



The Eagle

December 2013

Advent Adult Education

By Bradley Pace

We all think we know the Christmas story. But more likely than not, we remember some mash-up of the Gospel stories (yes, stories), our childhood church's Christmas pageant, and *It's a Wonderful Life* or *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. But the Christmas story as we find it in Matthew and Luke (and in a kind of abstract form in John's Gospel) is more likely richer and more incredible than anything we think we know.

This Advent, I will lead a series of discussions on the birth of Christ. We will meet in the Bishop's parlor after the 10:15 a.m. service on December 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd. Grab a cup of coffee and join in.

For background reading, please read Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. You might also want to pick up a copy of Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's book *The First Christmas*. However, no preparation is required.

St. John's Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 15th, 10:15 am

By Bradley Pace

This year the St. John's Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 15th, during the 10:15 service. Rehearsals will follow the 10:15 services on Sunday, December 1st and Sunday, December 8th. All rehearsals will be in the church nave. We will be doing the same pageant as last year. People of all ages are welcome to participate, and you will not have to memorize your lines.

Any parents who would like to help out are more than welcome as well. Please feel free to contact me or any of the youth group leaders with questions.

Cookies and Cocktails

By Cresta Cates

Tis the season! Join us at the home of Annie and Sven Schreiber for some low key cookie baking and holiday cheer on Sunday, December 15 from 2-5pm. Annie will provide wine and cider and double ovens ready to bake up holiday treats. Bring your favorite dough to assemble and bake, or compose the entirety of your treats at Annie's. Children are welcome. For more information, please contact Annie Schreiber or Cresta Cates.

Friends of Zach Brooks and Leah (Moss) Brooks (and all other parishioners!) are invited to stop in at the coffee hour after the 10:15 service on December 22nd. Zach and Leah will be visiting from Boston that week and would especially welcome the chance to visit with St. John's friends who were unable to make it to their wedding this past August.

-Allison Moss

From the Rector

By Bradley Pace

When I first became a priest, my wife worried that I would be constantly distracted by children in the congregation. She assumed I would...look, squirrel...every time one of the kids made noise, screamed, or cried. But the fact is, I thrive on the noise. For me, it's not a distraction in the least. I cannot tell you how entertaining it is for me to see kids wriggle and squirm and laugh and play in church. An even though I could easily be diagnosed as having attention deficit disorder, there are few "distractions" that are as heartening to me as young children in church.

I realize of course that kids don't "behave" in church the way they used to. I remember getting in loads of trouble for squirming in my seat—and even, one time, for reading the sports page during a particularly boring sermon. At St. John's we have amazing "goody bags" for the kids made by Sally Byrn. But as my wife loves to say: "Back in my day, we just had to be good. There were no snacks and toys in church." Nowadays, my kids and maybe your kids or grandkids aren't really accustomed to sitting still for long periods of time at church, at home, or even at school. And they can make a lot of noise, too.... But as a friend of mine loves to say, that noise is just "the Church breathing."

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus makes this point. Jesus says—in the more revealing language of the King James Version—"suffer the little children to come unto me." Come on guys, give the kids a break. "Forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:14). This isn't quite the cute little story we imagine it to be. Jesus is making a radical point here that the Kingdom of God belongs even to children—even those worthless little people who seem to get in the way and use up all our resources. For the record, that isn't my take on children, but it is the way children were viewed in the culture of Jesus' day.

If you think about it for a moment, isn't the Christmas story a similar kind of distraction? We haven't even reached Advent yet, so I don't like to talk about Christmas.... But if you think about it, everybody at the time of Jesus' birth was just going about their business. As Jesus says in one of the Gospel readings for Advent, there were wars and rumors of war. There was poverty and famine. There were people living lives filled with hopelessness and despair. The Romans ruled with an iron fist and the religious establishment kept people from seeing joy in God's creation. And then this baby comes along. And although we sing "no crying he makes", there is a great deal of wriggling and squirming and noise. Lots of noise. Choirs of angels shouting "Gloria" and sheep and cattle lowing and shepherds staggering in and kings bringing gifts (although not, you will hear if you come to the adult education during Advent, in the same version of the story). It's as if the only way they could get the kid to stop crying was to put on a dog and pony show. Kind of sounds like our kids and grandkids in church doesn't it? But this baby came along—this little child—and he distracted everyone from those wars and rumors of wars, he distracted them from their hopelessness and despair. He made them all stop for a moment. He gave them heart again. God was breathing life into the world....

I like to think that we could all use a similar kind of "shot in the arm" from time to time; a little breath of fresh air in the church, in Lafayette, and in the world generally. When the bad news and the rumors of bad news come around, isn't it wonderful to hear children? Isn't it wonderful to be distracted for a moment? Isn't it wonderful to hear the breath of God?

Maybe you come to the 8 o'clock service because it's quiet and peaceful. Maybe the noise of children in church isn't your thing. But maybe you're just the kind of person who needs a little of that distraction. As we all go about our hurried lives, as we go about our many tasks getting ready for Christmas, remember that this season of waiting and preparation in Advent is really all about getting distracted by a child.

So, my sisters and brothers, may you occasionally be distracted by the wriggling and squirming and laughing and playing whether it's in the front row or at the movie theatre or at home. May you be distracted by the baby in the manger and the Glorias and the cattle lowing and the shepherds and the kings. May you be distracted enough to hear God's breath as it breathes life into our church and into the world.

See you in church!

Calling All Runners and Walkers!

by Hilary Cooke

Saturday, March 29, 2014 will mark the running of the third annual Circular Logic Marathon in beautiful West Lafayette, Indiana. This is a really neat event sponsored by the Wabash River Running Club (website: circularlogicmarathon.com) and should be lots of fun. Some of you may be thinking, "I can't run 26.2 miles!" and my response is: "You don't have to!" In this particular marathon an option exists for relay teams of all sizes. I'm trying to gather a team from St. John's—this is not about trying to be the fastest team, this is simply about coming together for fun and fellowship. There are limited spots for relay teams, so please contact me ASAP (hilary@stjohns-laf.org) if you are interested in participating (even if you only want to walk one mile, you're more than welcome to join the team).

Next Eagle Deadline

The deadline for submissions to the January Eagle will be **Monday, December 9**. Email to eagle@stjohns-laf.org (preferred) or place items in *The Eagle* mailbox on the porch.

"Why I Love St. John's"

By Michael Bennett

One of my (too many) routines involves my pre-rehearsal ritual on Thursday evenings. It's the kind of ritual that, when omitted, makes me feel as if my week is incomplete. Surely you have a similar ritual. Every Thursday I order-by-phone the same take-out entree from the same establishment, pick it up and eat it at my desk while perusing online newsletters from other Episcopal churches with which I have a connection. These churches I follow may be where close friends of mine are employed, where I once upon a time applied for employment, where one of my organ teachers works, where I've visited on vacation, etc.

There is a common thread in these, mostly weekly, publications: each of them has a column that could be paraphrased as "Why I Love [insert parish name]." I enjoy reading these columns because you can quickly, over a few weeks, gain an overall sense of the parish atmosphere and see what ministries they are purposely executing. I love St. John's because it is a "singing parish." Each week during worship I am thankful to be singing in a community where God's praises are so musically abundant. As your music leader, the transparent joy in our singing is life giving – sometimes I could just fly right off of the organ bench!

Youth Group News

By Hilary Cooke

We had a successful and energetic youth group Lock-in in early November, culminating in participating in the Fall work day (see Tony's article elsewhere in the Eagle to learn about that). I was very proud of our youth and their eagerness to give back to this community. Next up: shopping for Jubilee Christmas on Sunday December 8th at 3pm.

In national youth news, Summer of 2014 will mark the triennial Episcopal Youth Event, this time being held at Villanova University outside Philadelphia. This is an incredible opportunity for youth finishing grades 9-12. Please stay tuned for more details!

Godly Play

By Hilary Cooke

Reminder! Godly Play will not meet on December 1 or December 22, so we will have all of our Advent stories on December 8 and December 15. We will resume January 12, 2014.

Your Food Pantry

By Steve Starks, Food Pantry Director

Your Food Pantry served 649 households in October, feeding over 2150 family members.

We had anticipated a slight increase in November due to the cutback in SNAP benefits (formerly Food Stamps. SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.) We have not noticed any consistent or noticeable increase in the first two weeks of November yet, but November is historically the largest month of the year for client visits. It may have a slow effect on how families adjust and change, or it may hit all at once and we will indeed see an increase in Pantry usage. Either way the Pantry is well stocked now thanks to large Government shipments the last two months, with an expected 3000 pounds again in December, and generous donations from St John's and St Thomas Aquinas. We did receive over 900 pounds of donated food from the Krannert Ambassadors at Purdue right after Halloween, which was a pleasant surprise and helped to fill our stockroom.

The SNAP cuts average out to an annual decrease of \$132 for an individual to a reduction of \$432 for a household of four. There are more cuts being considered by Congress, and more information will be available on that in the Bulletin the next few weeks. I might also mention that beginning in November will be a change in the dates that families receive their benefit allotments. How these two events together will affect our client visitation numbers remain to be seen.

For now our Pantry needs continue to be things such as toilet paper (which SNAP does not cover since it is non-edible), peanut butter and soups. In other words, items which make a quick meal. We have received a large allotment of cereal, especially Shredded Wheat and Special K, the last two months so the need for cereal is not as critical. Variety is always welcome however, so donated cereal is always welcome. If anyone sees a sale on Mac 'n Cheese, please pick some up because it always goes very fast. We cannot keep enough in stock. Produce is slowing down now that the growing season has ended in Indiana. However, Food Finders provided an ample supply of produce the last few weeks, including over 300 pounds of grapes, which we do not see very often.

Thank you for all you do to support the Pantry and those in need of food assistance. It is a continuing need, and your vigilance and consistent support are very much appreciated.

Book Discussions

By Mary Campbell

We don't meet in December – honoring the contemplative season of Advent and our need to simplify our lives at least a little as we prepare for Christmas.

We enjoyed good sessions in August through November. Some of us absolutely reveled in the artistry of mystery writer Louise Penny in August. We joined the community's One Great Read in September and marveled over the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition – and tried to comprehend the evil acts that were happening just a few blocks away. In October we explored community reactions to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. Finally, in November, we opened ourselves to understanding something about Native American experiences in the 20th century.

Our Winter/Spring session begins on January 22 with “A James Herriot Evening.” There will be more about this in the January Eagle. A list of our meetings is on the credenza in the Commons – look for the light spring-green flyer.

There's no expectation that everyone will like every selection. In fact, some of our most interesting meetings have developed because there were divergent opinions! So join in – one Wednesday a month at 6:30.

Fall Spruce-Up Day Happenings

By Tony Bailey

St. John's Church is a large facility. It is the co-mingling of four (4) different facilities, two of which were built in the mid-1800s and the last two in 1955 and 1996 with the square footage similar to 10 houses. While we have an excellent custodian, in the absence of a Sexton, there is the need for constant maintenance and repairs by the parishioners of St. John's.

To address some of this maintenance and repairs the Property Committee hosted the Fall Spruce-up Day on Saturday, November 9. We were very busy for about 2 1/2 hours. We worked so hard that the Lafayette Fire Department showed up to help cool us down...actually, it appears a smoke detector malfunctioned setting off all of the VERY LOUD fire alarms throughout the facility and we didn't get the alarm company called in time so unfortunately the LFD stopped by with several trucks to make sure everything was okay. I hope that never happens again!

Those who spruced up the gardens weeding, trimming, raking and cleaning included: Jim Bodenmiller, Dennis Dell, Dorothy Jones, and Heather Johnston Nicholson.

Projects completed include: Outreach Room Clean-up; replaced burned out light bulbs in Outreach Room and Food Pantry and cleaned plastic lights coverings in Outreach; rearranged Commons for new set-up; replaced light bulbs in Commons, Chapel and Watson House and Sacristy attics; placed salt and snow shovels at main entrances; vacuumed fan coils on refrigerators and freezers; turned off water to outside faucets, drained and put away hoses; repaired light cover in West stair tower; added door stop to Garden door; repaired wall strips in Bell Tower; started the disassembly of the old organ blower motor; cleaned out alley grate; cleaned up sidewalks; washed windows; cleaned trash can lids; pew scratch and ding repairs; cleaned under pew cushions; oiled squeaky door hinges; replaced batteries in auto-flush toilet in Outreach; repaired a loose railing and wiped off handrails and door knobs with Clorox wipes. The Youth Group tackled special projects including cleaning up the Journal and Courier Parking lot, checked for trip hazards and cleaned scuff marks of walls with Magic Erasers.

Continued special thank you to members of the Property Committee: John Lindenlaub, Joe Venable, Paul Lawson, Bob Slagel and Sven Schreiber. Thank you to the Youth Group, Ruthie, Jessie, Hannah, Cyrus, Jeff, Ryan and Keenan, and leaders Bradley Pace, Hilary Cooke, Alissa Goudswaard and Tim Smith. And additional thank you to Spruce-up Day spruceruppers including: Bruce Johnson, Mary Campbell, Tim Smith, Joanna Benskin, Judy Loudon, Ross Watson, Jim Marciniak, Nick and Cecilia LaBonté, Annie Schreiber and Kelley Bailey.

Many, many thanks to all of these people (and anyone we might have missed or whose names I mangled – sorry) for sharing their time and talents at this year's Fall Spruce-up Day. And last, but not least, we ate donuts, drank coffee and orange juice and had yummy sloppy Joes for lunch (thank you April Delancy).

UTO December

by Mary Louise Davis

Our St. John's UTO Ingathering was November 10th In the January Eagle I will tell the final figure from the Fall Ingathering. Every day we have opportunities of thanksgiving for tasks completed, friends, family, our communities, St. John's services and care of parishioners of all ages. The beauty of fall has been upon us the past few weeks; soon winter challenges will com. May the beauty of the winter outweigh the challenges! Enjoy this blessed season of Christmas.

September Financial Report

By George Moore

A.	INCOME	<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Total 2013</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
1.	Pledge Income	\$ 21,749.46	\$207,652.10	68.45%
2.	Operating Income	\$ 2,102.61	\$ 29,972.68	79.60%
3.	Non-Operating Income	\$ 916.67	\$ 8,250.03	27.50%
4.	Transfer Income	\$ 0.00	\$ 22,452.00	43.18%
	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 24,768.74	\$268,326.81	63.43%
B.	EXPENSES			
1.	Outreach	\$ 5,463.33	\$ 43,555.74	53.91%
1.	Program	\$ 21.42	\$ 12,818.08	56.89%
2.	Administration	\$	\$ 126.05	4.50%
1.	Personnel	\$ 15,072.32	\$ 157,632.27	70.78%
5.	Office	\$ 8,370.23	\$ 19,197.01	77.82%
▪	Property	\$ 3,887.73	\$ 52,010.33	74.80%
▪	Miscellaneous (Non-Budget)	\$ 0.00	\$ 374.00	
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 32,815.03	\$ 285,713.48	67.54%
	Net Income (Loss)	\$ (8,046.29)	\$ (17,386.67)	

Notes:
^a This is a summary report of the operating income and expenses for the indicated reporting period. Detailed description of these items are available for review from members of the Finance Committee.

November Celebrations

Weddings

Stuart Tyler Barman
 Richelle Marie Whitlock
 November 2, 2013
 Son of Cathy Barman
 Grandson of Dick Barman

Baptisms

Kaylee Mae Conway
 November 3, 2013
 Daughter of Ryan and Erin Conway

Leland Nicholas Baker
 Logan Allen Baker
 November 3, 2013
 Sons of Jennifer Baker and Mark Dolfini