



From the Rector

As I've mentioned before, Monty Python's *the Life of Brian* is one of my favorite movies. In the movie, Brian, a young man born in a manger across the street from Jesus in Bethlehem, is repeatedly mistaken for the Messiah. The movie is hilarious, but also quite pointed in its critique of institutional religion and religious people. The Monty Python troupe is, I should point out, never critical of the Gospel message, just the fact that people have been killing one another over how to interpret and apply that Gospel message for more than 2,000 years.

In the opening scene, the three wise men arrive at Brian's manger (by mistake, of course) to praise the new Messiah. They startle Brian's mother who thinks they are drunk. When they explain that they are "three wise men", she responds, "Well, what are you doing creeping around a cow shed at two o'clock in the morning? That doesn't sound very wise to me."

She only allows them to stay after they mention

that they have brought gifts including gold. Since they are astrologers, she wants to know what star sign he is. Of course, like Jesus, Brian is a Capricorn. They end their visit by praising Brian: "We worship you, O Brian, who are Lord over us all. Praise unto you, Brian, and to the Lord, our Father. Amen."

Their confusion continues until they leave and notice the glowing Holy Family across the street. They return; knock Brian's mother to the ground; and take back the gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

January 1 is, of course, New Year's Day. But in the Church, January 1 is also the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. (It's also known as the Feast of the Circumcision of Jesus, but let's just stick with "Holy Name"). While Sundays are always Easter days in the Church, the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is actually one of only a handful of feast days that take precedence on a Sunday.

So, what's in a name? Why would we honor the

name of Jesus with a special feast day? Why would the angel make a point to give Mary (in Luke’s Gospel) and Joseph (in Matthew’s Gospel) such a specific name? Why not let them choose their own name? Why “Jesus” and not, I don’t know, Brian? And why, during the earliest days of the fledgling Christian community, would St. Paul teach that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Philippians 2:10) and that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13)?

Most likely, Mary and Joseph would have probably come up with a good name on their own, right? The most popular boy’s name in 2023, Liam, suggests something like “strong warrior” or protection. That would be fine, I guess. Despite its Celtic origin, even the name Brian — as in *the Life of Brian* — would have been a good name for their “bouncing baby boy.” “Brian” means “noble” or exalted one.

While we might find it odd to pray in the name of “Brian” — “We worship you, O Brian, who are Lord over us all” — we would have become used to it by now.

But the name “Jesus” announces in a special way what this child is sent to accomplish. “Jesus” is a transliteration of the Latin, which is itself a transliteration of the Greek Ἰησοῦς, which was itself a Hellenization of the Hebrew name “Joshua.” The Hebrew means “God saves.”

And in this case, the name means everything. Mary and Joseph could not possibly have understood the cosmic significance of the child in their care, at least not without divine intervention. In Luke’s Gospel, the angel tells Mary that Jesus will be called

“son of the Most High God” (Luke 1:32). In Matthew’s Gospel, the angel tells Joseph that the child shall be named Jesus because “he will save God’s people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Throughout the New Testament, we read of the many promises Jesus’ name carries for God’s people. We are promised God’s unfailing assistance — “If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it” (John 14:14). We are promised the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). We are promised healing and freedom from blindness, disability, demonic possession, and even from death itself. We are promised God’s abiding presence (Matthew 18:20). And we are promised new and abundant life in his name (John 20:31).

The name “Jesus” is not an incantation. It is not the key word in a magic spell. But you see, not just any name will do.

The name “Jesus” is not an incantation. It is not the key word in a magic spell. But you see, not just any name will do. The story hinges on the identity of this baby boy — this child who personifies, embodies, *incarnates* God’s salvation for all humanity. His

name shall be Jesus because he will save God’s people from their sins. His name shall be Jesus because he will save God’s people from blindness and paralysis and demons and death. His name shall be Jesus because he will save God’s people for abundant life. God’s people That’s you and me. Point of fact, if the Gospel is to be believed, that is everyone. Jesus *is* God’s salvation for the whole world. “God saves.” “Jesus.” The name means everything.

May God’s salvation be made manifest in your heart and in your life as the Epiphany of our Lord draws near. May you know God’s presence and God’s healing. May you know abundant life. All this in the name of Jesus. – *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

From the Curate

Catechism Series – Installment 6

In the middle of Advent we come to the section of the Catechism dealing with our basic beliefs about Jesus Christ, God the Son. As Christians, literally “little Christs,” our faith hinges on the answer to the first question in this section: What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only son of God? We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father and shows us the nature of God. Jesus reveals to us that God is love. He demonstrates to us this crucial, miraculous fact through his teaching, his healing of the ill and afflicted, his unwavering servanthood, and his sacrificial death.

As we wait during Advent for the commemoration of Jesus’ birth on Christmas, it is fitting that we should consider the incarnational questions in the Catechism. Not only are they central to our faith as they tell us about who Jesus is, but they are appropriate to this season of the liturgical year. What does it mean when we say that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the Virgin Mary? And why would he do such a thing? We believe that God took the first step in reaching out to us, God’s own creation, by becoming a human being and that God chose Blessed Mary as the source of Jesus’ human flesh. She consented to play the role of God-bearer and gave birth to Jesus, an event we will celebrate in a few days as of this writing.

That God would become human is baffling enough, but why should this be necessary? We believe that Jesus came to earth so that we might be adopted as children of God and be made heirs of God’s kingdom. Jesus’ Incarnation marked the beginning of a new phase in our relationship with the Divine. The remaining question/answer pairs in this part of the Catechism begin to illuminate what Jesus did in order to bring about this renewed relationship springing from his Incarnation.

God the Son

- Q. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only son of God?
- A. We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father and shows us the nature of God.
- Q. What is the nature of God revealed in Jesus?
- A. God is love.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the Virgin Mary?
- A. We mean that by God’s own act, his divine son received our human nature from the Virgin Mary, his mother.
- Q. Why did he take our human nature?
- A. The divine son became human, so that in him human beings might be adopted as children of God and be made heirs of God’s kingdom.
- Q. What is the great importance of Jesus’ suffering and death?
- A. By his obedience, even to suffering and death, Jesus made the offering which we could not make; in him, we are freed from the power of sin and reconciled to God.
- Q. What is the significance of Jesus’ resurrection?
- A. By his resurrection, Jesus overcame death and opened for us the way of eternal life.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that he descended to the dead?
- A. We mean that he went to the departed and offered them also the benefits of redemption.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father?
- A. We mean that Jesus took our human nature into heaven where he now reigns with the Father and intercedes for us.
- Q. How can we share in his victory over sin, suffering and death?
- A. We share in his victory when we are baptized into the New Covenant and become living members of Christ.

-Book of Common Prayer 849-50

As we continue reading, we learn that through his death Jesus freed us from the power of sin and reconciled us to God. (Theology nerds, notice that the Catechism doesn't lock us into any particular atonement theory. We are left with some very typically Episcopal wiggle room. Normal people, please disregard any of these words that don't make sense.) Jesus' resurrection from the dead freed us from the power of death (which he overcame) and opened for us the way of eternal life. We can be reconnected with God, our Creator, in fresh, life-changing ways through Jesus.

Jesus even descended to the place of the dead to tell them the Good News about our new relationship to God. This is one of the lines in the Apostles' Creed that can slip past us if we're not careful. It's based on church tradition and scripture. It is alluded to in 1 Peter chapter 3:18-20. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and

made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey.

Not only did Jesus descend to the dead, but after his resurrection he also ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. As we read in the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4 on Christ the King Sunday a few weeks ago, Jesus fills all in all. His ascension makes that a reality. But Jesus' taking our human nature into heaven doesn't mean that he's no longer active. He reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and he intercedes for us. Jesus prays for us as we live our lives in this beautiful world that was created through him. He prays for us as we work to manifest his kingdom on earth. He prays for us as we endure hardship and loss. Jesus rejoices as we begin to share in his victory over sin, suffering, and death through baptism into the New Covenant which is described in the next segment of the Catechism.

–Jason Fortner, Jason@stjohns-laf.org.

Sacred Ground begins online in February

The Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis is offering Sacred Ground in the online format beginning the second week of February 2024.

Several parishioners at St. John's and Good Shepherd have taken the class and highly recommend it. Here is a description of Sacred Ground from the national website:

“Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

“The 11-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories.

“Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, the Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries and our society. “This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people” (www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/).

Registration will begin in January via a link that will be shared by the diocese when it's available. Past and present Sacred Ground participants will have the opportunity to gather to discuss the implications and applications the course has for our local communities. More details will be shared in the months to come.

For more information, contact Becky Dick
–Becky Dick, beckydick.wl@gmail.com

Jubilee Christmas — A Huge Success

Many thanks to everyone who helped with Jubilee Christmas at St. John's. Thanks to everyone who coordinated from Good Shepherd and St. John's—including Mary Kay McCauley, Cathy Baron, Georgia Brist, Hilary Cooke, Maggie McClure, and Angela Mosier. Thanks to our shoppers and those who helped with setup. Thanks to our hosts, cookie bakers, and other volunteers. Together, Good Shepherd and St. John's served 40 families, with 96 children and 23 teenagers.



Support Those in Need through the Rector's Discretionary Fund

The Rector's Discretionary Account is a pool of money that the St. John's clergy use to help members of St. John's or of the community at large in times of unexpected or emergency need. The account is partially funded through the St. John's budget (\$900 per year), honoraria given to the clergy for funerals or weddings, and loose plate offerings, but this rarely covers the need. This time of year, we receive numerous requests for assistance, especially for utilities. If you would like to give to the Rector's Discretionary Account, you may do so through the Realm online giving portal, through the Sunday offering, or by mail. Please note "Rector's Discretionary Account" with your gift. And thank you in advance for your generosity.

- Bradley Pace,
bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

Sunday Morning Hospitality at St. John's — Stay Tuned

As part of a project for the College for Congregational Development, members of St. John's are collecting information and working on plans to make our Sunday morning hospitality an opportunity to welcome newcomers and visitors, strengthen existing relationships, and build community. Look for more information to come. Thanks to Carla Bowerman, Jason Fortner, and Maggie McClure for their work on this project.

- Bradley Pace,
bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

Epiphany Pageant

Sunday, Jan. 7, at St. John's

St. John's will host an Epiphany Pageant of lessons and hymns on Sunday, Jan. 7. There will be only one service that Sunday at 10:15 a.m. All children ages 3 through the eighth grade are invited to participate. We will have a rehearsal at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 6, at St. John's. Please contact Amanda Yaune at amanda@stjohns-laf.org with any questions.



Annual Meeting—Sunday, Jan. 28

The St. John's Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Jan. 28, after the 10:15 a.m. service. There will be only one service that Sunday followed by a carry-in brunch. Please plan to attend and bring a dish to share. Sign-up sheets will be up in St. John's Common's. Annual reports are due by Wednesday, January 17. Reports should be sent to our Parish administrator, Teresa Lohrman, at teresa@stjohns-laf.org. If you have questions, please call the office at 765.742.4079. - Bradley Pace,
bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org



Children's Chapel returns Jan. 14

Children's Chapel is an opportunity to show the kids what being an Episcopalian is all about. Children's Chapel is open to any children registered in Sunday school. Registration is simple and can be done at www.stjohns-laf.org/cfregistration/.

- 9:00-9:15 a.m. – Godly Play drop off in 2nd floor Art room. Snack provided.
- 10:00-10:15 a.m. – Godly Play pick up, Children's Chapel drop off, and break period.
- 10:15 a.m. – Chapel begins. Children are returned to parents at the Peace.

For more information, please contact **Amanda Yauney** at amanda@stjohns-laf.org.

Death

Dean Hunter, November 30, 2023

Longtime member and friend of St. John's



The Greater Lafayette Episcopal Youth Group

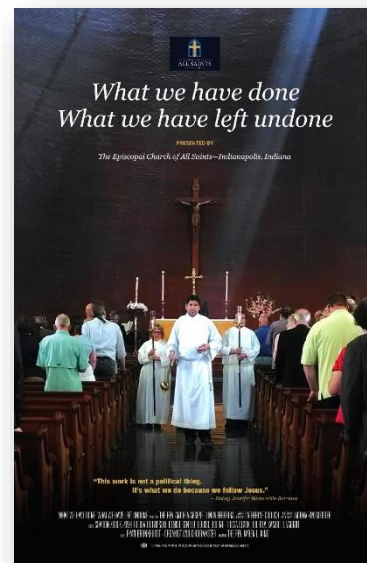
The Youth Group met on December to shop for Jubilee Christmas items, eat pizza, and make soap. Thanks to Cynthy Scruggs who helped the youth make handmade, artisanal soap for Jubilee Christmas.

What We Have Done. What We Have Left Undone.

The All Saints Documentary Premier

Thursday, Jan. 4, 6:30 p.m.

All Saints invites you to the premier of the documentary *What We Have Done. What We Have Left Undone*. Join us in the Sanctuary of All Saints at 16th and Central on Thursday, January 4, 2024. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. EDT, with the screening at 6:30 p.m. EDT. A Q&A session and reception will follow. Parking is available on the street and behind the church with ramp access at the front of the church.



Preaching Among Friends – Online Lay Preaching Workshop Beginning Jan. 9

Preaching Among Friends is a six-week online workshop for lay preachers, suitable for beginners and experienced preachers looking to hone their craft. This course addresses the unique positions of lay preachers by offering the chance to claim their voice to preach, craft relevant sermons they believe with one clear message of Good News, and apply a sustainable practice that respects the limited amount of time they may have for sermon prep.

The cost of the course is \$250. \$200 will be refunded to you upon successful completion of the course. Scholarship support is available. Please contact Canon Brendan O’Sullivan-Hale at brendan@indydio.org for additional details. For more information and to register, go to indydio.org/event/preaching-among-friends-online-lay-preaching-workshop/.

Reunification Discernment Website & Listening Sessions

Our Reunification Discernment Team is hard at work and has several resources available and events coming up! Visit the Episcopal Indiana Reunification Discernment website at www.episcopalindiana.org/ to stay up to date on the work of the committee and to view related documents including the committee's report to Diocesan Convention.

You can also register for events, including upcoming listening sessions. Share potential benefits you see, concerns you have, and dreams you hold for the Episcopal Church in Indiana. (Meeting held via Zoom. Times listed in Eastern time zone.)

Listening Session 1 - Jan. 10, 7-8 p.m.

Listening Session 2 - Jan. 16, 7-8 p.m.

Listening Session 3 - Jan. 22, 7-8 p.m.

Listening Session 4 - Jan. 27, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Listening Session 5 – Feb. 1, 7-8 p.m.

Listening Session 6 (clergy only) – Feb. 7, 2-3 p.m.



Diocesan Youth Mission Trip PHILADELPHIA



EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE of
INDIANAPOLIS



July 7-14, 2024
Youth \$600 | Adults \$0

Trip Includes:

- ✓ Work with the historic St. James School and their service partners
- ✓ Stay in the Episcopal Mission Center (with real beds!)
- ✓ Immersive cultural & historic experiences, like Philly cheesesteaks, the Liberty Bell, the steps from Rocky, the site of the Philadelphia Eleven, & the farmer's market

Register Here:



CONTACT: Heather Kenison, Diocesan Youth Minister heather@indydio.org | indydio.org/youth

Making a bigger impact: Donate stock to St. John's

Gifting stock is a smart way to give. A donation of appreciated stock can be up to 20 percent more valuable than selling and donating the cash, allowing you to make a bigger impact and save on your taxes.

Gifting stock avoids federal capital gains taxes and most donors can also claim an income tax deduction for the stock's full market value (state and local income tax deductions may also be available in some areas).

When you give appreciated stocks directly to St. John's, your gift can be up to 20 percent larger because you avoid the taxes you'd incur from selling and donating the cash. This means more money going to the work that you support.

Whether you want to do it yourself or get help from your financial advisor, donating stock takes as little as 10 minutes. Please contact St. John's Parish Administrator Teresa Lohrman, teresa@stjohns-laf.org, for details about gift of stock delivery instructions.

St. John's Financial Summary November 2023

INCOME	Jan-Nov	Budget	% of Budget
Operating Income	\$414,813.48	\$495,730.62	83.7%
Non-Operation Income	\$37,094.95	\$56,557.40	63.3%
Transfer Income	\$19,938.39	\$42,100.00	47.4%
TOTAL INCOME	\$471,846.82	\$596,388.02	79.1%
EXPENSES			
Outreach Program	\$62,508.49	\$86,001.00	72.7%
Administration	\$22,625.18	\$28,620.00	79.1%
Personnel	\$4,584.82	\$4,450.00	103%
Office	\$304,487.26	\$342,185.51	89.0%
Property	\$25,115.66	\$28,912.00	86.9%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$526,193.94	\$596,388.02	88.2%
Net Income (loss)	-\$54,347.12		

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

Amanda Youney, 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.



Save-the-Date

- Epiphany Pageant
Sunday, January 7
- Vestry Election
Sunday, January 15
- Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 28