



# LOGOS

The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

*"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1:5*

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October/November 2024

## Introducing St. John's New Deacon



Hello, friends!

I'm the Rev. Mary Cushing, newly ordained as a deacon and newly assigned to St. John's and St. Patrick's. My first day with both parishes will be Sunday, October 27. I'm excited to join you!

I'll naturally be participating in regular worship services, and my other work will focus on mission and outreach. The call of a deacon is to service, especially service to the marginalized: "the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely," as the ordination rite says. As important, deacons are called to support the laity as they pursue their baptismal call "to seek and serve Christ in all persons." Thus, I'll be working both to support ongoing initiatives, such as the Little Free Food Pantry at St. John's, and to explore new opportunities. Let's chat if you have ideas for new ministries! I'd love to help bring them to fruition.

As for myself, I'm a native of the New York City area and moved to Northern Virginia in 1984 for a job with the federal government. I began formation for the diaconate around the time I retired in 2021, and then I was ordained this August. I'm a mentor for the Education for Ministry (EfM) groups at The Falls Church Episcopal and at St. Michael's in Arlington. I live in Arlington with my two cats and enjoy visiting my daughters, who now live in Richmond and Philadelphia. In my free time I enjoy reading, puzzles, watching sports, and attending music and theatrical performances.

**Celebrating a Special Birthday Brunch**



St. John’s celebrated the 90th birthday of longtime member Kay Wells with a festive brunch on Sept. 8 following the worship service.

## All Saints Day and All Souls Day Remembrances

On Sunday, November 3, St. John's will remember the departed during the worship service. You are welcome to add the names of family and friends from around the world. You can email the names of those to be remembered, along with your name, to [office@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:office@stjohnsarlingtonva.org), or add the names to the form that will be at the back of the sanctuary on upcoming Sundays.

## Come Support St. John's AFAC Volunteers

On the second Friday evening of every other month, a group from St. John's spends an hour at the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) bagging food. Our next occasion to volunteer will be on Friday, November 8. Please contact Faye Pritchard at 703-931-2168 if you would like to join in this community ministry. You can also leave nonperishable grocery items for AFAC at the back of the sanctuary, or write a check to St. John's and include a note in the memo line that the donation is for AFAC. Thank you for continuing to support this valuable ministry!



### St. John's Staff and Leadership

**Staff**

Rector: The Rev. Julie D. Bryant  
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson  
Sexton: Julio Sorto

**Parish Leaders**

Peter Olivere, Treasurer  
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

**Vestry**

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden  
Patricia Broida  
Dave Dunlap  
Diane Henderson

Peter Olivere  
Lisa Pope  
Christine Williams

## St. John's Dedicates Little Free Food Pantry



Members of St. John's and the Glencarlyn community turned out on Saturday, Sept. 7, for the dedication of the Little Free Food Pantry. The Rev. Julie Bryant led the dedication event, which also featured a balloon artist, face painting for children, and light refreshments. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Pantry to date with your food and monetary donations! The most regularly needed items for the Pantry are tuna fish, shelf-stable milk, water, marinara sauce, snacks, dry lentils, rice, and peanut butter. To donate, visit <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/8ASCHW3B7DZ6A>, or checks can be made out to St. John's (please list "LFFP" in the memo line).

## Words on Hymns: *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

Our recessional hymn for October 20 was the gospel hymn *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*, written by Doris Akers in 1962. Akers (1923–1995) was an American gospel music composer, arranger, and singer who is considered to be one of the most underrated gospel composers of the 20th century. She wrote more than 500 songs.

Akers was born of an interracial marriage in Missouri, one of 10 children. She taught herself to play by ear at the age of six and composed her first song at age 10, *Keep the Fire Burning in Me*. During the 1930s, she formed a group with three of her siblings known as “Dot and The Swingsters.” She subsequently moved to Los Angeles, where she founded and directed the Sky Pilot Choir, an integrated choir that was featured on recordings, television shows, and radio broadcasts across the country. She went on to release many recordings until her death of spinal cancer in 1995.

Akers received numerous awards, including back-to-back Gospel Music Composer of the Year in 1960 and 1961. “Doris Akers Day” was held in Kirksville, Missouri in July 1976. Akers was the headline act of the city’s American Bicentennial celebration, with approximately 20,000 people attending an evening concert. In 1992, Akers was honored by the Smithsonian Institution as “the foremost black gospel songwriter in the United States.” She was posthumously inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2001 and the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2011.

In an interview with Lindsay Terry shortly before her death, she recounted the composing of *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*:

One Sunday morning, in 1962, she said to her choir, “You are not ready to go in.” She didn’t believe they had prayed enough! They were accustomed to spending time with her in prayer before going into the church service. She had once said, “I feel that prayer is more important than great voices.” They had

already prayed, but this particular morning she asked them to pray again, and they did so with renewed fervor. As they continued to pray, Doris began to wonder how she could stop this wonderful prayer meeting. She even sent word to the pastor about what was happening. Finally, she was compelled to say to the choir, “We have to go. I hate to leave this room, and I know you hate to leave, but you know we do have to go to the service. But there is such a sweet, sweet spirit in this place.”

During the interview, she told me, “We songwriters always have our ears open to the possibilities of a song. The song started ‘singing’ to me. I wanted to write it down, but couldn’t. I thought the song would be gone after the service. Following the dismissal of the service I went home. The next morning, to my surprise, I heard the song again, so I went to the piano and began to write, *There’s a sweet, sweet spirit in this place.*”

In her song, she recognized the “spirit” in the room as the “spirit of the Lord.” She could see in the “sweet expressions” of the choir members that they also recognized the “presence of the Lord.” In the chorus of the song she calls us back to the New Testament where the Spirit of God descended like a dove, lighting upon Jesus at his baptism (Matthew 3:16). She referred to him as “sweet Heavenly Dove,” asking him to “stay right here with us, filling us with your love.”

Akers was affectionately known as “Miss Gospel Music” because she was admired and respected by everyone in the music industry.

Carol Dunlap

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, November 5, at 7:30 p.m.** to discuss *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman. This classic theological treatise demonstrates how the gospel may serve as a manual of resistance for the disenfranchised. The selection for the **Tuesday, December 3**, meeting is *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. The novel tells the story of Chicken Hill, a neighborhood in a small Pennsylvania town where Jewish immigrants and African Americans live side by side. Come join the discussion in November and December. All are welcome!

### Thank You to:

➤ Everyone who has volunteered to monitor and stock the Little Free Food Pantry and all those who have contributed items for the Pantry.

➤ Liz White for organizing the joyous 90th Birthday Brunch in celebration of Kay Wells on September 8.

### We celebrate with all who have birthdays in October and November:

Erin Baynham, Dave Dunlap, Richard Henry, Roger Ludwig, Taylor Robinson, and Liz White.

### We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in October and November:

Ginger and Marshall Adair; Jeff and Michelle Aitken; Madeline and Andrew James; and Barbara Wien and Robert Herman.

#### LOGOS

LOGOS has a bi-monthly publication schedule.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).  
The deadline for the December/January issue is December 2.

#### St. John's Vision Statement

St. John's Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

#### St. John's Mission Statement

St. John's mission is building a strong spiritual community in Christ; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.