



# THE FORERUNNER



February 2019

St. John's Episcopal Church



From the  
*Rector*

The human body has 206 bones, 639 muscles, and about 7lbs of skin, along with ligaments, cartilage, veins, arteries, blood, fat and more. Every time we hear a sound; every time we take a step; every time we take a breath, hundreds of different parts works together so that what we experience is a single movement, our minds and bodies working as one unit. The human body represents one of the most complex systems in

existence.

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Cor.12:27*

That is why the human body is one of the most powerful images for the Church offered in scripture. The metaphor conveys both complex diversity and organic unity. Some of us may find it difficult to name their place in the church. But if I were to ask you to envision yourselves as a part of a body, it may be a little easier to find your place. Children and adults have little difficulty identifying themselves as hands, hearts, feet, brains, elbows and knees, fingers and toes, ear lobes and funny bones.

The passage from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians is located within a larger grouping of texts concerning unrest within a congregation. Resentment began to grow among this diverse, multi-generational congregation of rich and poor; people with degrees and those without any formal training. Their state of disunion was a result of their refusal to acknowledge the many gifts and talents of all. Paul emphasizes their need to discover God's provision found among the diversity of spiritual gifts within their own community. The unity of the body of Christ emerges from and mirrors the diversity of God.

Paul's use of the metaphor of the body is one that was used throughout the ancient Roman world. For them, it served as a reminder to those on the lower social and political spectrum of their position of subservience to those in higher standing. Considering this, Paul employs the image to emphasize the seemingly less important, less prominent, or less significant parts, lifting the least of the members and calling the greater parts to pay attention to and even honor these others.

Powerfully, Paul inverts the force of the metaphor that points to the equally essential nature of all functions of the body. The head cannot claim that it does not need the feet, thus superiority over another is antithetical to Christian community. Status, as we call it, is overthrown within one body where all members are intimately bound to one another. The differences in gifts, or functions of the body, Paul says, is never be the basis of comparisons that cause confusion, doubt and pain. Consequently, the church should not just tolerate a plurality of capacities and experiences but should actively cultivate such diversity among its members. The radical interdependence that Paul portrays requires a radical diversity of gifts, all necessary for the common good.

This is the foundation of a counter-cultural society where all members play an indispensable role in the community. The purpose of Paul's reference to less honorable members of the body is to suggest that those persons who would be disdained according to ordinary social standards will be treated with the most respect in the Christian community. Extend this trajectory and see that the marginalized and maligned, the uneducated and the disabled; that "the least of these" have gifts of such excellent value to offer, for they are the embodiment of our Lord Jesus. Christian community is a tangible expression of the love of God.

Why do you come to St. John's? Really, think about that. Why do you come to church? Why make all this effort to get here on Sunday morning? Is it a search for meaning in your life, purpose to your existence? Do you want to grow spiritually and discover a deeper relationship with Christ? Is it to be of service to the community by doing your part in making the world a better place? I said yes to all of that. What about you? I think one of the main reasons why you come and the reason you stay is to be with one another. Speaking for me, I long for authentic community where, as Paul says, "there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another."

You've heard the saying, 'You can pick your nose, but you can't pick your family?' The same applies in congregations. There will always be differences within a congregation, like a family – opinions, experiences, priorities, needs – and it is dangerous to try to play down those differences in the interest of some superficial harmony. When this natural diversity within a congregation is not allowed to be expressed openly, like a family, subtle judgments are communicated: when the ear gets the message that it would really be better if it were an eye, when the foot realizes that the community values hands more highly.

All of us need to belong. We want to have a place. We want significance. You and I come to baptism as individuals, independent and self-contained. We come out of the water changed where our identity is no longer solitary. At baptism, we, as individuals, can no longer truly be known without reference to belonging to the body of Christ, that's you and me. We belong to each other. We are new creations in-relationship with other new creations. Belonging is a gift which is the tangible expression of God's love.

However, some people want to belong without belonging. For Paul, there is no such thing as belonging without participating. This is contrary to the nature of a living body. A body does not work when one part checks out for a few years; not only will its function be unfulfilled, but the rest of the body will be thrown out of balance. Belonging is not a one-sided affair. We are given a gift of belonging at baptism, but we are also signing up for responsibility of functioning as part of the body of Christ.

*continued on p. 2*

### *From The Rector, continued*

Belonging means participating for all. Every member is given gifts, to be exercised for the common good. One of the tasks of the community is to discern gifts – many of which are named today – and to provide ways in which they may be used. How do we discern these gifts? What structures do we have in place ensure such gifts are used and valued? The message is clear: every single person in the church matters and highly valued: shut-ins, babies, those with physical and mental challenges, as well as the hard-workers and generous givers.

Many congregations, including this one, have a practice of thanking people for the contributions they make to the life of the church, sometimes with special honors for those who have served long and faithfully. A culture of thanking can build up the community and encourage people to use their gifts, and we will continue to show our gratitude. However, we must be careful because it can carry implicit messages that run counter to the message of a living body. Rewarding those who have exercised their gifts, we can imply that this is something special, above and beyond the call of duty, and that the only valuable ministries are those that receive public thanks. This is a reality we can name, which has less to do with equality than with wholeness. Only with all our members can the body of the church be whole.

Being a community of Christ means imitating Christ. This is lived out by suffering and rejoicing with one another. This is more than making casseroles for someone in need or throwing a party for someone celebrating. It is about being a community that walks through the valley of the shadow of death with each other. It is about bearing one another's burdens. Many of us rarely experience this kind of community, but that is what I want for us, for you, for St. John's.

Too many of our relationships are functional, existing in order to do or achieve something. But our relationship with the Lord Jesus in a sense has no purpose beyond itself. They exist as the visible expression of the love of God, a love that simply takes delight in the presence of the beloved. As part of the body, we share each other's lives, in good times and in bad. As we do, we become a tangible expression of God's love. We know God loves us when we are held in a community of love. A community of love is a tangible expression of heaven.

This is a vision of church, a congregation, of St John's: not just a historic building with stained glass and glorious music, but people caring for one another, sharing the work of God in world. This work of God is made possible by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who works in and through each of us. As 206 bones, 639 muscles, and about 7lbs of skin work in perfect interdependence with blood, nerve endings and the immune system so does the body of St John's. As oxygen animates these complex systems, the Holy Spirit empowers individuals into a community of love. As food gives the body nourishment, we are fed by outward and visible expressions of God's love for the whole world. Amen.

All of us who are part of the body belong to Christ and to each other.

*In peace, Fr. Chuck+*



### **Annual Meeting**

On Sunday, January 25, St. John's held our Annual Meeting. Attended by over 50 congregation members and families, it was the first one with Father Chuck Messer presiding. Following a delicious luncheon featuring fried and roasted chicken and side dishes and desserts from our families. During the meeting, we elected a new Senior Warden, Larry Owen, to a one-year term. We also reelected David Miller as Junior Warden for a two-year term and David Miller and Ron Wohlrab to three-year terms on the vestry. Ann & George Neff and Ron Magill were elected as delegates to the Diocesan Convention (in March) and the Woodbury Convocation. Eileen Miller and Courtenay Reece were elected as alternates to both these activities. The budget was presented and a short discussion on the financial resources of the church was led by Treasurer Ann Neff. Organizational Reports were included in the booklet. Special recognition and a bouquet of flowers were presented to Gail Boyd for her leadership and work with the St. John's Quilters. To date, the quilters have created and donated over 850 quilts to the Ronald McDonald House in Camden, along with dozens of crocheted animals made by Peggy Fittabile. Also honored was Ron Magill for his terms of service as Senior Warden.

Copies of the Annual Meeting report booklet are available from the Church Office or see Father Chuck after the service.



### **From The Deacon's Bench**

Our Deacon is taking a much deserved vacation in Florida this week. Praying for safe travel mercies and a fun time in the warm sunshine.



*We invite all acolytes to join us as we travel to Trinity Cathedral in Trenton for the Diocese of NJ Acolyte Festival. It will be held on Saturday, February 9, from 9:30-3:30. We will carpool from the church, leaving at 8 am and returning following the festival. Please let David Miller or Marge in St. John's office know asap so we can register. Please refer to the brochure you received by email to select the workshops you want to take. This is a great opportunity for learning and fellowship with acolytes throughout the diocese.*

### **LENTEN STUDY**



Hamilton: A Lenten Reflection - March 15, from 7-9 pm Join us as selections from Hamilton the Musical are used with prayers and readings to spark discussion about Lenten themes of sin, reconciliation and forgiveness. This study will be led by Courtenay Reece. Due to the adult themes, supervised activities will be planned for those under 18. Light refreshments will be served. Please sign up in the parish hall for planning purposes.

*Stars*  
By Emma Bailey



God spread a deep blue cloth,  
across the vast night sky.

It covered me like a blanket,  
And soothed me like the low strum of a cello.

Across it were gently scattered,  
handfuls of silvery stars.

They shimmered as crystals when illuminated by  
moonlight,  
and aligned to form shapes and figures in my  
imagination.

Though far away and not seen in the day,  
the stars make sure to shine toward earth at night.

They leave me with a last thought before I drift off to  
sleep,  
"How wonderful and thoughtful God is,  
He painted those stars just for me."



We welcome to the family of God and St. John's, Roman Nicholas Sassi, infant son of Kaitlyn Roszkowiak and Anthony Sassi. Roman was baptized by Deacon Sally, on January 14, 2019 at AI DuPont Hospital. At this time, he is now an inpatient at CHOP with RSV and related pulmonary difficulties. Please keep Baby Roman and his parents in your prayers.



**We pray for those who serve  
in our military, especially:**

Major Ryan Bailey, US Army  
PFC Justin Francisco, US Army

Lt. Col. Peter Larrabee, USAF  
Senior Master Sgt. David John Milne, USAF  
Captain Tyler Patrick VanSant, USAF  
Captain Joseph Flescher III, USAF  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Marlene Flescher, USAF Academy  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Michael McCormick, US Army  
LCpl Jessica Armstrong, US Marine Corps



"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." -St. Matthew' Gospel Chapter Two, Verses One and Two, A.V. 1611

As we continue in this blessed season of Epiphanytide I pray that meditating on the archaeological discoveries underway in the Holy Land of today will intrigue your curiosity and strengthen your faith. In 1979 two small silver amulets were brought to light at Ketef Hinnom, an archaeological site that is part of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem. Dated c. 600 B.C. The amulets are inscribed in paleo-Hebrew and contain the oldest known biblical quotation, a priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26. "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." I consider that these silver amulets may be similar to modern day sacramentals, like rosary beads, scapulars or medals you may have among your own treasures. The verses inscribed have deep meaning for the nature of the Sacerdotal Priesthood and sanctification of The Church.

**Megalithic** (from the Latin; *Mega* meaning large and *Lithic* meaning stone) discoveries are being made the world over which call into question the very nature of the historic record. In many ways I find these discoveries confirm the scriptures. In 2013, a massive stone cairn was brought light beneath the Sea of Galilee. 32' off the seafloor & with a diameter of 230 feet (70 m), it's twice the size of Stonehenge. The Cairn's estimated to weigh c. 60,000 tons, heavier than a modern-day cruise ship. It has been dated to 2000 B.C. when a city called "Bet Yerah" or "Khirbet Kerak" stood a mile to the south of the structure. While its exact purpose remains unknown it's speculated to have religious ceremonial nature and its character relates to many of the ancient megalithic temples. These are a lost treasure of human history deposited all about our earth and which we will look forward to examining further in our travels. Godspeed.

"Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tvo da gloriam."

"Not to us Lord, not to us, but to Your Name give the glory."

*Ryan Bailey, Sr*

- 2/5 Casie Kates
- 2/8 Richard Frieze
- 2/8 Curt Harker
- 2/8 Aiden Willis
- 2/12 Betty Wismer
- 2/13 Jonathan Buck
- 2/13 Armen Messer
- 2/17 Daphne Miller
- 2/19 Jennifer Robinson
- 2/20 George Neff
- 2/22 Kathy Paras
- 2/22 Emma Bailey
- 2/24 Joe Buck
- 2/26 Jim Davis



### Reflections by Ann

In his sermon of Sunday morning, January 27, Father Messer asked us sincerely, “Why do you come to church?” I had been thinking about that question for more than a few months. I would be standing in the back before a service, counting the people in vestments, comparing that to the number of folks in the pews, figuring which group would “win”. I wondered if we would soon be putting up a sign on the door that said, “CLOSED for Lack of Interest.” Why were we here; why was I there?

There was never any doubt for me that I WAS there. I have come up with many more answers to that “WHY do you come to church?” than Eileen has space for in this Forerunner. So we are making this article a three month “serial”! Stay tuned.

My first three answers tie back into Father Chuck’s sermon. Number one: I love coming to Saint John’s because I get to use the skills and talents God has given me. Being a member of the choir, I get to sing for over an hour each Sunday morning, just in rehearsal! I enjoy reading the lessons, and am happy to do so. As a retired businesswoman, it gives me pleasure to help with church “Business” in my role as the Treasurer. (But don’t look for me in the kitchen.)

And second, St. John’s is a “Happenin’” place. Each Sunday, at least, “I gotta get down there to find out what’s going on, who is doing what, what’s happening?” at this, my place, and community, of worship. My third answer has to do with that community. We all want and need to be known, understood, and loved. I know that my God does so. I come to church to be reminded of that truth, and to be with these people of St. John’s, who do know me, understand me (more or less!) and DO care about me.

Next month, my three answers will be around what DOES go on at St. John’s, the people I know there, and why all of that keeps me coming to church each week. See you here next month, and hopefully in church in between!

*Ann Neff*

### Spotlight on: Char’s Charming Baked Goods



Char’s Charming Baked Goods is a small family bakery. We are still in our first year and plan to leave a satisfying taste on your taste buds. We have fallen in love with baking and providing beautiful cupcakes for our clients. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide cupcakes for Birthday Sunday. We hope you enjoy every crumb as much as we enjoyed making them.

With love in every bite,  
Chardana Sweeney  
Phone: 856-469-9802



- 2/1 Bill & Mary Anne Clisham
- 2/12 Dennis & Trudy O’Hare



Rich & Julie Frieze will be taking Amtrak on February 15 to Charlottesville, Va. Then on to Waynesboro, Va. to visit their grandson Cadet Aden R. Dunfee (private) at Fishburne Military School for another parents’ visit.

Capt. Tyler P. VanSant, USAF, son of Doug & Theresa VanSant will be deployed for his third tour of duty to United Arab Emirates and Syria in February. Please keep him and his wife Sarah and our grandson Luke in your thoughts and prayers as he makes his journey to serve and defend our Country.



**March 3, 2019 3 PM**  
**Davidow Theater, SCC**  
**Symphony in C**  
**Celebrating 10 years of Free Concerts!**



Prayers are requested for:  
Alice Fogg and Collin Patrick  
Baby Roman Sassi and his parents  
Tyler, Sarah and Luke Van Sandt

# Activity Page



## PUZZLE

### WITH LOVE FROM ABOVE

The Bible is full of special words from our loving God.

*Directions: Using the messages on the candy hearts, complete the Bible verses (all NIV) below.*



God is our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

“Surely I am with you \_\_\_\_\_.” Matthew 28:20

And the \_\_\_\_\_ of God ... will guard  
your hearts and your minds in  
\_\_\_\_\_. Philippians 4:7

Whoever lives in \_\_\_\_\_ lives in God,  
and God in them. 1 John 4:16

\_\_\_\_\_ love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

Answers: refuge, strength, always, peace, Christ Jesus, love, Perfect

## A MESSAGE OF *Love*

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



### What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

### What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.



# February 2019



CIACC-Children's Inter-Agency Council YSC-Youth Services Council IAC-Inter-Agency Council NA-Narcotics Anonymous AA-Alcoholics Anonymous MAC-Music Around The County					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 
<b>3</b> 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Birthday Sunday ECW Meeting	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:00 am-3 pm IAC/YSC 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	<b>6</b> 10:30 am-3 pm IAC/CIACC/YSC 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	<b>7</b> 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> ACOLYTES  Acolyte Festival Trinity Cathedral
<b>10</b> 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Sandwich Sunday Vestry Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	<b>13</b> 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	<b>14</b> 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study 	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Fellowship Hour Hanging of the Hats	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	<b>20</b> 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	<b>21</b> 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Pie Sunday Chicken Pot Pie Luncheon	<b>25</b> 10 am-2 pm Retired Educators Luncheon	<b>26</b> 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	<b>27</b> 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	<b>28</b> 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	<b>Office Hours</b> Monday: Closed Tuesday-Friday: 9 am-4 pm (Fr Chuck) 12 pm-3 pm (Office)	



**Looking Ahead:**  
**March 3, MAC Concert**  
**March 5, Shrove Tuesday Supper**  
**March 6, Ash Wednesday Services**

**From The Editor:** Do you want to change how you receive the Forerunner? Simply leave a message with the church office and it will be rerouted with the next issue

You can also check out St. John's website: [www.stjohnssalemnj.org](http://www.stjohnssalemnj.org). The most recent Sunday Bulletin is on the website, as well as current and past issues of the Forerunner and special announcements. St. John's is also on Facebook (St. John's Salem)

Please have any information you would like printed in the next Forerunner to me by **February 25**. Family news, articles, information, articles, recipes, book or movie reviews, or anything you think would be of interest to our church family. Items can be emailed to [ecmiller114@gmail.com](mailto:ecmiller114@gmail.com).

**Special request: We are always looking for family news, articles, stories, poems, recipes, and other items of interest. Email them to me or leave them in the office.**

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### **St. John's Episcopal Church**

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Vestry Class of 2022 David Miller Ron Wohrab  
Class of 2021 Ryan Bailey Ron Magill Bill Mecum  
Class of 2020 Sue Harker Gwen Norton Ann Neff (Clerk)  
Recording Secretary: MaryAnne Clisham

# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## WELCOMES YOU



### Schedule of Services

#### Every Sunday

8 AM—Holy Eucharist Rite 1 in the Chapel

9:15 AM-Christian Formation-NOOMA in the Parish Hall

10:30 AM---Holy Eucharist Rite II in the Church followed by Fellowship Hour

#### Every Wednesday

10:30 AM Kerygma Bible Study in the Parish Hall

Noon---Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

#### Every Thursday

6:30 PM Kerygma Bible Study in the Parish Hall with Potluck Dinner



### **St. John's Episcopal Church**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

