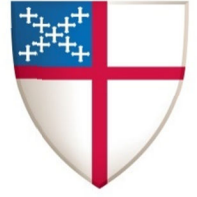




# St. John's Episcopal Church and Day School



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

## Newsletter, October 2023

Have you ever noticed that most of the holidays we celebrate occur in the time between October and March? You would certainly not be the first, nor would ours be the only culture in which that was true. I bring it up pretty frequently around this time of year that the cycle of sacred story telling for our indigenous brothers and sisters usually begins sometime around this time of year, though the exact time varies for different groups of people.

It seems to be part of the human experience that we sense the change as the sun moves farther away from us for a portion of year, leaving us to longer nights and colder weather. The toil of Summer, where the oppression of the heat makes it impossible in some places to do anything but care for plants and animals in the limited hours when it is cool enough to do so, has given way to fairer days where family and friends have more time outside together and people have time to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

As the natural world begins to slow down around us, I hope that we will listen to what it teaches us about life, rest, and rebirth. I don't think it is an accident that we remember our connection to our sacred and beloved dead in this season of harvest. Life and death can feel so close together during times like that. It can be hard as the culture around us begins to spin up for holiday season to remember the relationships that lie at the heart of this time regardless of the culture we come from: family, community, and the land we live on. God uses each of these relationships to reveal Love in new ways if we are open to seeing Love at work in our lives.

My prayer for us during this time is that we turn our attention to the ways that God is at work in our relationships. The problems facing us at this time in the world around us are big and in some ways profoundly different from those we have survived in the past. The work of the Gospel: loving God, neighbor, and self; has not changed. That may sound trite or even flippant; but being disciples of Jesus means being willing to be taught in the ways of Love as he understood it (which was as the very name of God). Love is not just an emotion. It is a force... a powerful strategy for surviving impossible things together... and something that connects all of us in ways that are beyond even our deepest religious or most modern scientific understanding.

May we make room for Love during this sacred time; and may Love continue to surprise us again and again as God calls us to abundant Life through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your Brother in Christ,  
The Rev. Michael Peter Drinkwater

## **Spiritual Journey Through Art** **by Nancy Gregory**

Awhile ago I was in a group of folks studying different art forms as tools or aids in contemplative prayer. We began our study with music. The question we were asked was, how had we used music in our spiritual journeys?

I began by reflecting on my spiritual journey, trying to remember moments that stood out, and then asking myself, "Is there a piece of music that I can recall from about that same time that was impacting me?"

The first situation that especially stood out was a time of no music when you normally expected to hear music. The lack of music was significant in that it made me realize in a deeper way than ever before just how important music has been to me.

I don't often go to the movie theaters but a while back I did to see a much talked about movie. The director was well known and there had been strong reactions, pro and con. I sat through the movie, then the ending came. It was a very powerful ending. Very emotional. The screen went to the credits, a time when there is usually background music and chatter from the audience. In fact the audience usually gets up to leave during the credits. This time it was very different. There was no music. There was only silence. The audience made no noise, no talking, no moving about, as the credits rolled by. The very powerful emotional ending of the film was made more so by that silence. We expected music. We wanted music to help us process what we had just seen. We didn't get music. Directors sometimes provide music to convey, emphasize, and sum up important messages of their work. In this case, the lack of what we expected conveyed a strong message too. We made up our own minds about what we had seen and heard. We reached our own conclusions. We were, to a person, reflective about doing that job. The experience was striking.

I realized how successful the director seemed to have been. My reaction to some music can sometimes be deep, unspoken, and emotional. I sometimes have no words to express what I feel. I may not even be conscious that it is happening.

It so happens that photography does the same thing for me.

I was surprised recently to read the dedication in a book of instructions for my camera. The author dedicated the work to her family and "to God, the source of all inspiration." Building on that thought is a quote I heard recently from Ernst Haas, a photographer. He said, "A picture is the expression of an impression. If the beautiful were not within, how would we ever recognize it." I think you could replace the word "picture" in his quote and insert music or any other creative art form.

Here's another quote, this one from Ansel Adams, "A true photograph need not be explained, nor can it be contained in words."

And here's what author Esther de Waal said about Thomas Merton's practice of contemplative photography. "...it is from his photographs that we learn much about how he saw the world, and how he prayed---and the two of course are intimately connected. .... He once was out with a friend, both with their cameras, and Merton reprimanded his friend for the speed with which he approached things. He told him to stop *looking* and to begin *seeing*. Looking means you already have something in mind for your eye to find...but seeing is being open and receptive to what comes to the eye...Merton's photographs show us that ultimately his concern was to communicate the essence of silence."

Perhaps to open a connection to God? To better hear God?

### Schedule of Sunday Readings

Date	Old Testament	Psalms	Epistle	Gospel
01-Oct	Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32	Psalms 25:1-8	Philippians 2:1-13	Matthew 21:23-32
08-Oct	Isaiah 5:1-7	Psalms 80:7-14	Philippians 3:4b-14	Matthew 21:33-46
15-Oct	Isaiah 25:1-9	Psalms 23	Philippians 4:1-9	Matthew 22:1-14
22-Oct	Isaiah 45:1-7	Psalms 96:1-9, (10-13)	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Matthew 22:15-22
29-Oct	Leviticus 19:1-2,15-18	Psalms 1	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8	Matthew 22:34-46

### Rota

Date	Sunday	Reader 8am	EM 10:15am	Reader 10:15am
01-Oct	Proper 21	Joyce	Steve	Nancy
08-Oct	Proper 22	John	Nancy	Hannah
15-Oct	Proper 23	Randy	Nancy	Tony
22-Oct	Proper 24	Joyce	Nancy	Hannah
29-Oct	Proper 25	John	Steve	Hannah

### Community Kitchen Schedule

Date	Team
03-Oct	St. Joseph's Mission
05-Oct	Sam + Crew
10-Oct	PPW
12-Oct	Sam + Crew
17-Oct	Christ Community Church
19-Oct	Sam + Crew
24-Oct	Retired Folks
26-Oct	Sam + Crew
31-Oct	Retired Folks

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Birthdays:

Irvin (10/5); Aileen (10/7); Lloyd (10/8); Morgan (10/9); David-Luke (10/18); Nancy G. (10/22); and Deb M. (10/28).

## 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 Joyce 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: [stjohnsalamo.com](http://stjohnsalamo.com)

## 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

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