

The Sentinel

For the parishioners and visitors at St. John's Episcopal Church, Georgetown



...for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove, is heard in our land.

Song of Solomon 2:11-12



Our Rector Reflects on Her First Year at St. John's

Dear friends,

This is a good news, bad news, good news (and more good news) letter. The first bit of good news is that we have had an amazing year together!

We just finished the Sunday School year with a fun, new curriculum; we have a new bright, friendly nursery; we had an amazing concert series; a glorious Christmas, and festive Easter with choir and brass playing to a packed house for both services!

We had a wonderfully successful House Tour and Patrons' Party, Emily was ordained a deacon, and we've had baptisms, weddings, confirmations, celebrations of new ministries, and bid fond farewells to students and choir members moving on .



Rev.
Gini
Gerbasi

Even in the midst of struggle and sadness, it has been a year of new life and joy – resurrection has broken out all over!

The bad news is that Tanya Watt will be stepping down at the end of May as our interim parish administrator.

As many of you know, Tanya is married to Tim Watt, who is finishing his first year at Virginia Theological Seminary. Tanya is working on her PhD in public

policy, and has been teaching classes remotely since she and Tim moved to the area last summer. When Tanya started with us in September, we expected that she would stay 2 or 3 months.

We quickly realized we couldn't possibly get through Christmas without her, and so she agreed to stay until we could find a permanent replacement.

I'm not sure that I will ever be able to thank Tanya for everything she has done *for me and for us* these past months. She started the day before Kimm's funeral, when I hardly knew which keys opened which doors. From her first day, I came to depend on Tanya's common sense, her creativity, her intellect, and

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Confirmation, an Affirming Step of Faith

Confirmation, as defined in The Book of Common Prayer is a pastoral rite, "a mature public affirmation of faith and commitment to the responsibilities of Baptism."

Three St. John's parishioners took that step into a deeper and public spiritual commitment at a confirmation service at the Washington Cathedral. Senior Warden **Avery Miller**, **Christopher Wilson** and **Charles C. Haynes** were confirmed in the simple, but profound May 16 ceremony. To prepare, they had met with the Rev. Gini Gerbasi earlier in the month. Avery said for her, confirmation was long overdue.

"It was on my "Bucket List" but I saw it more as a pressing obligation than a gift -- until I met Gini. She made me want to be an official member of a spiritual community that was welcoming and nourishing. When challenges have come our way, our family has always found enormous support and love within the walls of St. John's. And it sounds simplistic, but my confirmation simply confirmed for the world to see my joy and comfort as a member of the Episcopalian Church.

"And now St. John's has a confirmed Senior Warden which means I'll be twice as efficient!"

Charles explained his faith journey like this: "After Christopher and I found our church home at St. John's, I felt called to deepen and strengthen my connection to the Episcopal Church. Although my faith journey has included participation in other denominations and paths, I choose Confirmation instead of Reaffirmation or Reception because I wanted to affirm publicly my discipleship to Christ as a member of the Episcopal Church

Christopher said, "Beginning last summer, when Charles and I first started attending St. John's and discovered Gini as a new friend and spiritual guide, I've felt a call to become more deeply involved in the life of the Episcopal Church. Though I went to weekly chapel at an Episcopal school in South Carolina from kindergarten through 12th grade – and have focused much of my education, research, and teaching on Christian history – I was never confirmed. My parents weren't churchgoers. So over the past year, having found a wonderful spiritual home at St. John's, I felt eager to become a full-fledged Episcopalian in my journey toward increased participation in and service toward the Church. Confirmation at the Cathedral was beautiful, especially Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon that urged us to imitate St. Peter in walking on water, taking risks to go where Christ calls us.

In her sermon, the Bishop explained the depths of spirituality. "Being a Christian--that is, being one who follows Jesus and tries to live according to his teachings and to pay attention to his Spirit at work in and around us all--has far less to do with how many times you show up in church on Sunday than it does with your openness to his invitation."

"When you hear it, to walk on water--that is, to be brave, and do the thing that as yet, you cannot do; to follow your heart; to accept what you'd do anything to avoid; to love when it costs something; to show up when you're rather run away. When that happens, and I assure you that it will. . . Pay close attention. And trust the one who calls you out will be



Charles, Avery, Bishop Mariann, Gini and Christopher following the confirmation service.

To learn more, contact
gini@stjohnsgeorgetown.org.

A Letter From Wardens Avery Miller and Jamie Cartwright

Volunteers Needed: Your Talents, Your Church

Wardens' Report

Friends,
Let's all take a moment to realize how much the last year represents the

incredible strength and unity of St. John's.

A year ago, we called Gini to this church. The search committee devoted countless hours to finding this wonderful, joyful mother who radiates love and her deep faith.

And under Gini's leadership, St. John's has blossomed. The pews are once again filling up and new faces are joining familiar ones. Our financial footing has improved. Many of you stepped up to our reinvigorated stewardship goals.

The House Tour in April exhibited our deep community connections and our entrepreneurial talents. The cadre of enthusiastic volunteers that turned out for the event inspired admiration.

We all have so many demands on our time so the crowd on that Saturday was inspirational. Volunteers have continued to turn out for Saturday Suppers and Grate Patrol. Our Concert Series has ended its season on a high note, with an incredible line-up of concerts starting in the fall.

Your wardens Jamie and Avery are starting a second year-long term which ends in December 2015. When our interim rector Bruce McPherson recruited the two of us with our busy careers and young chil-

dren, he struck a Kennedy-esque note when he approached us. *Ask not what your church can do for you; ask what you can do for your church.*

We took up the mission with Gini at the helm, joined by an active vestry and an invigorated property committee. New members have stepped up to expanded responsibilities.

We have a wonderful church staff that has supported Gini and goes beyond its job descriptions daily. We are welcoming a new parish administrator who comes with the experience of working at several other Episcopalian churches.

But we need more volunteers. Please look inwardly and think about your talents and how the Church would be strengthened by your abilities. Many committees have been neglected or need to be invigorated. Send an email to Gini or your wardens if you would like to get more involved.

We would love to find enthusiastic help in the challenging and rewarding roles of helping the church thrive. We would love to hear about areas in the church that you think need more people power, and how together, we can strengthen those areas.

Summer is starting with the combined service at 10 a.m. Hope to see all of you there!

Contact info: Avery.S.Miller@abc.com
James.r.cartwright@gmail.com



Serving Up the Parish Picnic

Bring your appetites to the annual parish picnic. This annual fun get-together will be held on Sunday, May 31, following the 10 a.m. service. The picnic will be at the Hyde-Addison school playground. There will be burgers, hot dogs, drinks, side dishes, and a visit from our very own ice cream man truck! You don't need to bring anything except yourself, and your sense of fun!

Parish Life @ St. John's

Bringing New 'Joy' to the Parish! Welcome, New Administrator



Greetings St. John's Episcopal Parish! It is with great delight and enthusiasm I write this brief note to introduce myself as your new Parish Administrator. From the Diocese of Virginia, I am Joy Warburton.

I am a cradle Episcopalian and an active member in my home parish Trinity Episcopal Church, Arlington, for twenty-four years. I bring with me an extensive experience in parish administration support roles. In 2004 I felt a call on my life to change my vocation to serve God and his people which landed me serving as a Parish Administrator.

I see administration as my spiritual gift and ministry and strongly believe my previous secretarial training and managerial experience was merely preparation for being a part of God's plan. I feel blessed and delighted to be working in a church environment all these years.

I live in Woodbridge with my husband, Edmund; our daughter Elaine, who is completing her junior year at Mary Baldwin College and our son, Cameron, who will be going to college this fall. I am looking forward with great optimism to work with all of you at St. John's.

— Joy Y. Warburton

Continuing Our Education in Faith

The Adult Faith Forums have recently concluded for the spring with a series that focused on "The Treasures of the Book of Common Prayer." St. John's clergy and several outside guest speakers presented on sections of our central resource for worship.

This series was an outgrowth of suggestions for by members of the parish. We model for the younger parish members the value we place on faith education in the faith during our monthly "ALL IN" events, where we join with the children's Sunday School.

The committee, co-chaired by **Martha Wilson** and **Andrea Kramer**, will be holding a meeting to discuss ideas and suggestions. All are invited to come on Sunday, June 14 at 11:45 am in the Conference Room to help shape our adult education activities — and our faith -- for the coming year.

— Andrea Kramer



Emily Rowell Brown Gets Collared

On May 9, 2015, Emily Rowell Brown was ordained to the transitional diaconate by Bishop Kee Sloan of the Diocese of Alabama.

Her home parish, Christ Church Tuscaloosa, held the service. Emily will continue to work at St. John's and as the Episcopal Campus Minister and be ordained to the priesthood at the end of the year.

Color it a Childlike Faith

Our Sunday School curriculum uses colors in its videos to express feelings and movements in Bible stories: angry characters are colored red, happy characters glow yellow, and sad characters cry blue tears. These videos do not use any words; the entire narrative is conveyed through colors.

Are you skeptical? I admit I was when I first saw this approach. But Gini had tried this curriculum before at her other congregations, and we decided to try it out at St. John's this year. The verdict? The kids' love it!

It's amazing how much we can learn just by listening and observing carefully. The youth group watched the glow of a special light display during Christmas and helped with the Race to End Homelessness 5K; the St. John's children, youth, and adults listened carefully to the father-daughter team Carter and Stephanie Hood tell their faith journeys; and the 9am congregation took in the magic of a *Frozen* movie-themed Sunday worship, absorbing the beautiful voices of Anne and Patrick in our choir, and hearing the message of love and sacrifice.

We'll continue our theme of listening and discerning this summer as we work to determine next steps for our youth group and Sunday School curriculum and format. Perhaps one of the best and most summative moments of our year was an outburst at the aforementioned charades: "A time to rejoice!" shouted one of our students (and I think she was right on more counts than the charades game).

Hats off to this year's teachers and youth group leader: **Kristina Cartwright, Elisabeth Banks, Adelaide Haase, Elizabeth Turner, Lizzie Livengood, Albert Copeland, Georgina Warren, Kenneth Wong, Helen Sale, Cindy Anderson, and Dan Brown!**



We honor our Sunday School teachers.

New Georgetown Campus Ministry by the Numbers

I thought it would be fun to look at the 2014-15 Georgetown Campus Ministry through some numbers. This was my first year in the position, and I am pleased to say that we've seen great relationships develop among the students and parish families. We're looking forward to offering a summer Bible study with neighboring campuses.

- **65** Exam care packages prepared and delivered by our students to their (stressed out) peers
- **60** Temperature during the students' overnight spring retreat in West Virginia
- **28** Bible studies enjoyed over the course of the year
- **2** On-campus lectures on Christianity and race attended by our campus ministry group
- **26** Delicious meals devoured by our hungry college students (many courtesy of St. John's families!)
- **100s** Cups of coffee and tea made in our Keurig by Georgetown students during Bible study and finals period
- **58** Prayers and blessings prayed together this year
- **1** Really great God doing wonderful things in Georgetown and at St. John's!

Special thanks to **Isobel Cox, Stephanie Bothwell and James and Georgina Warren, the Powell family, Ann and Al LaPorta, Ron and Laura Ivey, David Bujard, JoAnn Zuercher, the Kramer-Wong family, the Miller-Mocek family, Lizzie Livengood, Adelaide Hasse, Albert Copeland, Chelsea Rich, and Andrew Overton** for providing dinners to our students!

Above articles by Emily Rowell Brown



Rewinding the 84th G'town House Tour



By Barbara Wolf, Georgetown House Tour Co-Chair

The 84th Georgetown House Tour, held April 25, was a showcase of the generous spirits of the parish and the community – especially those who opened the doors of their home to about 1,000 people who joined us.

Despite the cloudy and cool day, the climate was sunny and warm among the some 150 volunteers serving tea in Blake Hall, selling tickets on the lawn, captaining and working as docents at the houses, directing traffic and tour buses, playing our impressive Cassavant Frères organ for visitors and counting receipts from ticket sales. Rev. Gini Gerbasi experienced her first House Tour as the new rector at St. John's and greeted tour guests as they entered the church.

The massive endeavor involves months of preparation and much volunteer talent:

- House Captains prepare write-ups for the tour booklet and recruit docents.
- Corporate sponsors and advertisers are secured and the glossy tour booklet is designed and printed.
- For the Patrons' Party, community co-chairs are recruited to help plan and carry out the event; Two thousand invitations are mailed and an 80-member host committee is assembled, all leading to the \$83,000 dollars that are raised in four months time.
- Hundreds of cookies and thousands of savory tea sandwiches are handmade by parishioners, who enjoy the goodies to the accompaniment of musical entertainment.

None of this could happen with the amazing energy of our volunteers. A special thank you to the GTHT Co-chairs **Barbara Wolf** and **Colman Riddell**. **Ron Ivey** deserves special recognition for chairing Sponsorship and Advertising in addition to his service as a vestry member of St. John's. **Nina Kaull**, our Tea Chair, once again planned and carried out a flawless event, and led an amazing team of volunteers.

Donating countless hours of work, those volunteer leaders included: Chair of Houses **Megan Motherway** and Marketing Chair **Alison Bates Fisher**, and **Kevin Shieves**, Parking Chair. Everyone's hard work, creativity, team spirit and love of St. Johns' is greatly appreciated.

There were ten spectacular houses on the tour this year, featuring widely ranging styles and designs and histories. Quality Hill on Prospect Street was a featured site and proved to be a compelling destination for our tour-goers anxious to see the elegant mansion built by John Mason, nephew of George Mason. St. John's parishioners **Isobel** and **Brian Cox** opened their lovely home to the tour, and our very own Gini dashed into action in securing a lovely home with stunning gardens after having visiting there following a baptism.

A fun feature of the tour is the Patrons' Party. This year, Georgetown resident **Debbie Winsor** hosted the April 22 event at her home on Dumbarton Street for more than 250 people attended. A thank you to the Patrons' Party co-chairs: **Amy Gross**, **Megan Paleologos**, **Amy Porter Stroh**, **Belinda Winslow**, and **Deborah Winsor**.

Begun at the height of the Depression, the tour is also a fundraiser, representing a significant percentage of the church's annual budget. The funds are used for the maintenance and upkeep of our historic church, which is used not only as our place of worship, but used nearly daily by a variety of community groups. A portion of the revenue also funds our many outreach projects, which include the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol for the homeless, Saturday Suppers, and nonprofit organizations we support, which include organizations like the Georgetown Ministry Center, DC Volunteer Lawyers and Jubilee Jobs.

Along the tour route, Hyde-Addison Elementary School parents and students set up lemonade stands, which helped raise funds for the school. St. John's Church and Hyde-Addison enjoy a special relationship, which includes everything from after-school tutoring by parishioners to hosting school assemblies in the parish hall to parking provided to churchgoers by the school.

Next year's House Tour will be Saturday, April 23, 2016. It has always been our goal for this great St. Johns tradition, to have each and every parishioner involved as a volunteer. Planning begins now!



The 'Selfie Booth' was a popular stop on the House Tour and on Facebook.



Event, tour and tea photos by David P. Sloane
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GEORGETOWN HOUSE TOUR

Patrons' Party Delights and Reunites Community



Long-time parishioner Frida Burling is honored.



The elegance and grace of the Georgetown House Tour Patrons' Party makes it *the* social event of the spring for the community. Not only is it fun, but this party raises significant revenue for St. John's — money which is then redirected to the parish and its many outreach activities, particularly among the homeless of

Photographs courtesy of David P. Sloane.

Continued from Page 1 — **LETTER FROM GINI**

her incredible ability to make everyone who walks through our doors feel like the most important person in the world. She has been a blessing to me and to St. John's, and I will miss her! Thankfully, I won't have to say a *real* goodbye, because Tim will become our seminarian in September, and so he and Tanya will be with us every Sunday!

It has been a long time since we've had a seminarian here, and I'm really looking forward to Tim joining us! He will be participating in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) this summer at the Hebrew Home in Rockville. Please keep him in your prayers; CPE is a wonderful, but intense experience!

Speaking of seminarians and CPE, Cara Rockhill, whom we commissioned as a hospital chaplain in April, will be joining us when she gets back from Israel in a few weeks as our summer seminarian. She will be here full time for the month of July, preaching and teaching and writing. (Look for her blog and a summer forum on her Holy Land trip!)

She will finish her Master of Divinity degree (from Wesley) this summer. In August, she will be moving to Fredericksburg, where she will be doing a full year of CPE at Mary Washington Hospital as part of her chaplain training. She will be back as she can on weekends to worship with us and to meet with those who will help discern her call to be a deacon. **[Read an excerpt from Cara's recent sermon below]**

Our next bit of good news is that we will be joined on June 15th by Joy Warburton as our new full-time parish administrator. Joy has more than 10 years of experience as a parish administrator. She comes to us from Trinity Church in Arlington, where she is much loved! She has written an introductory letter, which you will find in this issue. Although she is not starting until June, she will be doing some training with Tanya before then. This is a big step for us, and I'm excited to have her on our team!

We have a fun summer planned with popsicles and lemonade on the lawn replacing our formal coffee hour for the summer. We'll have an interactive, instructed Eucharist one Sunday this summer, and lots of opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth, including a guest preacher, the Rev. Stan Fornea, Chaplain at the White House, who will be with us July 26th. It's going to be a cool summer – I can't wait!

With every blessing for refreshment and renewal this summer,

Cara Rockhill gave an amazing sermon on April 26. Here is an excerpt.

“As I stand before you today, I am at the end of one journey, and the beginning of another. If you had told me 3 years ago that I would be standing before you, in a pulpit that Francis Scott Key helped build. . I would have nodded politely at you then slowly backed away, because you are clearly crazy. But yet here I am.

The journey that I went on was interesting and unexpected. 4 years ago, I was barely a Christian. And now I stand before you a confirmed Episcopalian, who is in the process of being ordained as a Deacon. In the course of this journey, I have been, many times, on my knees crying out “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? What am I doing here? Where do I go from here? What do you want from me?” But I have come out of this journey with a belief that God is with me, and you, always.

St. John's supports *The Bishop Walker School*, the highly regarded school for boys. Those of us who dream of true equal opportunity for all expect that one day the boys at Bishop Walker School will receive as outstanding an education at Bishop Walker as do the boys at St. Albans or any of the other outstanding Episcopal Schools in the diocese. But making that dream a reality will take the financial investment of the whole community.

Prayerfully consider a donation to the school as an outward sign of our community's heartfelt response to the disparate opportunities available to children of color in our city. Envelopes are available to collect donations to the school. You can also mail a check to church with "Bishop Walker School" in the memo line. So far, St. John's parishioners have donated \$2,145 in support of this effort.

SATURDAY SUPPER — *A Yummy Idea*

By Carol Seaver

HOW IT HAPPENED. In October 2013, Holy Trinity Catholic Church invited Bruce McPherson and other Georgetown churches to consider the possibility of feeding—every Saturday night year round—50-60 persons in our community lacking homes and often hungry. Word spread quickly.



By early November, six churches — Holy Trinity Catholic, Mount Zion and Dumbarton United Methodist, Georgetown Presbyterian, Jerusalem Baptist, and St. John's Episcopal — became a vital, inter-racial, ecumenical team. We met and discussed 'issues': Full-hot, or quick-bite takeaway meals? Mixed parish, or single parish teams? Adults only, or mixed age/family teams? Rotated location, or single site?

After two meetings, we voted: Full hot...single parish...mixed age/family style. When discussion seemed finished and quiet descended, Pastor Johnsie Cogman



of Mt. Zion spoke up, cheerily proclaiming: "No rotating sites! Mt. Zion will be the home for every supper. We can't have the brothers and sisters trying to keep track of our schedules."

78 DINNERS LATER. Since that meeting, the ministry has cooked and served 78 consecutive Saturday Suppers. Our



guests keep coming, many known now by name—racially diverse, and averaging 55 per supper, with about 10 women each night, and one intact family recently. Producing a supper requires 14-16 volunteers to prepare meal items, set up/break down guest and buffet tables and

chairs, prepare the food service and beverages/dessert tables, serve guests and bring around extra helpings.

While meals vary widely, they always include two main dishes, a favorite pasta, vegetable casserole, potatoes in some form, a green vegetable (broccoli...who knew!), bread and butter, salad, and a range of deserts. As St. John's is on duty the 1st Saturday of the month, it is our pleasure to serve a Big Birthday cake and ice cream to celebrate all birthdays—volunteers and guests—coming up in the month ahead.

HOW WE DO IT. Ten days before each first Saturday, a "SignUpGenius" email goes out to St. John's 44-person mail list; volunteers select food items/amounts; some come and serve only. The time commitment is two 2 hours (4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.) Together, volunteers and guests, offer a prayer thanksgiving. A gracious but organized efficiency provides pleasures of food and social interaction.

There's something holy going on here, a transformative rendering, making 'Us' and 'Them' into 'We.' There is no doubt: Where two or more are gathered in his name, there he is in the midst of us.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Let Carol know of your interest :

cseaver23@gmail.com

Virtuoso Performances for Season III

By Samuel Carabetta

Organist and Choirmaster and Artistic Director, Georgetown Concert Series



2015-16 season on page 12

The third year of the 2014-15 Georgetown Concert Series was a great success. We began the season with two sold out performances - in October with the angelic voices of the internationally acclaimed Vienna Boys Choir. The Ambassador from Austria also joined us for this performance.

And, in November the GRAMMY award-winning men's choral ensemble, Chanticleer began our holiday season with A Chanticleer Christmas.



Vienna Boys Choir opened the 2014-15 season in October with a sold-out performance that filled St. John's.

In March (even in an ice storm!) we hosted the innovative string trio, Time for Three. We concluded the season in April with Olivier Latry, organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, who presented a performance on our magnificent pipe organ co-sponsored with the DC Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

He also taught a master class for young organists the day before his performance and there was a superb review of his performance in *The Washington Post*.

Music is an essential part of the worship and spiritual life of St. John's. St. Augustine has been quoted as saying, "He who sings, prays twice." At St. John's, the members of our congregation are enthusiastic in joining their voices with the choirs to sing hymns of praise. This spirited union creates a joyful camaraderie in which we all share.

Music at St. John's continues to grow and develop in depth, excellence, outreach, and service to our community.



Olivier Latry teaches master class before St. John's performance.

A new era of musical enrichment has begun with festival services and performances that have brought enjoyment to so many people of all generations. Our *Friends of Music* includes many from outside the congregation who are now becoming acquainted with St. John's, and we look forward to welcoming them as new members to our community.

Donors at three levels have generously contributed to *Friends of Music* which assures support for the music program at St. John's. We are currently seeking funding for our new season and have generously received \$11,000. toward our goal of \$40,000. We hope you will become a *Friend of Music*. Go to www.stjohngeorgetown to learn more or contact Sam Carabetta:



2015-16 Season Series

Concerts Begin on 'Phantom-astic' Note

TODD WILSON, ORGANIST

Sunday, October 4, 2015 at 5
pm

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
THE 1925 SILENT FILM STARRING
LON CHANEY



THE KING'S SINGERS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2015 AT 5
PM



A CANDLELIGHT FESTIVAL

OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 13, 2015
at 5 pm

St. John's Choir



CANADIAN BRASS

Sunday, April 3, 2016 at 5
pm

Learn More About Becoming a Friend of Music at St. John's by visiting the parish website or calling (202) 338-1796 .



St. John's Episcopal—Georgetown Parish

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