



THE *Eagle* NEWSLETTER

St. John's Episcopal Church | Lafayette, Indiana | August 2023



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
LAFAYETTE

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.

Cover photo: Several St. John's and Good Shepherd youth have enjoyed camp at Waycross this summer (including Sadie Bowerman, pictured here with her cabin). Several others were Leaders- and Counselors-in-Training. Former St. John's member, Cyrus Hulen, was one of the lead staff members.

From the Rector

I do love a good church potluck. Growing up in the Baptist Church as a kid, potlucks were a regular affair. Fried chicken, buttered rolls. As Midwestern Episcopalians, we typically say “brunch,” and there’s often hot dishes and smoked salmon. That’s perfectly fine by me. I was on sabbatical last year, so I missed the parish picnic at Happy Hollow Park. I’m really looking forward to this year’s picnic on August 13th. I’m always down for worship in the park, games, and food. But in fairness, it really comes down to food.

Food is a huge deal at church. It’s also a big deal in the Bible. We could probably tell a version of the biblical story centered on food and hit most of the highlights. Think about the Gospel stories where Jesus miraculously provides food for thousands of people in the wilderness. These stories aren’t just one-off miracles but are important signs of who Jesus is and what God is up to. On the heels of one of these stories in the

Gospel of John, Jesus tells the Jewish leaders gathered around him “I am the bread of life. ... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” He centers his ministry, his life, the life of God, on this image of bread. While this may be a bit

ancestors in the time of Joseph and the unleavened bread of the Passover, the day that God delivered them out of slavery. They would remember the manna, the bread of the angels, that God sent down out of heaven for them to eat in the wilderness. They would also be put in mind of the Bread of the Presence, the Showbread, that was presented before God in the tabernacle or in the Temple in Jerusalem to represent God’s dwelling with his people. They might dig deeper and recall the bread that the widow of Zarapheth gave to Elijah. They would surely remember how over and over again the prophets told them that they would know God was in their midst when they were feasting. As the prophet Isaiah says, God is at work preparing “a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.” (Isaiah 25.6)

Jesus himself spoke consistently about the great banquet of God’s kingdom, and he explained all of this by telling stories about a man who sowed wheat and a woman who leavened bread and a father who killed the fatted calf. He reminded those who had been following him to pray for their “daily bread,” but he also spoke of wedding feasts and extravagant meals. Those miraculous feeding stories were signs of that reality, the reality of God’s kingdom. But so was Jesus’ presence among them. That was why he could say that he, himself, is the bread of life.

Surely, when Jesus calls himself the bread of life, he is talking about his crucifixion and alluding to

odd or confusing to us, Jesus knows that, for his hearers, this image harkens back to the highpoints of their historical imagination. They would remember, for instance, that God had given Adam and Eve fruit trees in the garden. They would remember the stored grain that saved their the later Christian practice of the Eucharist. probably both and all those other biblical stories as well. But whatever else Jesus meant, we can’t go too wrong if we focus on the fact that in Jesus God is feeding us over and over again. In fact, in the biblical story, we might not go too far wrong if we imagine that one of the most important, most profound, and most universal ways God says “I love you” is by providing food. All those stories I mentioned and more besides show that food is a

Throughout scripture, food is so often sacramental. It’s why Jesus can say that “I was hungry, and you gave me food,” because “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25.36, 40).

sign of God’s love, a tangible mark of grace. Throughout scripture, food is so often sacramental. It’s why Jesus can say that “I was hungry, and you gave me food,” because “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25.36, 40)

That is one of the reasons why food is a central focus even of our worship— bread broken and wine poured out for everyone. That is

why the central focus of our outreach ministries for so long was the food pantry and why we continue to support those suffering from food insecurity through Bread for the World or by volunteering at Food Finders. That work is sacramental. God says “I love you” by feeding us. We receive food as a gift from God, and we give food to others as a gift from God. It’s why our fellowship is so important. To me, a good church potluck, a picnic, or a brunch is like the kingdom of God. The bread, the wine, the canned goods, the fried chicken or smoked salmon—all of it —are the gifts of God, for the people of God. — *Bradley Pace*, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

From the Curate

The following is the text of the sermon delivered at Worship in the Street on July 2. The sermon was based on Romans 6:12-23.

Romans 6:12-23

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So, what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The sermon:

St. Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome lays out the idea that faith in Jesus Christ leads to radical

change. Most of us who worship together have been swimming in Christianity our whole lives. Even if we've not always been super active in the Church, the cultural consequences of Christianity have been the air we breathe without thinking about it. It's hard for us to imagine our faith as leading to anything radical because we're so accustomed to the imagery and language of Christianity.

Yet, Paul explains how by being baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection we are released from slavery to sin and set free to live righteous lives of obedience to God. He describes a transformation of our condition that leads to eternal life. It's a spiritual 180-degree turn. "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." This kind of breaking free made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit is about as radical as it gets.

But this transformation of our lives is not a prerequisite for coming to God. It is evidence of grace already received. God doesn't demand that we have it all together before we come to faith or before we are baptized or receive communion. It's the free gift of God that empowers us to be slaves of righteousness. Through the grace of Jesus, we are given the ability to resist sin by the power of the Holy Spirit and to serve God. We have freedom and choice where we had none before.

When Paul writes about sin in his letter to the Romans, he depicts something beyond the personal sins we so easily commit by what we do and what we don't do. He's looking beyond our individual thoughts, words, and deeds. Paul is talking about a personified force that enters into the human story in a systematic way. It's a force that grows, expands its reach, and takes over, choking our desire and ability to do good. It leaves no room for just actions, right attitudes, the consideration of the needs of others, and gratitude.

Paul also sees people in light of relationship. He understands that we are never truly lone individuals

free from any external influence. He believes that we are always aligned with something. We are never neutral. In today's passage, he portrays us all as being either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. As he explains how Jesus' love alters our lives, Paul pulls back the spiritual curtain so we can realize that we are completely obedient and subservient to either the force of sin or God's love for us. We are shown that it's Jesus Christ who enables us to move from slavery to sin to freedom.

Paul's slavery metaphor is jarring. I can understand being completely beholden to sin and being powerless to resist it. It's likely we have all experienced that state of helplessness at one time or another in our lives. It just seems oxymoronic to say we are slaves to righteousness since slavery is such an abhorrent, evil thing. And isn't serving God supposed to be perfect freedom? But this image of slavery is Paul's way of expressing his belief that our whole life is determined by which of these two masters we serve. We are reminded that Jesus taught that no one can serve two masters (True to Our Native Land, 259). A person will surely love one master and hate the other.

Also, all this talk of slavery is especially unsettling when we consider the powerful, sinful force of systemic racism in our country and the world. I believe racism and white supremacy are perfect examples of the kind of systemic, all-encompassing, forces of evil that Paul names as sin in Romans. In addition to the obvious discrimination, oppression, and brutality a host of related evils emerges from racism: economic and environmental injustice, educational disservice, and mass incarceration. These are the outcomes of the old way of life that Jesus frees us from by his death and resurrection. The thing is that even though we have been set free, there is still work to do. The struggle is not over.

Theologian Daniel Patte puts it this way: Through our faith, we have the assurance of salvation and are free from guilt and fear of divine

judgment and death. (Yet), this teaching could ... mislead us into thinking that everything is resolved when we discover we are forgiven (*Global Bible Commentary*, 434).

Each Sunday, we worship the God who loves and liberates us just a few yards from a mural of George Floyd. His image is a poignant reminder that the fight against sin is not over because his death was a result of systemic racism. The wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, the question is now this: Knowing that the way to freedom has been opened to us, do we return to the death that is obedience to sin or do we move deeper into the abundance of life, love, and grace that comes with obedience to righteousness? Do we intentionally ignore the sin we live in, benefit from, and enable when we are silent, or do we accept the call of God to work against racism, oppression, and injustice in our own hearts and in our world? Do we embrace the radical change that is the free gift of God, or do we cling to the passive cultural Christianity that requires little commitment on our part?

It's a frightening prospect to be freed from such overwhelming forces of evil and then to turn back and face them head-on in opposition. But we must not think that we do so alone. Jesus is standing beside us. The Holy Spirit is moving within us and between us, literally inspiring us to walk alongside our siblings of color who have been pushed to the margins of society by actions, attitudes, and policies that the Church has often supported.

We are called as one body to leave systemic and personal sins behind and to bring healing and forgiveness where the need is greatest just as Jesus did. That body, the Body of Christ, is made up of people like you and me who have been set free from the bondage of sin so that we can experience eternal life. That eternal life in Jesus is not our gift to give. It is the free gift of God, but it is our job to point people toward it by what we say and what we do. It's

your job. It's my job. It's our job to do together. Not on our own, but with God's help. Thanks be to God that we, having once been slaves to sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which we have been entrusted, and that we, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. We are free, but we still

have work to do. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are transformed so that we can resist the sin in our own hearts and work against the systemic sins that oppress all of God's children. — *Jason Fortner, jason@stjohns-laf.org*

Notes

Global Bible Commentary. Daniel Patte, ed. Abingdon Press, 2004.

True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary. Brian K. Blount, ed. Fortress Press, 2007.

Habitat for Humanity Apostles Build

Congratulations to Brenda and Jacob as they've moved into their new Habitat for Humanity House. This house was a labor of love for several Lafayette area churches.

St. John's members helped paint the trim and the doors. Thanks to everyone for your help and support. For more information about Habitat for Humanity and St. John's participation, contact Dee and Jack Kueberth (dkueberth.lafayette@gmail.com and jkueberth@gmail.com)



Jubilee Christmas 2023

As many people get ready to head back to school, it is not too early to be thinking about Jubilee Christmas. This year, we are using an Amazon wish list of the items we purchase for the gift bags provided to each family (see photo). If you are shopping on Amazon, check out our list and purchase a few things if you are able.

The link to the Amazon wish list will be made available in the weekly email communication from St. John's. If you are not an Amazon shopper, cash donations (using either the Realm app or the Jubilee Christmas envelopes on Sunday) are greatly needed early so we can pay for the food gift cards we purchase through Lafayette Urban Ministry that are also provided to the families.

We are thankful for the support you provide to Jubilee Christmas. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Kay McCauley. — *Mary Kay McCauley, mccauley.mk3@gmail.com*



Discipleship Groups

Discernment is about finding how God is at work in the world and how we might get involved with that work. Where do I see God? What is God doing? How is God calling me to use my gifts? Who is God calling me to be? What is God calling me to do? How can we do this discernment work intentionally?

One way is to form “Discipleship Groups.” Discipleship Groups function as a kind of accountability group. Members ask one another: Which Christian practices do you need to emphasize in your life right now? Are you following through on your commitments to these practices? How can we support you in fulfilling your commitments? How can we call you back to the work you have committed yourself to do? And while discernment is singled out as one of the practices, the entire process is really shot through with those above questions.

If you are interested in being a part of a Discipleship Group at St. John's, please go to <https://forms.gle/mE4YsEnfmS7FBhWt8> for more information and fill out the form/questionnaire. You can also contact Father Bradley directly or just create a group. Groups commit to meeting “for a season” (a set number of meetings or period of time). And while there is a process and a framework, groups can meet in any number of ways (weekly, monthly/via Zoom or in-person, etc.) and focus their energy as will be most helpful for them.

Groups are now forming. Hopefully, this will be an ongoing part of our community's way of being — an ongoing part of discerning where God is at work in our lives and in the world and how to join God in that work. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*



Membership has its privileges

Help us update our membership rolls at St. John's

My favorite line about being a member of an Episcopal Church comes from Richard Giles' book *Always Open*. He says that "It's love first, questions later." It's true, he says, that this makes "for a very untidy house ... for there's always someone coming or going in this free and easy environment, and people loitering with good intent." This is one of the things I love most about being Episcopalian. We're mostly a bunch of people "loitering with good intent"— hanging around, worshiping, sharing, and making Christ known.

Being a member of "the Church" is easy enough. If you are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, then you are a part of the Body of Christ. Even if you aren't yet baptized, you may be a part of the Christian community at-large, a part of the community of people yearning to connect with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

But there is also the paperwork and "official" membership has both its privileges and responsibilities.

A few years ago, we moved our database to Realm. This has been very helpful to us in a number of ways, but it's come with some headaches. In particular, we lost some information in the transfer. So, we are asking for your help.

In order to be considered an **Active Baptized Member** of St. John's, (1) you must be engaged in the life of the parish by attending worship or service and (2) your baptism or confirmation* must be recorded in the church's registry. If, for instance, you have been attending St. John's for years, but

were baptized and/or confirmed in another church; in order to be an "active baptized member," you must request a letter of transfer from your previous church (Episcopal or not) or be received** into this Communion by the bishop. According to Diocesan canons, only active baptized members are allowed to vote for Vestry members or to serve as parish wardens. By parish by-laws, two-thirds of Vestry members must be confirmed, adult members. By this canons and by-laws, some of our most active members of the parish aren't able to fully exercise leadership or official membership.

I mention this because we will be reaching out to ask members of the parish to update their information and, if they have not, to request a letter of transfer from churches they have attended in the past. We will also be inviting folks who are not baptized, confirmed,* or received** to prayerfully consider taking the steps to be brought fully into the Communion of this church. Please look for more information coming soon. — *Bradley Pace*, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

**Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop. (The Book of Common Prayer 860)*

*** Reception is for baptized persons who have already made a mature public affirmation of their faith in another denomination. They are presented to the bishop as part of the Confirmation rite.*

Stay Connected with St. John's & IndyDio

If you haven't been receiving the email newsletters from St. John's or from the Diocese of Indianapolis, then you're probably missing out. St. John's email comes out each week on Friday morning (other important messages are sent as needed). The Diocese of Indianapolis sends out news each week on Wednesdays.

- Go to www.stjohns-laf.org and fill out the form "Connect with St. John's" to join the parish mailing list.
- Go to indydio.org/newsletter/ and click "SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTER" to join the Diocesan list.

Weddings

Andrew Redd (*grandson of Jean Redd*) and
Madeline Flores-Redd
Saturday, July 1 in Indianapolis.

Deaths

James Zimmerman, June 21, 2023
*Jim and his wife Lisa began attending St. John's
in 2019. He was confirmed by Bishop Jennifer at
St. John's in April of this year.*

Music at St. John's—2023-2024 Special Events

Sunday, November 5, 5 p.m.

Choral Evensong for the feast of All Saints

Sunday, December 3, 5 p.m.

Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday of Advent

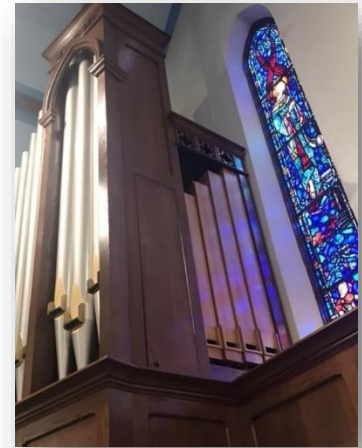
Sunday, April 28 5 p.m.

Eastertide Hymn Festival with Guest Organist: Marilyn Keiser

Friday, August 2, 7:30 p.m.

20th Anniversary Organ Concert—Michael Bennett, organist

For more information about music at St. John's, go to www.stjohns-laf.org/music or contact St. John's Director of Music Michael Bennett at michael@stjohns-laf.org.



Congratulations to Teresa Lohrman

Recently, the St. John's Vestry promoted Teresa Lohrman to the position of Associate for Administration & Finance. This action by the Vestry recognizes that, for many years, Teresa has been performing duties above and beyond what most parish administrators normally do.

Please congratulate Teresa when you see her!

Look for more information coming soon!

St. John's Night Ministry

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that when you serve those in need, we are serving Christ. With this in mind, St. John's hopes to begin a weekly Night Ministry to serve the homeless in and around the St. Johns' neighborhood. Look for more information on how to participate in or donate to this ministry.

“How to Be Perfect” and get to “the Good Place”

Making moral decisions is hard. But we can have fun together while discerning how to make those decisions. Join Bradley for discussions about moral philosophy using Michael Schur's book *How to be Perfect* and the TV show “The Good Place.” Date and times be determined. (*Bradley swears on a stack of Bibles that this won't be a lecture class, and there won't be any tests!*)

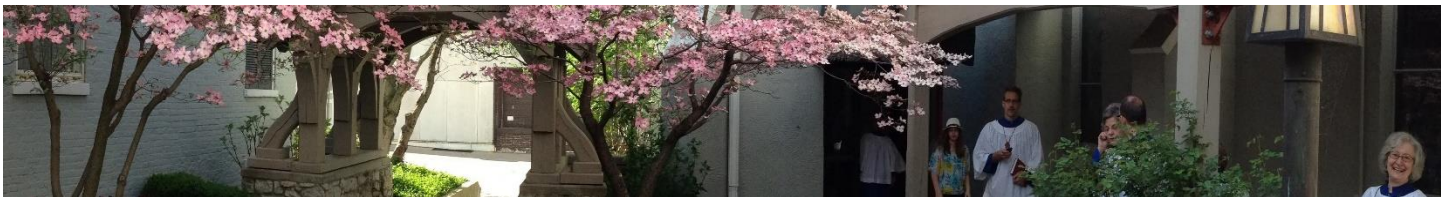
The Racial Justice and Education Team

The St. John's Vestry recently approved the creation of a Racial Justice and Education Team. The leadership will be meeting soon to talk about ways we can work together for the transformation of our own hearts and our community.

St. John's Financial Summary

June 2023

INCOME	Jan-June	Budget	% of Budget
Operating Income	\$239,084.73	\$495,730.62	48.2%
Non-Operation Income	\$19,932.70	\$58,557.40	34.0%
Transfer Income	\$0.0	\$42,100.00	0.0%
TOTAL INCOME	\$259,017.43	\$596,388.02	43.4%
EXPENSES			
Outreach	\$32,473.85	\$86,001.00	38.1%
Program	\$14,707.74	\$28,620.00	51.4%
Administration	\$1,584.17	\$4,450.00	35.6%
Personnel	\$160,066.22	\$342,185.51	46.8%
Office	\$11,111.24	\$28,912.00	38.4%
Property	\$52,647.53	\$106,219.51	49.6%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$272,860.75	\$596,388.02	45.8%
Net Income (loss)	\$-13,843.32		



Worship in the Park and Parish Picnic

Sunday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m. at Happy Hollow Park

The Parish Picnic will take place on Sunday, August 13, at Happy Hollow Park. Look for more details forthcoming. Holy Eucharist will begin at 10 a.m. followed by the parish picnic. Please bring a dish to share.

— Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org