

LOGOS

The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1:5

August/September 2025

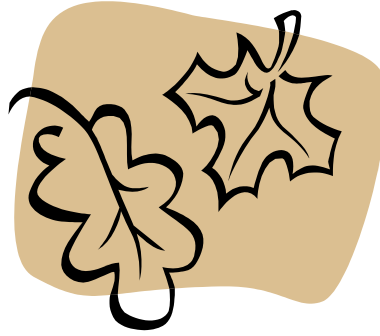
Explore Education for Ministry



Are you looking to deepen your faith? Are you hoping to understand how your personal experiences and beliefs bring you closer to God and God's people? If the answer is "Yes," then Education for Ministry (EfM) may be for you. Through study, prayer, worship, and reflection, EfM's small seminar groups journey together through scripture, church history, and theology. Participants learn how we are all called to be the hands, heart, and incarnate body of Christ in our own place.

EfM groups meet for 36 weeks a year over the course of the four-year program. Participants in Years 1 and 2 study the texts and context of scripture, while Year 3 looks at church history and Year 4 delves into Christian ethics and spirituality. Another EfM option is Wide Angle, which offers a taste of each of the four years in a one-year program.

There are multiple EfM groups in Northern Virginia creating spiritual, trusted communities where participants can have deep conversations about things that matter, always looking for ways that God is active in their lives. For more information or to find a local group, please talk to Deacon Mary Cushing. You can also read more about EfM at <https://theology.sewane.edu/education-for-ministry/>.



Find Some Breathing Space This Fall

St. John's is now offering the Breathing Space gathering in the Parlor on the third Sunday of each month. It is a time to sit quietly, talk about what's on your heart and mind, share resources, or pray as you may wish.

Stop in any time from 6 to 8 p.m. on September 21 and October 19 and stay as long as you like. Compline prayer will close the evening at 8 p.m. and then participants will wish each other Peace as they depart.



St. John's Staff and Leadership

Staff

Rector: The Rev. Julie D. Bryant
Deacon: The Rev. Mary E. Cushing
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
Sexton: Julio Sorto

Vestry

Christine Williams, Senior Warden
Patricia Broida, Registrar
Peter Olivere, Treasurer

Parish Leaders

Peter Olivere, Treasurer
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Words on Hymns: *O Zion Haste*

Mary Ann Thomson (1834–1923), author of the hymn *O Zion Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling* and wife of John Thomson, Librarian of the Free Library in Philadelphia, was born in London, England. She wrote about 40 hymns, which appeared mostly in *The Churchman* and *The Living Church* periodicals. Four of her hymns are found in *The Hymnal 1892*, but only one in our current hymnal, *The Hymnal 1982*. Of the origin of the missionary hymn that is found in our hymnal, Thomson wrote:

I wrote the greater part of the hymn, "O Zion, haste," in the year 1868. I had written many hymns before, and one night, while I was sitting up with one of my children who was ill of typhoid fever, I thought I should like to write a missionary hymn to the tune of the hymn beginning "Hark, hark, my soul, angelic songs are swelling," as I was fond of that tune; but as I could not then get a refrain I liked, I left the hymn unfinished, and about three years later I finished it by writing the refrain which now forms part of it. ...I do not think it is ever sung to the tune for which I wrote it. Rev. John Anketell told me, and I am sure he is right, that it is better for a hymn to have a tune of its own, and I feel much indebted to the composer of the tune "Tidings" for writing so inspiring a tune to my words.

Since the text was originally written in English, there are no great challenges with translation. However, there is a textual challenge for contemporary editors. Recent generations often do not understand the meaning of the word "Zion" in the first line. The hymn personifies the mountain upon which Jerusalem was built, and applies it as the people of God. Some hymnal editors have replaced "Zion" with "Christian" or

"Christians." As with other editorial substitutions, it doesn't work.

The Episcopal hymnal editors have a problem with the third and fourth lines of the first verse: "that he who made all nations is not willing one soul should perish, lost in shades of night." Instead, the new version is: "that he who made all nations is not willing one soul should fail to know his love and might." Why would the editors do such a thing? Artificial intelligence offers the following explanations:

Modernization

Updating archaic language to make the hymn more accessible to contemporary audiences.

Theological Relevance

Adjusting lyrics to reflect current theological understandings or beliefs within a community.

Cultural Sensitivity

Modifying phrases that may be considered outdated or insensitive in today's context.

Musical Adaptation

Altering text to fit new musical arrangements or styles while maintaining the hymn's core message.

Liturgical Needs

Tailoring the hymn for specific worship settings or occasions, ensuring it aligns with the themes of the service.

These changes aim to enhance the hymn's relevance and resonance with congregations while preserving its original intent.

There are a couple of us in our congregation who don't see any need to change the original text, which we feel is more powerful than the alteration. We will continue to sing Thomson's version, come what may!

Carol Dunlap

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, September 9, at 7:30 p.m.** in the undercroft to discuss *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving. Pick up a copy now and plan to join the discussion in September! The book club will also choose reading selections for the coming year, so please bring your ideas and suggestions.

➤ St. John's volunteers will bag food at the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) on **Friday, September 12**. Please contact Bill Pritchard at 703-931-2168 if you would like to join in this ministry.

Thank You to:

➤ Everyone who contributed to the annual School Supply Drive and to Faye Pritchard for organizing the collection.

➤ Everyone who continues to support the Little Free Food Pantry with food and monetary donations and to the volunteers who regularly check and restock the pantry. If shopping for items is difficult, the St. John's website at stjohnsarlingtonva.org includes a link to contribute funds online.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in August and September:

Ginger Adair, Marshall Adair, Griffin Baynham, Lynn Robinson, Jones Tallent, and Sawyer Tallent.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in August and September:

Erin and Gerard Baynham; Jones and Sharon Tallent; and Matthew and Cristina Tallent.

LOGOS

LOGOS has a bi-monthly publication schedule.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org.
The deadline for the October/November issue is Sept. 29.

St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

St. John's Mission Statement

St. John's mission is building a strong spiritual community in Christ; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.