget
Operating Income	\$275,121.55	\$495,730.62	55.5%
Non-Operation Income	\$23,229.15	\$58,557.40	39.7%
Transfer Income	\$0.0	\$42,100.00	0.0%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$298,350.70</b>	<b>\$596,388.02</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Outreach	\$38,152.27	\$86,001.00	44.4%
Program	\$14,906.36	\$28,620.00	52.1%
Administration	\$1,584.17	\$4,450.00	35.6%
Personnel	\$187,730.23	\$342,185.51	54.9%
Office	\$16,397.93	\$28,912.00	56.7%
Property	\$56,903.10	\$106,219.51	53.6%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$315,674.06</b>	<b>\$596,388.02</b>	<b>52.9%</b>
<b>Net Income (loss)</b>	<b>\$-17,323.36</b>		

## ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

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### **Parish Staff & Leadership**

**Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows**, Bishop

**Bradley Pace**, Rector

**Jason Fortner**, Curate

**Teresa Lohrman**, Associate for  
Administration & Finance

**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.



## Fall Worship Schedule Beginning Sunday, Sept. 3

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite 1

9 a.m. Morning Prayer via Zoom

10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist with choir