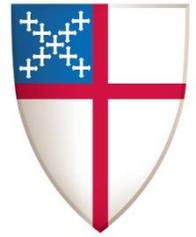




# St. John's Episcopal Church and Day School

Alamogordo, New Mexico

Our Mission is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel  
and to seek and serve Christ in all people



## 2023 – February Newsletter

Greetings in this season of change,

As I've been preparing to write this piece, an image from my studies in the language of the Diné (Navajo) keeps coming back to me. Their calendar is organized in such a way that the name for each month has an image attached to it from nature. The word for January translates to "Eaglets hatching." The word for February translates to "Eaglets call." Eagles are revered across cultures on this continent and their young were considered vital to the cycle of life in the desert and, more importantly, to the annual cycle of time. Eating the meat of an eagle in these cultures is taboo just like it is in the Hebrew Bible. Eating the meat of an eaglet would be tantamount to abomination.

There is an understanding in the culture of the Diné and their distant kin, the Diidé (Apache); that it takes all of us, great and small, to make the world go round. That sentiment should feel very familiar to us who hear Jesus say, over and over again, that the last will be first and the least will be greatest in the Kingdom of God. We also hear Paul refer to the members of the church as members of the Body of Christ in which all parts are honored from the soles of the feet to the top of the head. Some of these metaphors are going to speak more to some folks than others; but they point to a truth that I think is important for us to hear: We are connected in ways that centuries of mystics, theologians, philosophers, and scientists are even now fumbling to understand.

Jesus, and indeed the early church, had a profound understanding of this; and it gave them the authority and the agency to baptize people from everywhere into a movement that changed the face of the earth. May we celebrate our connection to one another and our agency as children of the household of God in our own day as we discern new ministries together. Blessings from...

Your Brother in Christ,

The Rev. Michael Peter Drinkwater

## God is Friendship

An article for the newsletter by Nancy Gregory, Senior Warden

I'd like to share with you some of the highlights of a recent retreat I was on. It was offered through the Community of the Transfiguration, a Religious Order located in Cincinnati. As many of you may know, I am an associate member of that Community, and we periodically get together for retreats. This one was on the topic of Spiritual Friendship and a book by that title written by St. Aelred of Rievaulx, an English Cistercian monk who lived from 1110 to 1167.

I think the strongest comment I heard during the retreat, was something one of the retreat leaders read from St. Aelred's book. St. Aelred said in that book, God is friendship.

Wow! I've probably heard hundreds of times, since Sunday School days, that God is love. I'm good with that. But I don't think I've ever heard, God is friendship. Think about it. That places friendship at a very high level, doesn't it? It's not the same as hundreds of Facebook friends. It's deeper than that.

Our retreat leaders spent some time helping us see the difference. Our first speaker was the Rev. Dr. Daniel DeForest London. He gave us a summary of the various religious folks throughout history who wrote and taught on the topic of being a spiritual friend.

Fr. Daniel described a spiritual friend as not always agreeing with us, but in harmony with us. Someone whose presence we enjoyed. Someone for whom we desired something good, without any self-interest. He described a true friend as someone who brings out our best selves. He called our spiritual friend an image of ourselves. Friends help us learn how to love ourselves.

Our second speaker was Dr. Paul Houston Blankenship, a Quaker, whose theological and anthropological work is focused on the spiritual lives of people living on the streets. He spoke about the difference soul friendship makes in everyday life, especially for the houseless.

After giving us a review of his extensive field work living on the streets among houseless person, he asked us to meditate on the following thoughts. These thoughts cover what he had discovered about friendship for houseless persons:

Where you are understood you are at home.

Understanding helps you belong, exposes your identity, reveals the soul, illuminates the mystery of the divine.

Friendship is the nature of God.

Friendship is a teacher, about the ways of the world.

Friendship is connecting to what gives you life and then growing it, nurturing it.

Dr. Paul ended his portion by asking us to write a letter to our Spiritual Friend.

Well, it was a true joy to be with my fellow associates in this retreat, if only via zoom. I was very grateful. I learned a lot. I came away thinking my sense of friendship was much richer now. I find myself so very grateful for those who call me friend. I see them with new eyes. The Eyes of God's love.

## Weaving a melody: “net” imagery in sacred music

By Hannah Draper Burnett

Epiphany 3’s Gospel reading got me thinking about the use of nets in the Bible; both as a literal, physical device (for example, in John 21:6: “And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.’ So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish,”) as well as a more intangible, spiritual sense – the image of Jesus as a “fisher of people”, gathering all to his message of hope and redemption for everyone; or as in Job: ““For he is thrown into the net by his own feet, and he steps on the webbing,” [18:8] which, as a person who has gotten into many sticky situations by my own accord, is “felt”, as the kids say these days.

Composers throughout history have seized on the imagery of “nets” within their sacred music – hymnist Carolyn Winfrey Gillette’s “Peter said: I’m going fishing” has grown in popularity since its original publication in 2003. Many Baptist hymnals include John Newton’s “Now while the Gospel net is cast”. While the use of net imagery in text is simple and effective, creating the imagery of “nets” using music is a good deal more complicated – but there are two examples that, to me, shine above the rest.

The first is found in our old pal J.S. Bach’s Cantata 150, one of his earliest cantatas (performed in 1707... we think) which utilizes text taken from Psalm 25 (“In you, O God, I put my trust”) as well as an unknown source. Bach’s musical depiction of nets comes in the penultimate movement; his setting of Psalm 25:15 -- Meine Augen sehen stets zu dem Herrn (My eyes wait for the Lord) where, using the incredibly complicated musical device of polyphony (many musical parts moving at different times), the interwoven and impossible-to-pick-apart texture ensnares the listener in a net that can only be untangled by the Divine (“Den er wird meinen fuß aus dem netze ziehen“; literally – He shall my foot from the nets remove).

The second example of text-painting to create a musical net is found within composer Mason Bates’ large work for chorus and organ, *Sirens*. The fifth movement, called “The Book of Matthew“ quotes the Gospel passage from Epiphany 3: “As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.“ To immerse the listener in the scene, undulating lines emerge beginning with the lowest voices and up through the soprano line, culminating in a dramatic, 8-part chord that captures both musicians and audience within its grasp.

See for yourself! Bach’s “nets“ can be heard here: <https://youtu.be/LzT4APqCqRY?t=698>

Mason Bates’ ”The Book of Matthew“ can be heard here (can you spot your Director of Music in this clip?) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1F8qdyHNs>

## Schedule of Sunday Readings

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
5-Feb	Isaiah 58:1-12	Psalm 112:1-10	1 Corinthians 2:1-16	Matthew 5:13-20
12-Feb	Sirach 15:15-20	Psalm 119:1-8	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Matthew 5:21-37
19-Feb	Exodus 24:12-18	Psalm 2	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
26-Feb	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11

## Rota

Date	Sunday	Reader - 8:00	Prayers - 800	EM - 1015	Reader - 10:15
5-Feb	Epiphany 5	Joyce	Nancy	Sharon	Nancy
12-Feb	Epiphany 6	John	Joyce	Nancy	Sharon
19-Feb	Christ the King	Randy	Nancy	Steve	Hannah
26-Feb	Lent 1	Geoff	Joyce	Nancy	Yvonne

### Community Kitchen Schedule

7-Feb	St. Joseph's
14-Feb	PPW
21-Feb	Christ Community
28-Feb	Retired Teachers

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Important February Meetings

Our February Vestry meeting will be held on zoom at 5pm on February 15. An email will be sent several days ahead of time with the link for those who are interested in attending.

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

February Birthdays:

Alec (2/11), Skip (2/16) and Sharon (2/26) Happy Birthday to all!

Anniversaries:

Ligia and John (2/14), David Luke and Tim (2/15), Tamela and Chuck (2/27) Happy Anniversary to all!

## Blessing Bag Ministry

Blessing Bags contain **travel** size items (i.e. hand sanitizer, small note books, toothbrush, toothpaste, pens, pencils, shampoo, deodorant, granola bars, soap, tuna/cracker packs, underwear, socks etc). We place several of the items in a gallon storage bag and distribute them to those in need. Currently, we are working closely with COPE and local partners in addition to Rio Grande Borderland Ministries.

If you are interested in helping in this ministry, please contact Sharon Kelman at 757 718 9451 or email ke4zia@gmail.com. You may bring any items you purchase to the church and deposit them in the bag that is located in the Narthex any Sunday.

## Saturday Morning Bible Study

We currently have a Bible Study that meets each Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. for a Bible seminar in the Parish Hall. All men and women from the community with an interest in the study of scripture are invited to attend. This will be restarting the Saturday following labor day.

## Caring card ministry

I would like to thank everyone who has donated cards, stamps and stickers to this ministry. We would like to help you celebrate **ALL** occasions. So, if you haven't signed up on our birthday (we just need month and day-**NO YEARS**) and anniversary lists, please do so. If you know of someone who may enjoy receiving one of our cards, please let me know. The sign-up sheets are on the table in the Narthex. If you prefer, you may contact me directly: Sharon Kelman email: ke4zia@gmail.com or 757-718 9451 call or text.

## **Pet Prayer Chain**

Many people in our congregation have pets. We all love our pets. They are part of our family. When they are sick, elderly or lost, it is a comfort to know that our church family is praying for them as well as us. If you have or know of a pet that could benefit from our ministry, please let David-Luke or Nancy know.

## **Daily Office**

Morning Prayer is offered Monday through Friday at 8:00 a.m. Evening Prayer is offered Monday through Friday at 4:00 p.m.

Links to these services can be found on the website.

## **Formation Hour**

Join us on Sundays at 9 for our Bible Study. Been to a lot of bible studies? None? All are welcome.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Do you knit or crochet? Are you interested in doing it as part of an ongoing spiritual practice that gives back to the community? If you are and would like more information, like patterns or prayers, please contact Joyce at [joycesummers@mac.com](mailto:joycesummers@mac.com)

# St. John's Episcopal Church

1114 Indiana Avenue, Alamogordo

Sunday Services: 8:00am Rite I; 10:15am Rite II

Office Phone: 575.437.3891

Email: [stjohnsalamo@tularosa.net](mailto:stjohnsalamo@tularosa.net) Website: <http://www.stjohnsalamo.com>