



Saint John's Episcopal Church
December 2020
A Newsletter about Our
Community and Ministries

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The Beauty & Mystery of the O Antiphons *by Joseph Arndt*

In December, I will perform the **O Antiphon Preludes** by Nico Muhly. Each prelude is inspired by one of the antiphons (see page four). You may be wondering, "What are the O Antiphons, anyway?" The O Antiphons are traditionally sung or said in conjunction with the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) at Vespers on the last days of Advent. Each antiphon has a text employing a metaphor for the Messiah found in the Old Testament. English paraphrases of these antiphons make up the stanzas of the famous Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

The antiphons make an acrostic: ERO CRAS. In English, this is roughly translated as "Tomorrow, I will come." Or, **Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai and Sapientia**. I hope you will reflect on each metaphor. I have included scripture passages with some explanations below and I invite you to join us online for these inspiring and mystical texts offered in song.

O Sapientia (O Wisdom) "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding..." – Isaiah 11.

O Adonai (O Lord) "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king; he will save us" – Isaiah 33. Adonai is the Jewish substitute for Yahweh because they believe they are unworthy to say God's name.

O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse) "A shoot shall come out of the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" – Isaiah 11. Jesse is the father of King David; David's sons ruled until Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BC. The Jewish people believed that David's line would be restored. If you imagine David's line as a tree, the stump is a metaphor for the tree being cut down. A shoot coming from the stump is a sign of hope that the Messiah will restore the Davidic rule.



O Clavis David (O Key of David). "I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open" – Isaiah 22. "His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom" – Isaiah 9.

O Oriens (O Morning Star, O Dayspring). "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" – Isaiah 9.

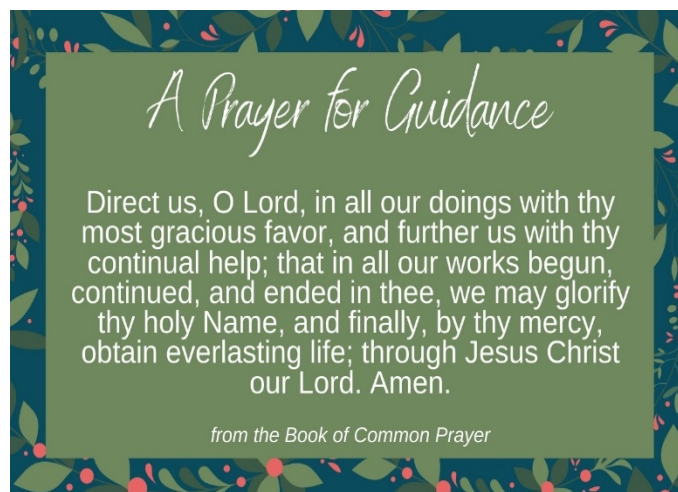
O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations). "For a child has been born for us, a son given us; Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" – Isaiah 9.

O Emmanuel (O "God is with us"). "Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name Him Emmanuel" – Isaiah 7.

Senior Warden's Report *by Jim Hicks*

As I write this article (on November 16), the Tulsa World is reporting 3,923 new cases of COVID-19 and twelve more deaths in Oklahoma. The state's seven-day rolling average is at a near record high according to the Oklahoma Department of Health's data. Bruce Dart, Ph.D., the executive director of the Tulsa Health Department (THD), recommends indoor venues limit individuals to twenty-five percent of capacity. Given the unyielding spread of coronavirus in the nation, Oklahoma and Tulsa, the question remains: when will "normal" services resume at Saint John's Church?

To put it bluntly, we don't know. The reopening advisory group has developed an extremely detailed plan which has been reviewed and approved by the THD and the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma. The reopening plan is posted and available for all parishioners to review online at www.sjtulsa.org.



In October, we began in-person worship services at 8:30 a.m. **outdoors** on our labyrinth following the guidelines set forth by the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma, the THD and the Center for Disease Control. Attendance is limited to thirty individuals. At the moment, the outdoor 8:30 a.m. service has moved inside on days of inclement weather (fifty-five degrees or below). This has provided the ushers and staff valuable learning experiences and no issues or problems have arisen. The 10 a.m. services will continue to be livestreamed until we feel the risk to parishioners, staff and clergy is minimized and we can safely resume indoor services, with a limit of sixty individuals.

Parishioners wishing to attend in-person worship services must call the church office no later than noon on the Friday before the Sunday worship service to reserve their space(s). Reservations need to be made for both outdoor worship services and for worship services held later inside the church. All reservations will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. Each person, couple or family will be assigned a seat number in a pew/chair. Should reservations be full when a person calls, then they will be first on the list for the following Sunday. Here are the answers to a few questions you might have about the process:

WILL MASKS BE REQUIRED AT CHURCH? Yes. Every person over the age of two years will be required to wear a mask. Studies show that mask wearing greatly reduces the risk of virus spread, so please plan to wear a mask while attending worship or while in the building for any reason. If you do not bring a mask, we will provide one to you.

WILL SOMEONE BE TAKING TEMPERATURES? Yes. Everyone who attends a service will be required to have their temperature taken at the entry. Anyone who registers a temperature of 100.4+ will be asked to leave for the safety of all concerned.

WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING SERVICES? In order to reduce the possibility of virus spread, every other pew will be blocked off. Additionally, parishioners will be seated by ushers in order to ensure there is sufficient distance between family groups/individuals. Please understand this may mean you won't be sitting in your usual pew, and please respect that ushers are working on behalf of the church to ensure your safety.

WILL WE HAVE COMMUNION WHEN WE REOPEN? At this time, communion is "in one kind" only, meaning wafer only. The clergy have been wearing masks and gloves while distributing communion at the 8:30 a.m. service. Walking through the vacant pews, the celebrant administers communion by coming to the people. All parishioners remain in place.

WILL THERE BE CONGREGATIONAL SINGING? No. Unfortunately, singing presents too much risk of virus spread. There will be no parishioner singing during services when we reopen. The full choir will not resume until such time as a vaccine and/or treatment is available. In the meantime, a limited choir will continue to lead us in praise and worship under the direction of Joseph Arndt.

WILL THERE BE COFFEE HOUR? We will not have coffee hour until such time as it is safe to gather in large groups again without socially distancing. The Common Room will be closed and lingering inside will be discouraged.

WILL RESTROOMS BE OPEN? Yes, restrooms in the narthex, the Bride's Room and the Common Room will be open. Restrooms will be regularly cleaned with disinfectants.

I cannot predict what the situation will be when this article is published. By then, Thanksgiving will have passed and we will have more accurate information on the positivity rate in Tulsa County. Please know that any and all decisions regarding services are made taking into account the divergent views of the members of the reopening advisory group, the Vestry and the staff. As you might imagine, everyone has a different perspective. In the meantime, our state-of-the-art audio-visual system will continue to provide unforgettable services streamed online: Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Evensong and 10 a.m. Sunday services. As always, if you have any comments, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at jhicks@barrowgrimm.com.

Rector Search Update

Senior Warden Jim Hicks reports that the Rector Search Committee has completed its portion of the search process. In November, the committee submitted the names of two highly qualified priests to the Vestry for consideration to be the next rector of our church. These candidates have been vetted and approved by Bishop Reed and both are scheduled to visit Tulsa in December. On the visits, each candidate will be interviewed by the Vestry and provided the opportunity to tour Tulsa and our church facilities. Upon conclusion of the candidate visits, the Vestry will enter into a period of prayerful discernment. Jim is hopeful that our church may issue a call for a new rector by the end of the year.

Stewardship Update *by Susan Walker*

We have reached the end of the active phase of our 2021 All In Stewardship Pledge Drive and I am thrilled to report we are far ahead of where we were last year – in terms of both pledge dollars and pledging units. THANK YOU! There have been so many unprecedented twists in 2020, and yet so many wonderful Saint John's parishioners have remained faithful in fulfilling their pledges for this year and in declaring their intent to support our future.

Three groups deserve our deepest thanks for their willingness to help make this campaign successful. First, the talented and wonderful members of the Stewardship Committee: Barrett Waller, B.J. Pohl, Betsy Hocker, Elizabeth Crews, Joseph Arndt and Nancy Hicks. Each of these people is so devoted to the future of Saint John's Church and brought critical personal expertise to our work. I cannot thank them enough for their ideas, hard work and good cheer. Second is our hard-working church staff, all of whom supported the myriad of tasks that needed to be done in order to bring information to you in a timely and engaging manner. Finally, thanks to our parishioners who were willing to be spotlighted in our videos about what Saint John's and its ministries have meant to them: Peggy and Tom Schroedter, Lauren Houston (and Shane and Otis), Nick Bradford, Jessica and Fred Stowell, Joseph Arndt (and Michael), Phyllis and Steve Anderson, Meghan Joiner (and Eric and Ellie) and Barrett Waller. Their stories were heartwarming and illustrated in personal terms how a pledge to our church translates into Christ's work in the lives of others.

Historically, mid-November has marked the end of the active stewardship phase, but pledges continue to roll in until mid-January. Therefore, it is not too late! You can mail in your pledge card or use the convenient tool on the website. If you have never pledged before, or in a while, please consider the importance of doing so this year, so that we can be best prepared to support our new rector and continue to adapt to changing needs wrought by the pandemic. While all donations that come in during the year are gratefully appreciated, pledged amounts are **so important** in allowing the Vestry to determine the budget for next year. Please also keep in mind that a pledge is simply a sincere declaration of intent. It is fully understood that circumstances could change.

Thank you again for your care and stewardship of our Saint John's Church home and ministries.

Treasurer's Note *by Bill Chevaillier*

The federal government has recently updated tax policy and includes incentives for 2020 charitable contributions under the CARES Act. To encourage more charitable giving in 2020, and to help charitable organizations recover from the pandemic, the CARES Act provides additional tax relief for donors on their 2020 tax return. We encourage our parishioners to take a look at these updates and consider if they may apply to your individual or family situation. These are the highlights:

Are you itemizing deductions? The adjusted gross income (AGI) limit for cash contributions was increased for individual donors. For cash contributions made in 2020, you can now elect to deduct up to one hundred percent of your AGI (increased from sixty percent).

Not itemizing? The CARES Act allows for an additional, "above-the-line" deduction for charitable gifts made in cash of up to \$300 for singles and \$600 for joint filers. If you are not itemizing on your 2020 taxes, you can claim this new deduction.

What about IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)? The CARES Act did not change the rule around the QCD, which allows individuals over seventy-and-one-half years of age to donate up to \$100,000 in IRA assets directly to charity annually, without taking the distribution into taxable income. However, remember that under the CARES Act an individual can elect to deduct one hundred percent of their AGI for cash charitable contributions. This effectively affords individuals over fifty-nine-and-one-half years of age the benefits similar to a QCD. They can take a cash distribution from their IRA, contribute the cash to charity, and may completely offset tax attributable to the distribution by taking a charitable deduction in an amount up to one hundred percent of their AGI for the tax year.

If you're planning a large donation in 2020, this may be a smart strategy as long as you are between the ages of fifty-nine-and-one-half to seventy-and-one-half and are not dependent on existing retirement funds.

More Music News

A Conversation with Nico Muhly

On Monday, December 7 at 1 p.m., Joseph Arndt will lead a special live Zoom conversation with one of today's most distinguished living composers, Nico Muhly. Register for this event by contacting Diana at dcarter@sjtulsa.org.

Nico Muhly (born 1981) is an American composer and sought-after collaborator whose influences range from American minimalism to the Anglican choral tradition. The recipient of commissions from The Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Tallis Scholars and St. John's College, Cambridge and others, Muhly has written more than one hundred works for the concert stage, including the opera *Marnie* (2017), which premiered at the English National Opera and was staged by the Metropolitan Opera in the fall of 2018.

Born in Vermont, Muhly studied composition at the Juilliard School before working as an editor and conductor for Philip Glass. He is part of the artist-run record label Bedroom Community, which released his first two albums, *Speaks Volumes* (2006) and *Mothertongue* (2008). He lives in New York City.

Muhly frequently collaborates with choreographer Benjamin Millepied and, as an arranger, has paired with Sufjan Stevens, Antony and the Johnsons and others. His work for stage and screen include music for the Broadway revival of *The Glass Menagerie* and scores for films including the Academy Award-winning *The Reader*.

Awaiting the Savior

Starting on **December 2** and continuing on **December 9**, join Joseph for a live Zoom class just perfect for perking up winter evenings. The two-part course, titled **Awaiting the Savior**, will be held on Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m.

Joseph will lead us through an exploration of the scripture, hymns and choral music heard in our worship during Advent. Highlights include the O Antiphons as well as the framework of the Advent and Christmas Lessons and Carols services offered by the choir throughout December. To register, contact Diana at dcarter@sjtulsa.org.



Still More Music Offerings Online

December 6, 5:30 p.m. – Advent Lessons and Carols for the Second Sunday of Advent.

December 13, 5:30 p.m. – Choral Evensong for the Third Sunday of Advent.

December 20, 5 p.m. – Organ Recital by Joseph Arndt featuring Nico Muhly's *O Antiphon Preludes* for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The original Gregorian chant will be interspersed by the men of the choir, conducted by Adam Pajan.

December 20, 5:30 p.m. – Choral Evensong.

December 27, 5:30 p.m. – A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday after Christmas Day. This final event is modeled after the famous service offered at King's College in Cambridge, England.

All offerings are streamed on Facebook and on our website at sjtulsa.org.



Advent Virtual Retreat

Have you wondered how can we practice hope during this season of Advent in the midst of COVID-19? One option is to join Susanne+ as she leads participants in a rhythm of scripture, meditations, reflection and small group discussion on the theme, **"In You, Lord, is Our Hope."** The retreat will be held via the Zoom meeting platform on Saturday, December 12 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Susanne+ invites you to take time apart to contemplate the life and ministry of Jesus while exploring the practice of hope. During this online virtual retreat, participants will use materials from Living Compass' *Living Well through Advent 2020: Practicing Hope with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind*. The link to the PDF version of this booklet can be obtained at www.shop.livingcompass.org/products/living-well-through-advent-2020-8-5-x-11-pdf-version.

To register, contact Carteena at crobohm@sjtulsa.org. There will be handouts sent to registrants via email prior to the retreat. To obtain the Zoom event access link for the retreat, watch for this event in the church e-news editions.



When Christmas Hurts

This year I am among those who will experience hurt at Christmas. I am grieving the death of my brother-in-law, Neal, and I won't be able to gather with my family. For others the issue might be unresolved relationships, loss of health, depression or anxiety, feeling lost, addiction, economic situations, loneliness, feeling helpless, guilt or something else. This year more of us may be feeling the hurt as our COVID-19 pandemic continues on. Christmas can feel very hard to celebrate in these circumstances, even without comparing ourselves to others whom we may perceive are having an easier time.

Remember that in the beginning dark was already present. God said, "Let there be light," and separated the light and the dark. This darkness (*araphel* in Hebrew) is especially reserved for God's use. This thick darkness reveals the divine presence even while obscuring it, the same way God's glory does. Both darkness and glory are signs of God's mercy because we are not equipped to survive direct contact with God, in the dark or in the light.

Light and dark are often perceived as opposites, but if we look at creation we see both light and dark. Over the course of a month, the moon both waxes and wanes. What would life be like if instead of seeing the fluctuations as meaning that something is wrong with us, we saw instead that light and dark are not opposites but in balance with each other? What if we could trust this rhythm instead of opposing it?

Darkness may be the most demanding teacher we have. Darkness might want something from us: to wake us up, to tell us something we need to know, to break the ice around our hearts or to move us to act. What if we could be curious about our darkness? What if we could ask it, "What do you have to teach me?"

In this Advent season, we remember that the gospel narrative is **God with us**, Emmanuel. Jesus started his life in the darkness of the human womb of Mary and met his end in a cruel death on a cross where he speaks, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" – Psalm 22:1. He is the Son of God who remains vulnerable to tragedy and despair. He was buried in the dark of the tomb. This is Jesus, "the light of the world," who learns that light shines out of even such darkness.

The solidarity of God with us in darkness is at the heart of our faith. We come to know the truth of Incarnation in darkness.

— *Susanne Methuen*+

A Message from Our Associate Interim Rector: *Susanne*+

We are almost nine months into our COVID-19 experience. Life as we have known it is very different. The nation is experiencing a dramatic increase in virus infections and deaths. We have continued uncertainty about whether to gather with others and, if we do, with how many people. Schools that have been virtual are now meeting in person and others who have been in person are going virtual. Unemployment continues and whole industries are rethinking how to survive in this new world. We hope there will be a peaceful transfer of power in January. At our church we have lost our former ways of being together for worship and fellowship.

We are in a time when we feel distress and when our faith may be put to the test. One of the faithful practices of God's people during such times is lament. Lament is an appeal to God. In some bibles the title of Psalm 102 is "A prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord." Laments are honest about the real condition of our lives and hearts. At the same time, laments are expressions of praise, in a minor key, confident that God is faithful and in anticipation of a new lease on life.

Laments may cycle conversationally between various elements:

They address God and describe who God is, what God has done, as in this verse from Psalms 102:25 –

In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They are specific about complaint, for example like this one from Psalms 102:4 –

My heart is smitten like grass and withered, so that I forget to eat my bread.

And yet they confess trust in God despite the given situation, such as this one from Psalms 102:27 –

But you are always the same, and your years will never end.

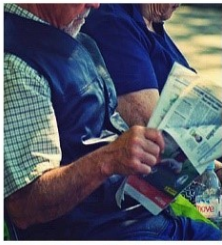
They ask God for something specific, such as this one from Psalms 102:24 –

And I said, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days..."

They offer praise to God for who God is and appeal to God's nature, such as this verse from Psalms 102:13 –

You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to have mercy upon her; indeed the appointed time has come.

The psalms are a great resource for lament. You might want to draw on the examples found in Psalms 3, 4, 12, 22, 31, 80 or 90. You may want to write your own lament as a faithful way to express that while we do not know what will happen, we do know Who is with us. If you need a listening ear, I would love to hear from you.



In this column you'll find notes and news items that will help you stay caught up on happenings around the church.

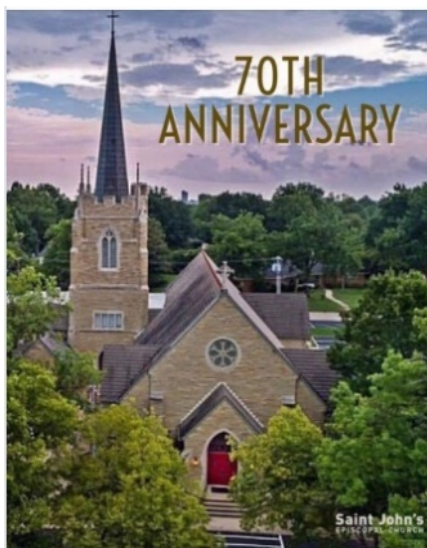
E-News News – Keep an eye out for Tuesday, Friday and Sunday email news for the latest information on any updates to worship offerings, class changes, diocesan news, music programs, holiday office closures and more.

Seen on Social Media – Our official church Facebook page (not the same as our community page) followers continue to steadily climb thanks to wonderful programs and worship and because our members share events on their social media platforms. A fun Facebook fact this month is about geography: we have multiple fans from outside the United States, including the United Kingdom and Canada! Also, seen in the screenshot below, you will find one of our most popular posts of the last few weeks: our seventieth anniversary. Happy birthday, Saint John's Church!

Attuned to Attendance – Though we are not in church every Sunday, the church office still tracks attendance and this becomes a part of the diocesan Parochial Report. These statistics are from the number of people who come in person for 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship as well as online service participation. Sunday's total attendance is the combination of 8:30 a.m. attendance, 10 a.m. viewership and Evensong 5:30 p.m. viewership. Facebook "attendees" are those who view worship on our Facebook page. The number represents all those who viewed the services (regardless if they joined the live service late, left early, or tuned into the video at a later time or day). We will report these stats here each month. Recent church Sunday participation was: Nov. 8 = 319 (21/NA/298); Nov. 15 = 536 (23/186/327); and Nov. 22 = 159 (NA/159/NA).

Christmas Offering

– Be on the lookout in your mailbox in early December for a church financial status letter that includes a return envelope for the important Christmas offerings. Since we cannot gather together the same way we have in years past, this provides an easy way for anyone to make/mail a Christmas or end-of-year contribution.



BJ Pohl's time on the Vestry wraps up with the close of this year. We are so grateful for his contributions to the church in so many ways, but especially wish to say thank you for his service on this lay leadership team. True to his nature as a man not to waste words, but also one of good humor, he shared a little bit about himself last week with us.

Q: So, BJ, was this your first "tour of duty" on the Saint John's Church Vestry? A: Yes it was!

Q: What other church committees or ministries have you served on? A: I have helped with technology (such as the committee to select the new audio-visual equipment and on the Saint John's website) and the Stewardship Committee this year.

Q: When did you join Saint John's? A: My grandparents attended the church in the 1970s and 1980s. I was baptized here and I returned to the parish about eight years ago.

Q: Tell us about your family. A: I have been dating my wife, Heather, since high school. After college, we were married in Tulsa. We have four boys ranging in ages between fifteen and twenty-four.

Q: What type of profession are you in and do you work remotely right now? A: I work in information technology at Williams. I do work from home and have in the past, so the transition was not as jarring for me as it probably was for many.

Q: What do you look forward to most about being back together at church? A: Connecting with the community.

Q: What is your family's favorite event at Saint John's? A: It changes as the ages of my kids grow up, but Christmas Eve is always a joy!

Q: Do you have a favorite place in the church to reflect? A: As I get older, I've come to enjoy the opportunity to be in the sanctuary alone in stillness and quiet.

Q: What would you most like to see Saint John's Church expand during the years to come? A: That would be more of an outward focus. I think there is so much opportunity to bring Christ's love to those hurting in our wider community.

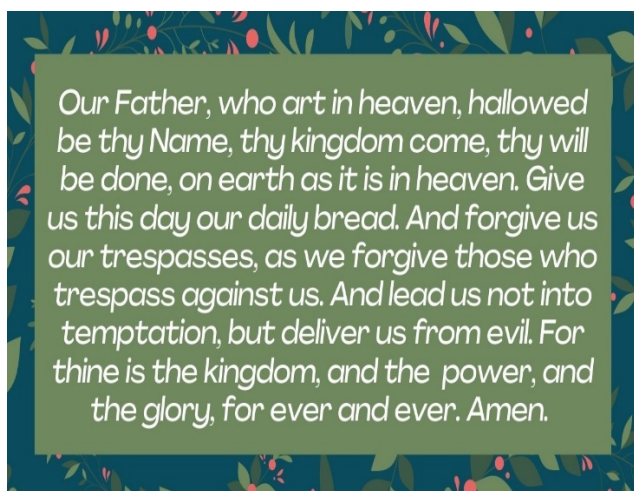
Q: What three words would you use to describe our church home? A: Communal. Beautiful. Potential.



Lynn Kimmel began attending with her mom and dad, Mark and Nancy Payton, around 2003, after she moved here from New Jersey. But she stayed because of the fellowship, the many opportunities to help others, and the close friendships she has been able to form, in spite of how big a church we really are.

Through the years, Lynn has been in the choir, become licensed as a lay eucharistic minister and lay reader, and served on the vestry. She has also worked in the bookstore and joined the calling ministry this summer. While she is energized by singing and finds sharing communion very meaningful, reading is her favorite service role. Lynn shared that through lay reading, she feels deeply connected to God. She describes her Morning Prayer reading time as Christ's manifestation in her life.

Lynn shared a few fond recollections of the earlier years of attending Saint John's Church. Father David Fox was the first rector she met and he was so welcoming; Father Irv Cutter's sermons resonated with her; the choir fulfilled her, and she formed close friendships, like the one with Sarah Waller. Because of her time in the choir, Lynn says one of the most special places to her in the church to reflect is anywhere near the altar. She also shared that her "go to" prayer is the Lord's Prayer:



Penny and Robert Johnston believe it is important to serve God and serve others. They are both lay readers and joined the Saint John's acolyte team in 1992.

An additional special way the Johnsons honor Christ is through prison ministry, a program they got interested in upon retiring from their full-time jobs. Penny has been serving in the ministry for nine years and Robert for six. Their roles include conducting services as lay people and praying with the men and women.

Robert attended Saint Luke's Episcopal Church until his family moved "south" in the early 1960s when he was about five years old. Penny grew up at Eastside Christian Church.

Penny and Robert met just down the road at Edison High School. They were school sweethearts. He tutored her for math class, and they married after graduation. Shortly after, Robert left for training in California and then served time in the Navy. He was stationed in the Pacific and made ports of call in Japan, Okinawa, Thailand, Hong Kong and Vietnam. When he left the service, they returned to Tulsa and Penny joined Robert at his family's Episcopal church home, around 1968.

One of the activities they have really enjoyed over the years is meeting friends on Sunday morning before church. Blu and Barbara Lawson, Priscilla Tate, Joe and Dona Morris, Bob Baker and Nancy Westfall often pulled their community together before church started.

Penny describes our church as a place of calm where she finds peace. She enjoys the added friendships she has formed through Daughters of the King. Robert finds peacefulness abundant here in his "second home." When asked for a favorite prayer that speaks to them, Penny and Robert both shared that they love the post-communion prayer:

"Send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart."

Youth and Families

This month we continue to offer several activities that children, teens or whole families can participate in.

Tableau Taping – We continue videotaping segments with parishioners for the tableau through December 7. After that, we move into the editing stage for the final video to be presented during the 4:30 p.m. livestreamed Christmas Eve service. If you would still like to participate, it is not too late to sign up. Taking part involves a short meeting in the church to video a segment of the gospel reading. There will be costumes, props and a lot of fun acting. Members of all ages are welcome to join in the action, including parents. To sign up, reach out to Joshua Corsaro through his email at jcorsaro@sjtulsa.org or via the church office phone.

Postcards of Praise – Parents, kids and teens, don't forget to look for some holiday cheer in your home mailbox this month. For December, Joshua is excited to focus on the Christmas season!

Family Fridays – Our fun family Facebook video series continues with explorations of areas in our church and on our grounds. Because Joshua has been hard at work on the new tech system installation (to offer online services for the church), we didn't have many Friday adventures to offer in November. But he has been planning away and in the weeks ahead will demonstrate many parts of the new system for you. It will be fun and, he says, maybe will even look a bit like Star Wars! Be sure to join in. And, feel free to share these videos through social media with other friends and families, even if they are not a part of a church.

Joshua and the staff can't wait to see you again in person when that is possible. Like we have said before: the building may be closed, but we are still the church. In the meantime, don't hesitate to call or email Joshua and share some of the fun stories about what you did for Thanksgiving or what safe and creative plans you have for celebrating Christmas and the arrival of baby Jesus!



December Kudos

This month we offer heart-felt "shout outs" to staff and volunteers for recent good deeds, both large and small.



To **Josh Corsaro and Ruskin Bell**, a tech dynamic duo – thank you for staffing the weekend Holy Eucharist worship service AV deck on Sundays. We appreciate your dedication to bring the beauty of worship into our homes while we cannot be together in the building.



To **Nick Bradford**, for his lay reading, volunteering as a member of the AV crew, and for recently planting fall botanicals in our east flower urns – well done. Thank you for beautifying our campus, cheering up the "front door" for staff and volunteers, and for helping bring the joy of worship to our online followers.

To **Betsy Hocker**, our resident "journalist," who took on the enjoyable but time-consuming role of interviewing parishioners as part of our stewardship campaign – you are so appreciated. Betsy captured photos, videos and responses to questions we were asking. And, she penned several complete stories as well, making our newsletters so much richer in content.

And to **Susan Walker**, our extraordinary Stewardship Campaign chair for the past two years – bravo! Your servant leadership, diplomacy, leadership and skills are appreciated more than we can articulate. Your energy is contagious and your love for this church and her people is tangible. Congratulations on a job well done during an especially challenging time.



Getting to Know Us: Joseph Arndt

Musician, conductor, teacher, friend, mentor, parishioner and ministry leader...these are some of the many hats Saint John's Church staff member Joseph Arndt wears around 4200 S. Atlanta Place. No matter how you know Joseph, or how well you think you know him, we believe you will enjoy getting a few "outside of the office" stories from our music director.

Q: It is evident that your parents are huge supporters and fans of your playing and conducting. Was music a big part of your family life growing up?

A: Music was always present when I was a child. I grew up hearing my mom (a pianist) and my dad (a cellist) playing together in the living room. I got my first job playing in an Episcopal church when I was twelve, and for several years one of my parents drove me to practice and to play for services until I could drive myself. A good family is the foundation for a successful life and career, and I consider myself very lucky.

Q: What late composer do you find the most (pick a word here: talented, haunting, innovative, moved by the Spirit) and why?

A: I absolutely adore the music of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). He was a Catholic mystic and an ornithologist. He incorporated ancient Greek rhythms and developed a unique tonal language. It's not always "easy listening" and his music is an acquired taste. I've incorporated some of his music at church occasionally and selectively. There's more of an audience for that music in huge cities (Dallas, NYC), but I've tried to broaden peoples' horizons in Tulsa!

Q: Do you like movies or theater? If so, please tell us a favorite you have seen (in person or streaming). A: I'm honestly not a big movie person these days. There seem to be too many prequels, sequels and spin-offs! One movie that stands out as a favorite to me as an adult, though, is *Doubt*. Featuring Philip Seymour

Hoffman and Meryl Streep, it is based on the play about an accused priest and the nun highly suspicious of him. What I love about the story is that it challenges you and the movie doesn't end with a clear result.

Q: What are three "bucket list" destinations you want to visit?

A: I really want to go to Prague because of the beautiful architecture I have seen in photographs. I also want to do something out of my usual Western European haunts! I'd love to visit Vietnam and Tanzania.

Q: We understand you like to hike. And several of us know you love brunch. What would your ideal "trekking in the mountains" picnic meal consist of?

A: In an ideal world, someone would cook me French toast in the middle of a long hike. But on a long hike I normally settle for a turkey sandwich and lots of water!

Q: Do you have a favorite liturgical season?

A: Advent is my favorite liturgical season! I love the rich Advent section of our hymnal and I take delight in being old-fashioned in my observance of Christmas. Michael and I make compromises because he'd prefer a Christmas tree go up in November! Generally we put one up and some other decorations about December 20.

Welcome Otis Houston-Gilley!

**This sweet boy is the son of
Lauren Houston and Shane Gilley
and he was baptized here at
Saint John's Church on
October 31, 2020.**





December Blessing Idea

In mid-November, Mary Waller had a chance to chat with parishioner Michael Turner about his work as assistant manager of the warehouse at Emergency Infant Services (EIS) in downtown Tulsa. EIS is a wonderful nonprofit agency offering temporary assistance to children ages five and younger whose families are in financial crisis for a wide variety of reasons. The organization provides the most basic of needs: food, formula, clothing and diapers, along with other children's items for thousands of infants and toddlers annually. A private, non-government-funded agency, EIS is committed to the mission: a hungry child cannot wait.

Because our church is not able to open the doors and take in donations or host a mitten-tree as we might have in 2019, Mary and Michael talked about the many ways Saint John's Church members could help struggling families during the holiday season. Making a financial gift or donation of goods to EIS is just one of many Tulsa giving opportunities our parish families might explore.

Michael shared that big items helpful to EIS for children are convertible child car seats and pack-n-plays. These are in short supply and the organization can accept them new or gently used. Food donations are helpful any month and those most in demand are infant formulas (either regular or soy-based). Any brand is good, especially those labeled as "gentle."

Since EIS focuses resources on hunger and safety first, this leaves very little opportunity for the purchase of clothing items. The agency's staff welcomes new or gently worn coats, gloves, mittens or socks that are for sizes infant to eight toddler (8T).

If you or your family would like to support EIS through the gift of enrichment items, the staff would be delighted to make those available to families in time for Christmas! New or gently used toys, dolls, action figures, books or games for boys and girls from birth through five years of age are appreciated. The best date to get these items to the agency would be between now and December 11.

Donations are accepted at the EIS headquarters located at 1110 South Denver Avenue between 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. There, you can find a convenient drive-up service space and the staff will unload your car safely.

Michael shared with Mary that throughout all the difficult months of the coronavirus outbreak, EIS has always remained open and serving children. And, regrettably, he noted that the agency staff is preparing for a greater-than-usual need for emergency assistance this winter.

If you would like to learn more about the work of Michael and the dedicated crew at EIS, visit their website at www.eistulsa.org. Making a monetary contribution is simple. Just visit the agency's website donation page at www.eistulsa.org/donate.

"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." – Proverbs 19:17

Las Posadas

Last month we introduced a fun new Advent event for those active on social media: Las Posadas. This activity honors the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem, seeking refuge for the birth of Jesus. Would you like to sign up for a day in December to welcome these Mary and Joseph figurines into your home? If so, contact Tammie Kolker at (918) 636-5945 or tkolker1966@gmail.com.

What will you do with Mary and Joseph? The opportunities for sharing your life with them can include: time at your meal tables, reading them a story, reading a chapter in Luke associated with your date (i.e. on December 4 read Luke Chapter 4), take them with you on your activities, let them rest with you, or other ways they would enjoy knowing you.

You will receive instructions for uploading pictures or stories to our Saint John's Church-Tulsa community Facebook page. In addition, you will receive instructions for keeping Mary and Joseph safely cleaned and for delivering them to the next person.





Merry birthday wishes to our fellow parishioners who are celebrating another year around the sun this month. We lift you each up in prayer for another year full of health and happiness!

- 1 Nancy Daniel
- 2 Teresa DiPrima, Judy Moore
- 3 Meredith Anquoe, Margery Augustine, Julio Diaz Meray Boustani
- 4 Payton Ballard, Kristine Taylor
- 5 David Shorten, Cheryl Waldeck, Mickey Wilson
- 6 Julia Phillips
- 7 Kari Cosner, Judy Harris, Dianne Schooley
- 8 Hillary Cinocca, Marvin Hockenson, Penny Johnston, Lindsey Latham
- 9 Judy Carroll
- 10 Edith Coen, Kathy Fields, Bud Maguire, Brad Williams
- 11 Gentry Ballard, Dick Hedlund, Ellen Prather, Rowan Shores
- 12 Betsy Blue, Christine Ford, Natalie Gillett, Dorian Kurin, Piper Szabo
- 13 Marilyn Morris
- 15 Jimmy Cox, Lane Duel
- 16 Martha Brown, Tommi Cox-Phipps, Terri Dunbar, Pat Elsberry, Toni Rizley, Michael Vestal
- 17 Martha Moore, Jason Smith
- 18 Bob Burlingame
- 19 Adrienne Ed, Jeff Slattery, Fred Stowell
- 20 Ann Maske
- 21 Dwayne Edwards, Gene Melton
- 22 Leah Eckenwiler
- 23 Bode Duvall
- 24 Christy Shellshear, Jennifer Smith
- 25 Lynne Beeson, George Dotson, Sherri Duvall, Daphne Wise
- 26 Charlene Fabian, Mark Gulick
- 27 Bill Chevaillier, Steve Collinson, Steve Lake, Jody Williams
- 29 Linda Farquharson
- 30 Cameron Taylor
- 31 Wythe Dodson, Jack Perdue, Carolyn Shorten, Eva Sabo, Mark Youngblood

Boy Scout Troop 153 *by Trina Moore*

The Court of Honor will be December 5 outside at Holland Hall and we are delighted to announce we will be welcoming five new Eagle Scouts!

On another note, we need your help. Our troop's nominating committee is working to fill the Scoutmaster role, the Troop Committee Chairperson position, and other roles that are essential to maintaining a vibrant troop. Every parent and volunteer has something to offer Troop 153. The more individuals who are willing to offer their time and talent, the better the program we can offer our scouts. If you or someone you know would like to join us as either a scout or volunteer, please contact a troop leader.

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in our community, we are heeding the call of our community leaders to socially distance by conducting most of the troop meetings with size limitations and by Zoom calls. Opportunities to earn the Citizenship in the Community and Public Speaking merit badges can be done on these Zoom calls and by volunteering in the community. Other online Merit Badge courses are being offered by several area councils and Troop 153 scouts are welcome to participate in these.



*Struggling?
You Are
Not Alone.*

Suicide (800) 273-8255
Addiction (877) 226-3111
Eating Disorders (844) 228-2962
Depression (888) 640-5174
Domestic Violence (800) 799-7233
Self-Harm (877) 455-0628
GLBT (800) 246-7743
Crisis Textline -
Text TWLOHA to 741-741

**If you, or someone you know,
is struggling, these
hotlines can help.**

This Month at Saint John's Church
December 2020 Newsletter
Saint John's Episcopal Church
4200 South Atlanta Place
Tulsa OK 74105-4331

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TULSA, OK

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join us for many wonderful
Advent season and Christmas worship
and prayer services.

THE SEASON OF JOY!

CHRISTMAS EVE, Thursday, December 24
4:30 p.m. Evening Prayer (livestreamed only)
with special tableau video

9:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with music (livestreamed only)

CHRISTMAS DAY, Friday, December 25
8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (pre-recorded)

Sunday, December 27
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (livestreamed only)
5:30 p.m. Lessons and Carols (livestreamed only)

SPECIAL NOTE: DECEMBER 28 THROUGH JANUARY 2 WILL BE A LAYREADER
HOLIDAY. THIS MEANS THE CHURCH WILL NOT STREAM MORNING
AND EVENING PRAYER SERVICES ON THOSE DATES. WE WILL
POST A LINK EACH DAY ON FACEBOOK TO THE DATES'
CORRESPONDING READINGS FOUND AT
FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Personal Meditation During Advent

Just for Advent, our nave will be open to individuals (or family members from the same household) for private, quiet meditation. The dates are Wednesdays, December 2, 9 and 16. Thirty-minute time slots between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. are available by RESERVATION ONLY. Registrants will enter at the door on Atlanta Place, sign in, take their temperature, and go directly to their assigned pew. Masks are required at all times while in the building. Respect for the arrival and departure times, as well as seat assignments, is necessary so we may minimize the possibility of virus spread. To register contact Carteena at (918) 742-7381 or crobohm@sjtulsa.org.