



MMXX: 10 : October : 2020

# EVANGEL

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH – NORMAN

## *Accepting Help as a Gift*

Holy Eucharist

### SUNDAY

7:30 a.m. Rite I  
9:30 a.m. Rite II  
*in the courtyard*

### TUESDAY

Suspended until  
further notice

### Evening Prayer

Suspended until  
further notice

### Inside

Moving into the Nave

Care & Share

Book Review

Blood Drive

Dear Parish Family,

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”  
—Acts 20:35

The Acts of the Apostles tells us that St. Paul attributes this saying to “the words of the Lord Jesus.” We Christians hold this ideal as a call to generosity and self-giving love.

I may be about to veer off the theological highway here—and I hope that neither St. Paul nor the Lord Jesus will be too disapproving, but—sometimes it is more blessed to receive than to give.

I had a powerful lesson in what it means to be blessed by receiving not too long ago. As many of you know, while I was in the middle of presiding at the Eucharist on September 6, the first day we gathered in the courtyard for public worship, I suddenly felt unwell. I was light-headed, my vision blurred, and I felt weak in the knees. I sat down for a few minutes and drank some water, hoping that this would pass. It did not.

It was then that I began a long experience of receiving, as I was unable to give anything at all. Deacon James Tyree took over the leadership of worship, as Greg Taylor and George Elassal helped me back into the building when I was pretty sure I would have been on the ground if I had tried to do it under my own power. I was upset and embarrassed. Stephanie Abla assured me that everything would be OK.

Within a few minutes, a team of EMTs had arrived and took blood pressure, attached a heart monitor, and started an IV. I remained in their competent hands as I rode to the

emergency room at Norman Regional Healthplex. There another group of doctors, nurses and technicians took over. George and James came to the hospital to look in on me, and Canon Eric Cooter called on behalf of Bishop Poulson to see how I was doing.

Another ambulance ride took me to the Oklahoma Heart Hospital, and I was once again surrounded by caring professionals. It's a pretty helpless feeling when you're either lying in bed, or being wheeled around hospital corridors.

Eventually, the verdict was that I had experienced a sudden drop in blood pressure caused by dehydration and anemia. That is not exactly good news, but since I was afraid I had had a stroke, it was welcome.

Through this whole event, I depended entirely on other people to take care of me. At certain points, my life was literally in the hands of others. I can't think of an experience at which I was receiving so much, without even the possibility of giving anything.

So I return to my original point—sometimes it is better to receive than to give. When we give, we are in control. When we receive, we are not.

This was nothing less for me than an experience of God's love, mercy and grace, mediated through the hands and hearts and minds of many of God's children. It was better to receive than to give.

—Rev. John Borrego  
Priest at St. John's

## REOPENING FOR WORSHIP IN THE NAVE ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

### THE LESSONS

*Lectionary Year A*

OCTOBER 4  
*Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20  
Psalm 19  
Philippians 3:4b-14  
Matthew 21:33-46

OCTOBER 11  
*Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
Exodus 32:1-14  
Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23  
Philippians 4:1-9  
Matthew 22:1-14

OCTOBER 18  
*Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost*  
Exodus 33:12-23  
Psalm 99  
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10  
Matthew 22:15-22

OCTOBER 25  
*Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost*  
Deuteronomy 34:1-12  
Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8  
Matthew 22:34-46

The Vestry has decided that we will once again offer indoor worship services at St. John's, beginning Sunday, October 4. We will gather at our regular times, 7:30 AM for Rite I and at 10:30 AM for Rite II.

We will, of course, take every possible safety precaution. Temperatures will be taken at the door, masks and hand sanitizer will be offered, and seating in pews will be staggered. We ask that you sit only with your family group.

The Rev. Canon Eric Cooter, Canon to the Ordinary, will be the guest preacher at both services on October 11.

We ask your patience as we cautiously move forward to this next step.

We are glad to be able to gather together and strive to continue to do so safely.

## St. John's to Host Blood Drive

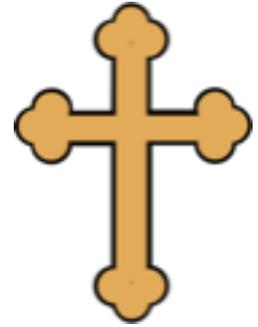
On October 18 from 8:30 am to 1 pm in the Parish Hall, St. John's will be hosting the Oklahoma Blood Institute for a blood drive. Donating blood is a great and appropriate way to minister to the sick. This year, blood donations are needed to help rebuild the blood supply in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

The Oklahoma Blood Institute supports the inventory for patients in more than 160 hospitals, medical facilities, and air ambulances statewide. One in every seven people entering the hospital will require blood. However, of those eligible to donate in the US, only about ten percent actually do.

All donations made during the drive for donors 18+ will be tested for COVID-19 antibodies to identify potential convalescent plasma donors.

Remember giving blood only takes about an hour and can save as many as three lives!

For questions please contact Carol Upp at [carolupp65@gmail.com](mailto:carolupp65@gmail.com)



### 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](http://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

We are thrilled that in-person church services are resuming (back in the Nave October 4th)! For now, we will continue to offer our online services, as well. Connect with us here:

**Wednesday Services:** The Rev. James Tyree, our deacon, is offering a midweek prayer service and a homily reflecting on the life and ministry of Episcopal saints. The videos are available on the St. John's website, <https://episcopalnorman.org/videos.aspx>.

**Adult Sunday School:** The adult Sunday School class has been meeting on the St. John's patio on the northwest corner of the building. Join them for a socially distanced, bring-your-own-coffee discussion of the day's lectionary lessons.

**St. John's Morning Prayer:** Morning prayer will continue online at least through October. Please join us via Zoom for morning prayer on Sunday mornings at 11:00 AM. This lay led service takes about 20-30 minutes and is a great opportunity for group prayer, practice of our liturgies, and meditation on the lectionary readings. To join the meeting, just click the link below from your computer, smartphone, or tablet. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, download the free Zoom app from your device's app store. If you have questions about this service or about how to use Zoom, please contact Shannon Conley at [la.emperatriz@gmail.com](mailto:la.emperatriz@gmail.com).

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73026652111?pwd=WEhxVUNKc2dUWHJXaGRWNIRGdHRLUT09>

Meeting ID: 730 2665 2111  
Password: 003527

## Youth Group News

Youth Group is open for all 6th through 12th graders. If you are interested in either learning more about it or details for the meetings, please email our youth minister, Emma Brown, at [ebrown@episcopalnorman.org](mailto:ebrown@episcopalnorman.org).

No football parking in October, but youth group will continue to meet either in person or online in accordance with the Norman Public Schools' guidelines. *Please watch Groupme for weekly announcements about youth meetings.*

Questions?  
Comments? Contact Emma!

## Cleveland County CROP Walk

Cleveland County CROP Walk organizers have a goal this year to raise at least \$20,000 to fight hunger, and St. John's is helping once again by agreeing to be a \$200 sponsor.

The Cleveland County CROP Walk is scheduled on Sunday, Oct. 18. Proceeds will go to the Church World Service and locally to Food and Shelter, Inc. CROP stands for "Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty" and Norman will host more than 800 events across the nation.

The CROP Walk normally calls on participants to gather and walk together but this year, due to the pandemic, there are three ways to support the event:

- Spirit Walkers who support the walk through prayers and online support.
- Distant Walkers who walk on their own or with family, who raise funds online and share your photos or videos in social media.
- Event Walkers with their team, with social distancing, at Andrews Park on Oct. 18. Teams will have staggering start times to prevent crowding.

To participate or learn more, visit [clevelandcountycropwalk.org](http://clevelandcountycropwalk.org).

## PASTORAL CARE

The church is committed to the well being of its members through caring relationships and kind actions. The Pastoral Care committee and St. John's staff are placing calls to check on our parishioners during COVID-19. Fr. Borrego is also available for pastoral care via phone or email. If you or someone you know needs care from the Pastoral Care committee, please contact the church office at 321-3020, or [staff@episcopalnorman.org](mailto:staff@episcopalnorman.org).



## *Volunteer Spotlight—Melissa Busby*

Lay reading at St. John's is so easy – in addition to providing a special worship experience.

“It brings lay people into the service,” said Melissa Busby, St. John's lay reading coordinator. “And in the Episcopal Church, this is a way to make sure everyone feels included and can participate.”

During both Sunday services, lay readers go to the lectern and read aloud the first and second liturgical readings (from the Old Testament and non-Gospel New Testament, respectively). The first reader also leads the congregation in reading the appointed Psalm unless the choir sings it during the 10:30 a.m. service.

Busby schedules one lay reader for the 7:30 a.m. service, who handles all readings and leads the prayers of the people, and two volunteers for the larger 10:30 service. Busby said this is where the “easy” comes in.

“For the first reading at the 10:30 service, anyone who wants to can come up from the pews and do a reading; that's all there is to it.”

In the long-ago pre-pandemic days of yore – and perhaps someday again – the 7:30 reader and second reader for the 10:30 a.m. service also served a wine chalice during the Communion service. Busby said a little more training is involved for that role along with a license from the diocese, but even that is relatively easy.

“We do a brief training,” she said. “But if you've seen a service, you pretty much will know what is involved, even those who chalice.”

Busby has been coordinating the lay reading schedule at St. John's for about six years. She said volunteers let her know whether they are available for the 7:30 or 10:30 service or both, and whether they are willing to do any reading or just the non-chalice first reading at 10:30.

She estimates the church currently has between 25 and 30 lay readers.

“It's really about half and half between 7:30 and 10:30 and quite a few for either service,” Busby said.

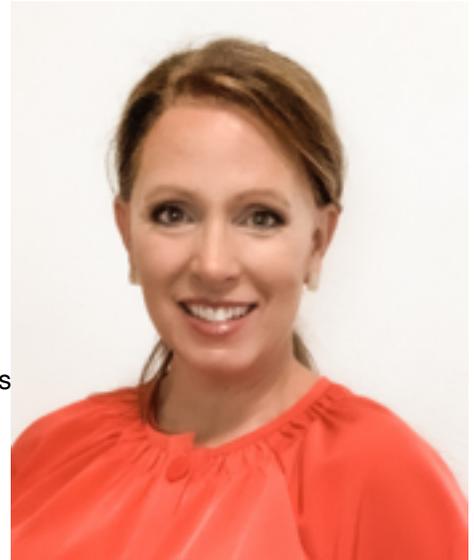
After getting input from readers each quarter on when they will or won't be available, Busby makes a lay reading schedule that goes three months out. It's far enough in the future for the volunteers to plan their schedules without it getting too far out for any certainty.

But this is 2020, when planning anything presents a persistently precarious predicament. The end of Busby's original winter reading schedule went by the wayside in March, as did her attempts to schedule the July restart. But that failed to dim the enthusiasm among volunteers to get back to reading again – even before the courtyard services in September and indoor church reopen this month.

“When we decided to have services in the courtyard, I reached out to everyone again. There were a few who decided to hold off and that is understandable, and others who were so excited to come back,” Busby said. “And when we started recording services, several who had not been comfortable with the in-person service were happy and willing to do that.”

Busby and her husband Jeff joined St. John's in 2002 when they and their three children – son Ki and twin daughters Brenna and Callie – moved to Norman from Rock Island, Okla., near Fort Smith, Ark., where they also attended a St. John's church.

“As we drove around town, we saw the (St. John's) building and immediately fell in love and said, ‘We'll try this first.’ And I just love the courtyard, it always feels so peaceful, so I was happy when we started having services there.”



# *Lectio Divina Bible Study Continues*

James Tyree continues the Lectio Divina Bible Study on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m., via Zoom. Lectio Divina is a style of reading in which a passage is slowly read aloud. The group then meditates on what was read and said before the verses are read again. Prayer and contemplation follows, and then each person is invited, if he or she chooses, to share what God may be telling that person through words or a phrase that, during the Lectio Divina process, really spoke to that person.

Throughout the series we will consider scriptures from Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. You are warmly invited to attend any, some, or all of the discussions on Zoom. The log-in information is detailed below. If you have any questions or login issues, feel free to call or text me at 405-820-1851.

Topic: Go Eat PopCorn with Lectio Divina  
 Time: 07:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)  
 Oct 7, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Oct 14, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Oct 21, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Oct 28, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Nov 4, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Nov 11, 2020 07:00 PM  
 Nov 18, 2020 07:00 PM



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723512607?pwd=dVMYWHIZbVo3dzV2cGlmUW1CM2h5QT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2351 260

Passcode: 694433



## *Blessing of the Animals*

The annual Blessing of the Animals will take place on Sunday, October 11, at 3:00 p.m. in the courtyard. Bring your beloved pets for a blessing in celebration of St. Francis. For those who prefer, a drive-thru blessing will be offered at the entrance of the church at 3:30. Pets may remain in vehicles for a blessing. Children may also bring stuffed animals to be blessed.

## *St. John's Knit Night*

"Knit" Night is a fellowship opportunity that, in normal times, offers a time to gather with others working on portable projects, such as knitting, crochet, embroidery, drawing, quilting and mending. We create and chat, building understanding and friendship.

Hopefully, we'll be able to resume meeting in person soon. For October, we'll continue to meet virtually. Projects are optional. You're welcome to join us just for the fellowship.

We invite you to join us the 1st and 3rd Thursday evenings at 8 pm -- October 1 and October 15. Our Zoom meeting is at the same link as Sunday Morning Prayer:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73026652111?pwd=WEhxVUNKc2dUWHJXaGRWNIRGdHRLUT09>

Meeting ID: 730 2665 2111

Password: 003527

Please contact Melody Palm at [mapalm@ilsu.edu](mailto:mapalm@ilsu.edu) if you have any questions.

## SPIRITUAL WISDOM FROM DARK TIMES

Elaine Pagels, *Why Religion? A Personal Story*, HarperCollins, 2018. Available in paperback for less than \$15, ebook for less than \$10.

Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels* (1979) became a lighthouse for my faith journey as I grieved my father's death. Then I read her thought-provoking *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (1988) and *Beyond Belief* (2003). So I welcomed Father Borrego's suggestion to review Pagels' latest. My summary review? Wow! Wow! Wow! This is a riveting spiritual autobiography, the deepest, most moving book I have read in a long time, hard to put down. Thank you, Father Borrego!

Now 77, grandmother, Episcopalian, Pagels was schooled in California (along with the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia!) and grew up in an anti-religious family averse to emotion, only to become an internationally renowned historian of early Christianity. With her husband, physicist Heinz Pagels (1939-1988), she had one son (1981-1987), and adopted a daughter and another son. Besides titles above, she has written five other books; some figure in the "personal story" *Why Religion?* tells. But this is not an academic book! It is a deeply felt life story pursuing the question, "Why is religion still around in the twenty-first century?" (p. xiii).

After hearing Billy Graham preach at a Crusade for Christ rally, she sought respite from her family's unfeeling ethos as a teenager by becoming an evangelical Christian, but left the church when told her Jewish boyfriend who had died in a car crash would go to hell because he had not been born again. Afterwards, as a Harvard graduate student in religion, she encountered gender discrimination and sexual harassment—also filing cabinets full of "secret gospels" she had never heard of, discovered in 1945. They became her life's work. The Church of the Heavenly Rest, an Episcopal parish in New York, appears occasionally for weddings, funerals, and pastoral consultations, and she mentions Twelve Steps too, but *Why Religion?* is a story about neither church nor recovery program. Thomas Keating at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, befriends Pagels, and Cistercian monks (Trappists) there influence her spiritual practices. Her devotion to studying those gospels the early Church had rejected as heresy was itself a faithful practice that spiritually sustained Pagels through the deaths of her little son and also of her beloved husband suddenly a year later. But this is not a book about how to meditate or pray, or do historical theology.

"What matters to me more than whether we participate in institutions or leave them," she writes, "is how we engage the imagination—in dreams, art, poetry, music—since what each of us needs, and what we can engage, obviously differs and changes throughout our lifetime." She cares about "experiences that shape, shatter, and transform those who initiate or engage them," that make "new relationships with ourselves and with others" (p. xiv). *Why Religion?* draws us into her own such experiences from adolescence forward, into the shared devastation of 9/11, often rendered from all sides in religious myths and metaphors. Read it to feel for yourselves the deep joys and griefs that animate her faithful search for healing and hope through dark times.

### FROM ST. JOHN'S LIBRARY

This monthly column in *Evangel* features short reviews of books from the parish library as well as Episcopal Church Publishing and cathedral stores, and the Education for Ministry program at Sewanee, or books recommended by our rector. Books reviewed need not be brand-new, but should serve the purpose of expanding our learning resources for spiritual growth—perhaps also introducing texts for study by parish groups and Sunday School classes. To participate in this educational lay ministry, contact parish librarian Anne Harris [anneharris636@gmail.com](mailto:anneharris636@gmail.com) or Susan Laird [susielaird@icloud.com](mailto:susielaird@icloud.com), or *Evangel* editor Merrie Beard [merrie@episcopalnorman.org](mailto:merrie@episcopalnorman.org). Submission deadline: third Sunday of each month, about 200-500 words.



# ST. JOHN'S OUTREACH

## CAMPAIGN TO CARE AND SHARE

OUTREACH OFFICE  
Administered through  
Food & Shelter for  
Friends due to  
COVID.

FOOD & SHELTER  
FOR FRIENDS MEAL  
Third Tuesday of each  
even month  
9:30 - noon

## We're All in This Together

2020 has brought more challenges than anyone could have imagined. The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in heartache for our friends and neighbors. And each day we turn on the news see the turmoil our country currently faces. We feel hopeless and powerless. But there is something we can do. When we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we help restore faith in those that have nowhere else to turn.

making a true difference in the lives of Norman's most vulnerable. All funds for St. John's Outreach Ministry are solely raised through your generous donations. Rest assured that your contribution to the Care & Share Campaign provides meaningful assistance to those that need it the most and is truly appreciated by so many!

Thank you for prayerfully considering your gift.

This month, we are kicking off our Virtual Annual Care & Share Campaign for Outreach to raise money to sustain our efforts and serve those in need. By giving to our annual Care & Share Campaign, you are

Lisa Schade  
*Outreach Chair*

## 2020 Campaign Goal - \$6,000.00

Each year, St. John's Outreach Office provides resources to our local friends in need who have experienced unfortunate circumstances and have no other place to turn. These include underemployed families in poverty that are trying to make ends meet to avoid losing their homes, families that are trying to facilitate new opportunities to improve their situation through obtaining education or new jobs, and those that are homeless in Norman. Every person is unique with a different situation, but extending the grace and mercy that God calls us to give results in smiles, tears, and a renewed dignity and spirit. This year, even though our offices were closed due to COVID, we fulfilled hundreds of requests for our neighbors in need. We prayerfully have set a goal of \$6000 to support our annual operating budget of \$10,000. Thank you for your generosity!

## Our Ministry Continues During COVID

In April, our Outreach Office stopped providing services to the public indefinitely due to COVID. However, we continue to receive daily calls from those in our community in need inquiring about assistance. Since we are unsure when it will be safe for the church to re-open to the public, the Outreach Committee has decided to partner with Food and Shelter for Friends to continue our ministry.

Beginning this month, Food and Shelter for Friends begin administering St. John's Outreach program at their location. All of the inquiries we receive by telephone or walk-in are being referred to their location for support. A dedicated case manager will assist those in need and provide services (bicycle repair, prescription assistance, back to work shoes and clothing, ID replacements and utility bills) until our monthly budget of \$750 is depleted.

Thank each of you for the support of our Outreach programs. The assistance you provide is invaluable to those who need it most, especially in this unprecedented time where many are in need of employment and services. If you're able to donate to Outreach, you can do so by pasting the email address below into your browser and selecting Care and Share Campaign or Outreach as the category. Thank you so much for your love and support those in need!

<https://onrealm.org/StJohnsEpiscopa87669/-/give/now>

### SANTA MINISTRY

For over a decade, St. John's parishioners have delivered the joy of Christmas to over 100 school children, DHS homebound seniors, and those in medical nursing homes. This year even though participation will be different, we are still planning for our Santa Ministry activities to continue. More information will be available in November. However, if you'd like to volunteer, please contact Lisa Schade (laneconsult@yahoo.com).

# ST. JOHN'S

Episcopal Church

235 W. Duffy, Norman  
405-321-3020

## MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 2088  
Norman, OK 73070

## OFFICE HOURS

9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Monday-Thursday

## STAFF

### The Congregation

Ministers of the church

### The Rev. John Borrego

Rector: 321-3020

### The Rev. James Tyree

Deacon

### Catherine Wilson

Christian Formation  
Director

### Merrie Beard

Parish Administrator

### Dr. Olivia Burke

Organist/choirmaster

### Emma Brown

Youth Minister

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

---

[staff@episcopalnorman.org](mailto:staff@episcopalnorman.org) • [www.episcopalnorman.org](http://www.episcopalnorman.org)

---

Due to COVID-19 virus, most services and activities have been suspended until further notice. We will meet in the Nave for services beginning October 4 (see page 2.)

The church office will open on Sunday mornings and by appointment. Staff are checking email and voicemails daily. Please contact us at 321-3020 or [staff@episcopalnorman.org](mailto:staff@episcopalnorman.org).

---

## Sundays

7:30 and 10:30 a.m., The Holy Eucharist

## COMING UP AT ST. JOHN'S

\*Pet Blessings, October 11

\*All Saint's Day, November 1

## St. John's Evangel

USPS 424550

Published monthly by

St. John's Episcopal Church

235 W. Duffy

Norman, OK 73069

*Periodical class postage*

*paid at Norman, OK*

## EVANGEL DEADLINE

October 15 for the

November issue

**Postmaster:** *Send change  
of address to*

St. John's / P.O. Box 2088 /  
Norman, OK 73070

> Keep up with the news of the diocese at:

[www.episcopaloklahoma.org](http://www.episcopaloklahoma.org)

> Connect with the wider Episcopal Church:

at [episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens](http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens)