



St. John's Episcopal Church | Norman, OK

ST. John's Episcopal Church

235 W. Duffy, Norman
405-321-3020
MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 2088
Norman, OK 73070

Services

Rite I:
8:00 AM
Sunday School:
9:30am
Rite II: 10:30 AM
Youth program:
4:00pm
Tuesday:
10:00am (Chapel)
Wednesday:
6:00pm (Chapel)

Inside This Month

- Letters from Fr. James / The Bishop
- Football Parking
- Book Review
- New Gates
- DOK

A Message from Deacon James

So ... let's address the elephant in the room.

The past few weeks have been rough for the St. John's community. Parishioners have ridden a dizzying roller coaster of thoughts and emotions since Fr. James Detrich's resignation as rector, and it's hard to know which way is up when trying to piece together bits of information and make sense of a confusing situation.

Which brings us to the metaphorical elephant. A group of people can look at the exact same elephant - or situation - and see something very different, depending on where one stands in relation to it. A person with a narrow view of one end would see the power and majesty of the elephant's face and head, whereas as someone on the other end sees nothing but a big ol' butt. And you know what? Both persons would be honest in what they see.

But with time and prayer, it becomes easier to move from either end and gain a broader view, one that provides a fuller understanding of both the present and future that's in front of us.

Personally, a broader view helps me appreciate Fr. James' contributions, from leading our re-emergence from the pandemic and strengthening stewardship to suggesting we start a Halloween trunk or treat for kids. There's also the broad view of our church itself, and its wide variety of members and activities in a community of worship that makes it such a special place.

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The timing of Holy Week and Easter Sunday is rather serendipitous. Because as we emerge from this difficult time, the Holy Week services of Palm Sunday, Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Great Vigil that precede Easter Sunday remind us more than any other time of year just how deeply Jesus loves us. He suffered greatly and died for us, and on the third day he rose again in the greatest of glory.

St. John's is not dead, far from it. But we have been going through a deep valley and now stand on the brink of renewed life and energy. Over time, the weighty elephant disappears and we are left with a clearer view of opportunities that lie ahead.

That growth and opportunity will be carried out by our parishioners of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, ideologies and personalities. Who we are and what we do is summarized well in the lyric from the U2 song "One": "We're one, but we're not the same"

I want to close by thanking people who do a lot of carrying, especially lately:

- Every person who has felt hurt, confused or even angry over the past few weeks, and yet still come to church. Thank you for keeping the faith.
- Every person who has returned recently after a long time away. Thank you and welcome back.
- The vestry. Omigosh, the vestry, and all that you have been through for the sake of our congregation. Thank you for your time, patience and discernment.
- Music director Melody Palm and all choir singers who faithfully show up most weeks. Your voices are a blessing that helps carry us through, so thank you.
- Every volunteer, including altar guild members, ushers, Eucharistic visitors, schedule makers, Greg Taylor with A/V, IT and security, and those in the parish office.
- Speaking of the parish office, thank goodness and Fr. James for our parish administrator Taylor Redden, who is doing a great job of facilitating and multitasking to keep St. John's running. Thank you!
- A humongous thank you to Canon to the Ordinary Betsy Randall, for leading our worship services for four weeks in March and for her vital and continuing assistance with both the vestry and Fr. James. Her impact has been immeasurable, thank you.
- And thank yous in advance to Fathers John Borrego and Blake Woods for the services they will lead in the coming weeks. Their warmth, wisdom and familiarity will be a comfort during this time of transition.

So now, friends, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

James Dietrich Letter of Resignation

A personal tradition of mine is each Ash Wednesday, I place in the sermon this line: we are all replaceable. It sounds a little cold when it's isolated from the larger point, which is that God calls us into his work. It's not our work. We get the privilege of participating in his work, and so, we can't get too big for our britches! We need to remember that we are all replaceable. And when the day comes when God chooses to move us along, we need to trust that others will come along and take up the work.

God is indeed moving me along. As I took a hard look at where we are as a parish, I came to the conclusion that I don't have the support necessary to keep doing the work I need to do here at St. John's. Also, in the midst of some really important and vital discussions, philosophical differences arose that just made my continuing in my role impossible.

Therefore, I've decided to resign as rector, effective immediately.

Please understand that I'm not resigning because of some scandal in the church—far from it. This decision is only being made for the reasons I stated above.

I leave St. John's proud of the work we all did together over the past 22 months. So many of you gave some much of yourselves to the work. You gave your time, talent, and treasure, and for that, I'll always be grateful.

Where all of that work eventually goes will now be in the hands of new leadership. And that's how it should be. The wheel keeps turning, and the church of Jesus Christ keeps worshipping and serving and doing the things it's called to do.

LeEtta and I consider our time at St. John's to be a lasting memory that we won't forget. We love this church, and we're be praying for its success from a distance.

Blessings to each of you.

James+

Bishop Poulson's Letter to St. John's

Dear People of Saint John's,

I know that the resignation of Father James as your rector has come as a shock to many, so I wanted to reach out to offer you my support, and most importantly, my prayers.

Father James has done much good and important work in his time with you, much of it during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID pandemic. I am grateful to him and to LeEtta for their many contributions to Saint John's.

At the same time, I know that the future of Saint John's is bright. I've been blessed to worship and visit with you all four times already in my less than three years as Bishop. I've met several times with your Vestry, including very recently. Your lay leadership is gifted and dedicated, and will guide you faithfully into your next chapter of ministry.

And I have assured your Vestry that my Canon to the Ordinary, Canon Betsy Randall, and I will be alongside you in this transition time, supporting you as you prayerfully seek your next rector. As a sign of our care for you, Canon Betsy will be with you for the next several Sundays to lead worship and offer pastoral support.

We know that what we hope for and what actually happens do not always align, sometimes painfully, but God is always with us, to guide and strengthen us.

My prayers and love are with you in this Lenten season, as we follow the way of our Lord's cross towards the hope of resurrection.

Blessings,

Bishop Poulson



For many St. John's Parishioners, this is a familiar sight. This signage is posted at the entrances of the nave as well as other locations throughout our building. What you may not realize, is this is one of the many ways we strive to be ADA Compliant and make in person worship as easy as possible for those who need assistance when attending services.

But..what is it? Unless you have hearing issues..or have a loved one who does, you may not be aware of the challenges and difficulties posed in attending public events and fully hear the range of sounds created as part of the service.

Hearing loops allow people who wear hearing aids to receive the sound from a sound system directly to their own hearing aids, much like Wi-Fi. The sound system in St. John's is designed to combine all the sound sources (speech, singing, instruments) gathered during a service and channel them into the hearing loop.

The majority of hearing aids on the market today have a telecoil, or "t-coil" program available in them which will serve as a receiver to the hearing loop. The telecoil program must be activated by a hearing professional. If you are unsure if your hearing aid has a telecoil in it, please consult your audiologist. If you do not have a hearing aid, receivers are available for your use.

For further information, contact staff@episcopalnorman.org.



BRINGING THEOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY DOWN TO EARTH

Diana Butler Bass, GROUNDED: Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution. (HarperOne, 2015). Available in audible (read by the author), e-book, paperback, & hardcover formats, new @ \$9-25, 341 pages, 11 hr 46 min.

Diana Butler Bass converted in youth from Methodism to Evangelical Protestantism and then in the early 1990s to become Episcopalian. Now this prolific lay theologian confesses a third profound conversion at the millennium, "to the world, the dwelling place of the divine." At once literal and metaphoric, at once physical and spiritual, *Grounded* names that conversion.

Where is God? Bass responds to that big question with stories of encounters with God in nature and in community. Church is not the only sacred space we inhabit: our planet is itself sacred ground. Bass has not abandoned Bible, faith, or church for secularism. Instead, her Christian faith has moved beyond the distant holy majesty of "the vertical God and elevator church," toward horizontally seeking a quotidian "God with(in) the world," toward love of God and neighbor that "enlivens the earth and the mystery that hovers just beyond sight." Where is God? Bass concludes "God is with us. Here"—grounded in dirt, water, and sky; in roots, home, neighborhood, and commons: at the beach, in air we breathe, at Sandy Hook and on 9/11, at Farmers' Market and local Art Walk, in backyard gardens, around tables, at front doors, in learning from sciences, in our own cultural histories and meetings with strangers. In Biblical narrative Bass reads testimony of "a God who comes close, compelled by a burning desire to make heaven on earth and occupy human hearts."

Naming this down-to-earth theology "sacred cosmopolitanism," she describes its revolutionary appeal to people of diverse world faith traditions and none, including not only Episcopalians and other church-going

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Christians, but also those now-unchurched somehow-faithful among whom we live, who call themselves “spiritual but not religious.” As in her past research on church history and on contemporary neighborhood church life, she expresses skepticism about both the false choice between a deceased God and fundamentalism and the presumed modern decline in faith and spirituality. She acknowledges that many folks avoid church because they expect conventional dogmatic scorn for their honest perceptions and intelligent thoughts; yet her memoirs show how they do seek experiences of wisdom, meaning, and awe in the world that we call God. *Grounded* calls us to greet such folks with friendly curiosity rather than brand them crazy or evil.

This magnificent book ends with Bass’s witness to an Episcopal church whose “living expression of Jesus in the world” kept its Eucharistic tradition in a Celtic evening service, but reoriented its worship and contemplation from a “mountain of privilege” focus on heaven and a distant patriarchal God to a profoundly hospitable community encounter with the beloved world—with “the sacred unity at the heart of all things, enlarging our field of vision to experience ourselves, our neighbors, and God as an inter-related ecology of faith.”

Doesn’t that compassionate spirit of cosmic unity sound like the posted mission of our own beloved St. John’s? You’ll find this profoundly practical theology both beautiful and easy to read: Bass writes as if she’s walking and talking with us on the Legacy Trail.

--reviewed by Susan Laird

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WINNER OF THE RELIGION NEWS
ASSOCIATION BOOK AWARD

DIANA BUTLER BASS

Author of Christianity After Religion

GROUNDDED



FINDING GOD IN THE WORLD
A SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION

Diana Butler Bass, *GROUNDDED: Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution* (HarperOne, 2015). Available in audible, e-book, paperback, & hardcover formats, new @ \$9-25, 341 pages, 11 hr 46 min.

Knit Night

The "Knit" Night Gatherings will be 6:30 to 8:30 pm in the Commons. It's an Open House format, so drop in for whatever part of the time works with your schedule. Bring any portable needlework or craft project you want to work on, and join our small group for fellowship. We'll only have ONE gathering in April, due to Maundy Thursday being the 1st Thursday of April. If you have any questions, or would like to be included in email reminders, contact Melody Palm through Realm.

Music

The St. John's Handbells have been refurbished! Parts for the ringing mechanisms have been replaced and regulated, and the bells have been thoroughly cleaned and polished. They look and sound great, and are more responsive to good ringing techniques. Plans are being made for rehearsals, and more information will be coming soon.

2023 Spring Game Football Parking

Our parking lot will be available again April 22nd for OU football parking, and volunteers are needed for the season! Please scan the QR code below for access to the Google reservation form. If there are any other dates you would be available to come out and help please leave a short description in the comments portion of the reservation form.



Book Of Common Prayer

There is an opportunity here at St. John's to remember, honor or give thanksgiving for a love done(s). After a check on condition and a count of how many were needed, the Vestry ap-proved the purchase of fifty (50) books of Common Prayer pew edition. Some will re-place badly worn books while others will be placed in pews where there are insufficient numbers of books. If you would like to "sponsor" one of these BCPs, a label will be placed on the inside cover with the name(s) of whoever you are honoring and your name(s). Please call or stop by the church office if you would like to do this, the cost of sponsorship is \$22.50.



Daughters of the King

On March 11, the Martha Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King welcomed three new members, **Clois Gordon**, **Bex Smith**, and **Stacy Smith**.

The Daughters of the King is a prayer and service order for women. Reaffirming the promises made at Baptism and Confirmation, a Daughter pledges herself to a life-long program of prayer, service and evangelism and in doing so fulfills the Order's mission to extend Christ's Kingdom. Women at St. John's who are interested in deepening their prayer lives and living according to a rule of life are encouraged to contact Martha chapter president Merrie Beard at merriebeard@gmail.com to find out more about the Daughters.

St. John's at a Glance

Prayer Requests

Prayer requests may be submitted to the church by calling the office, sending an email to staff@episcopalnorman.org, or online at www.episcopalnorman.org/prayer-request. Requests will be added to the Prayers of the People, unless you would like your request kept private.

Online Giving

Many of you have recently taken advantage of the ease of making pledge payments online. If you are interested in doing so as well, go to episcopalnorman.org and click on the DONATE button in the upper left corner. There is a simple form to complete; be sure to also complete the memo with what the donation is for. You can use this to pay for altar flowers, make memorial donations, etc. We use a secure program facilitated by our bank. Questions? Contact the office at 321-3020.

Online Church Service Options

Sunday Mornings: Live stream is here! The videos are available on the St. John's website, <http://episcopalnorman.org/livestream.aspx>.

OFFICE HOURS

Mon 10am-2pm
Tues, Wed, Thurs 10am-4pm

ADDRESS: 235 W. Duffy, Norman, OK 73069

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PHONE: 405-321-3020

WEBSITE: www.episcopalnorman.org

EMAIL: staff@episcopalnorman.org



EVANGEL

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tues, Wed, Thurs
10a.m. to 4 p.m.

STAFF

The Rev. James Tyree
Deacon

Catherine Wilson
Christian Formation
Director

Taylor Redden
Parish Administrator

Melody Palm
Interim Organist/Choir M.

Matthew Wilson
Youth Director

Our beautiful gates have been installed to keep our courtyard area safe and beautiful. They were constructed by former OU football player Erin Helvey of Helvey Originals. We have pondered this change for several years. Our children and many adults enjoy sitting outside and having coffee and visiting after services, and now we have a place that is free of debris left by strangers and ballgame revelers. Hayward (our yard engineer) has our courtyard grass looking pretty and we will have new landscaping planted soon in this area. The gates will be opened and welcoming when we have services. As the weather warms and the beauty of God's gardens spring up, please come, and enjoy this wonderful-restful area. Pat Welch, Jr. Warden



Evangel Submissions

Please feel free to submit articles for new and upcoming Evangels. If you would like to submit something to be included in the future please Email a copy of your Article to evangel@episcopalnorman.org, or submit by scanning the QR code and filling out the Submission Form.

