



RECTOR: REV. DIANE WONG
PARISH OFFICE: 781-648-4819
EMAIL: ADMIN@SAINTJOHNS-ARLINGTON.ORG
WEB SITE: [HTTP://WWW.SAINTJOHNS-ARLINGTON.ORG](http://WWW.SAINTJOHNS-ARLINGTON.ORG)
FACEBOOK: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/STJOHNSARLINGTON](https://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/STJOHNSARLINGTON)

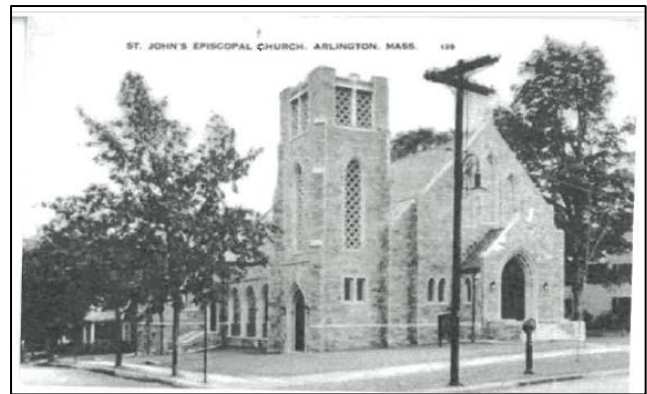
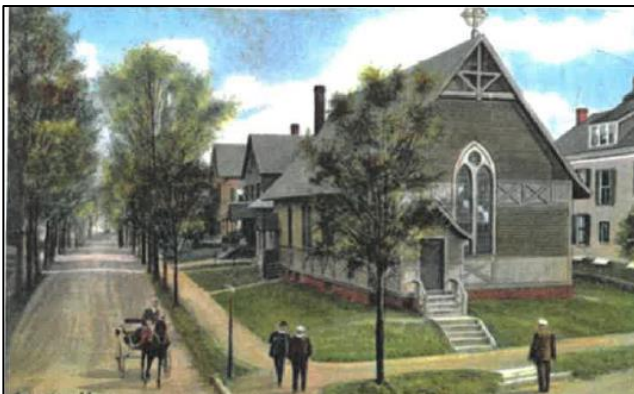
ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Newsletter – Summer 2025

A Message from the Reverend Diane Wong

If we go by the notion that church refers to a group of people committed to worshipping together, and not simply a building, then St. John's, our church, started on October 3, 1875 when 65 members gathered and attended the first Episcopal worship service in Arlington. Within a month, an Executive Committee was formed and the Committee decided to lease Menotomy Hall (where our Town Hall is currently located) for worship service. On October 27th, the first Sunday School was held there. On January 19, 1876, the first rector was called, and a movement began to have a church building. With the help of wealthy church members from Boston, St. John's had its first home on Academy Street in 1877.

After 50+ years, the church on Academy Street needed more space. A decision was made to purchase the building at the corner of Pleasant Street and Lombard Road. The building, then, was torn down to build our current church. The construction was completed in 1934.



(Historical information from January, 2001, Arlington Advocate)

What is amazing about this early history of St. John's is that both times, the decisions to take on the construction of a church building took place during a time when the country was in a financial turbulence - the Panic of 1873 and the Depression.

Now, 150 years later since the first service in 1875, some may still consider the timing of those decisions as being unwise and too big a financial risk. But perhaps the decisions were made out of faith, and the generosity of the people to make their vision a reality was also borne of faith. Our scripture tells us that God is in and alongside us always, to guide us, love us and support us. I like to think that those who came before us at St. John's back in 1875 understood this and leaned on their faith when making the decision. I like to think that their faith set an example for the people during the Depression when they made their decision.

Often God's call comes when we do not expect it and are not ready for the task. And there will always be times when we need to discern and make challenging decisions for our well-being and the well-being of the reign of God, to better serve God's people. Can the ever presence of God in and alongside us help us make decisions born of faith? Can the faith of the foremothers and forefathers of St. John's continue be our example?

While the tenants of our faith can be taught and passed along to the next generation, we cannot exactly teach the acts of faith. We can only teach them through examples of our own acts of faith. In the next ten, twenty, and fifty years of the life of St. John's, there will be occasions when challenging decisions need to be made. May our examples of faith allow those who come after us make decisions also borne of faith.

Appreciatively,

Diane+

Psalms 78:1-7 (the New International Version)

- 1 My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
- 3 things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
- 4 We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
- 5 He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,
- 6 so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
- 7 Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

Celebratory Plans/Ideas for St. John's 150th Anniversary!

- **Sept 27** - Family Dance Party in the Church Hall
- **Oct / Nov** - Organ Recital / Concert (after organ is fully repaired!)
- **Dec 14** - Bishop Julia Whitworth celebrates Eucharist at St. John's
- **January '26** - Game Night at St. John's!
- **February** - Movie Night with pizza and too much popcorn
- **March** - Celebratory Luncheon at Menotomy Grill to include Silent Auction fundraiser
- **April** - Speaker series (1st of 3? Theme ideas are welcomed)
- **May?** Wrap-up 150th celebrations with a Ragae Dance Party! Church hall? Or block party?

Family Dance Party September 27

This year our church will be celebrating its 150th anniversary. To start the celebration we will be having a family-friendly dance party on Saturday **September 27th** from **4:30 - 6:30pm** in the church hall featuring Stanley and the Undercovers! Please join us for dancing, pizza, snacks and fun! There is a \$10 charge per individual, couple, or family which will support funding for our organ repair. See you there - bring family and friends!!

Returning to the Camino

By Joseph A. Curro, Jr.



As many parishioners know, I had a life-changing experience in 2019, when my oldest daughter, Savannah, and I walked the Camino de Santiago from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, France to Santiago de Compostela, Spain and beyond, completing our pilgrimage in the Atlantic coast communities of Finisterre and Muxia. (Santiago de Compostela is widely believed to be the final resting place of St. James the Great, and this pilgrimage destination once ranked alongside Rome and Jerusalem.)

Little did I know, but these nearly 550 miles of walking were but the first steps on a much longer journey. Since returning home, I have had the privilege of serving as Boston Chapter coordinator, national board member, and chair of American Pilgrims on the Camino, which is dedicated to gathering pilgrims together, providing information, and extending support for the Camino in the form of a grant program and formal training for hospitality volunteers. I have also walked three

more Caminos, as well as the San Antonio Missions Walk in Texas, which is recognized as an official “preamble” for the Camino Inglés in Spain.

I was thrilled when my younger daughter, Sierra, called me a few months ago to ask if—as part of her college graduation gift—I would walk a Camino with her. And so, on June 8, we flew to Madrid and took the train to León to begin a 308-kilometer (191-mile) trek. All the old Camino magic came rushing back, as we: traversed fields and farms; visited cavernous cathedrals and tiny chapels; weathered intense heat, blisters, and the snoring of nearby sleeping pilgrims; jumped over bonfires on St. John’s Eve; sampled amazing cuisine; chatted with locals and gazed at livestock, domestic animals, and gorgeous landscapes; and made new friends from around the world, including leaders from other pilgrim associations in Spain, China, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and South Africa. We also had opportunities to memorialize loved ones we have lost over the past year.

I twice joined the throngs at the Santiago Cathedral to participate in Mass and to witness the swinging of the *Botafumeiro*, a 176-pound thurible, which races above the heads of onlookers at speeds of 42 mph, spouting smoke and flame. I also joined a far more modest group of worshippers at a midday Holy Eucharist service, which was made possible by the Anglican Pilgrim Centre in Santiago, whose lodging house, Casa Anglicana, Sierra and I stayed at.

As always happens on Camino, I had a chance to learn more about myself. My relationship with my daughter was also strengthened, and I know that both of us will remember and cherish this shared pilgrimage for the rest of our lives.

Deacon Linda’s Bio

By Linda Taupier

Are you wondering about your (fairly) new deacon? Let me tell you a little about my diaconate story.

I was ordained to the Diaconate in June 2017. I served at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield until my move to Arlington. Prior to my ordination I was a member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in East Longmeadow, MA for 40+ years. It was at St. Mark’s that I felt called to ordained ministry. With a truly supportive Bishop I began a discernment and, with a team from St. Mark’s I explored what it would mean to be a deacon. Meeting over a period of months, responding to questions and hearing their insights it became evident to all of us that my call was real. I graduated with the first class in the newly formed Province One School for Deacons.

I have been active in outreach ministry for 50+ years. I managed a free health clinic for many years until we were forced to close in 2018. I served on the Leadership Team for Church Without Walls which is a ministry for those not wishing to participate inside a church building for a variety of reasons. We met every Sunday at noon at Court Square in Springfield providing worship, community and lunch.

I also managed a Drop-In Center for the unhoused and disenfranchised located at the Cathedral with space set up like a living room for relaxation and conversation. Coffee, water and snacks as well as 2 washers and dryers for people to do their laundry.

In January 2023 I moved to Arlington to be closer to my daughter Jennifer, son-in-law Brett and grandchildren Nora 12 and Lucas 11. I accepted a call to serve as deacon at St. John’s in October 2024 and am very happy to be here.

Iris's Bio

By Iris Evich



I live in Somerville and graduated from Framingham State last year. I had worked at the library on campus and was originally looking at library positions post-graduation, but in November I learned that St James's, the church I went to growing up, was hiring an office manager. I've been working part-time there since December, and that's where I found out about the position here.

In my free time I like hanging out with my friends, reading, watching movies, and cooking. I love animals and currently have a cat named Tommy.

Two-Week Holy Week: Procession, Reflection, Explosion

By Jacquie Clermont

Holy Week, like everything else in Mexico, is gloriously over the top; it is actually two weeks of fireworks, processions, concerts, and decorations.



The good part, in addition, of course, to the visual feast it offers, is plenty of time to reflect on the relevance of a story we all know—the slow descent into despair and sudden appearance of hope and rebirth.

Processions in Mexico are common, with elaborately clad statues, followed by priests, members of their congregations and anyone willing to walk, sometimes in silence.

This is my first year here in San Miguel, and even though I heard the fireworks, I didn't realize what was going on in the center of town until it was almost too late.

It all started the week before Palm Sunday (one week is just not enough) when a casson bearing a life-size statue of Jesus, bleeding while tied to a column, is carried through the streets. It is the Lord of the Column (El Señor de la Columna), which would rest for the next few days in a local church.

The Virgin of Sorrows procession, led by a casson bearing the statue of a sorrowful Mary clad in dark velvet, follows on the Friday before Palm Sunday. There are displays of similar statues in public and private spaces, adorned by colors and plants with special symbolic significance. At the Real de Minas Hotel, I saw one such display surrounded by wheat grass (rebirth), white candles (purity), purple drapes (mourning), and baby's breath (purity). All week this plant was distributed in churches, thrown to the ground during processions, and used to decorate altars.

Fortunately, I did catch a few major events during Holy Week, including the night visit of the seven churches in the center of town; each represents Christ's seven steps to Calvary. Altars were decorated with baby's breath and bread, symbolizing the Eucharist. The statue of El Señor de la

Columna rested in the entry of one of the churches, and several people in line in front of me kissed the ropes people used to carry it.

The evening involved a lot of walking, and hungry, I resigned myself to eating street food for the first time in Mexico. Evidently, the angels were watching over me, as I was fine the next day, when my husband and I joined a Good Friday procession starting at the Parroquia de San Antonio de Padua. Sharing a bench in the park in front of the church, we watched as organizers put together a parade of musicians, singers, and children dressed in white, including two small angels. Needless to say, it did not start at 7 p.m. as advertised.

Leading the way was a caisson with a gold-trimmed glass coffin bearing the crucified Christ, followed by statues of Mary, Saint John, and Mary Magdalene. Each was on a kind of parade float of white and yellow flowers. John and the two Marys wore ornate velvet gowns with long cloaks carried by black-clad volunteers.

Also in the procession, women with black lace mantillas carried symbols of the crucifixion, such as the crown of thorns and the sign from the top of the cross.

Behind in the crowd were people like my husband and I, many of them carrying candles. Everyone save a few children and of course the brass ensemble and choir observed mandated silence.

We walked about a mile through San Antonio, a neighborhood here in San Miguel, just as the sun was setting.

There was plenty of time there in the thickening darkness for reflection. Here at the head of the procession was the man (Ecce homo) from the provinces who commanded followers to love their enemies, treated outcasts with dignity, and spoke truth to power. Power didn't like it. So on a holy day, he is captured, tortured, and humiliated, then finally killed.

Of his 12 followers, two betray him, while nine run for the hills. One, John, a young man who must have felt his world ended on Calvary, stayed until the end, as did the two Marys. Some scholars say other women also walked with him to Calvary. I love the bravery of these women.

And so as we walk to the doleful music, we see people, also with candles, lining the street or looking down from their roof gardens.

We reflect on the darkness of our own time, when the loudest, most hateful voice is the voice that gets heard. When people most like Jesus suffer at the hands of power-hungry bullies and religious zealots who apparently never understood the message of the New Testament. Or refuse to understand it.

Someone last week shared this quote from Gandhi on my Facebook feed. It is a reason for hope.

"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall... think of it, always."

The final event of the week, which I missed, came at noon with the burning of the Judases, paper mache figures of Judas, devils, and unpopular politicians, including an orange one we all know. They are stuffed with fireworks, so the explosions are, well, over the top.

Baha'i Community of Arlington and St. John's

By Farjam Mohtadi



Over a year ago, in commemoration of 10 Baha'i women who lost their lives in Iran in 1983 because of their religious beliefs, I reached out to a number of religious and community organizations to share their stories, to honor them and remember their love and steadfastness. Reverend Diane invited me to St John's and I spoke about these brave women. This was the start of a collaboration which I believe only God Himself could have arranged.

This initial connection has since led to a new initiative and for the past year, as Reverend Diane, members of St. John's and members of the Baha'i community have established a devotional space where all are welcome to pray and share what is most important to them: the love

of God. The Baha'i Writings speak about devotional spaces as "...occasions where any soul may enter, inhale the heavenly fragrances, experience the sweetness of prayer, meditate upon the Creative Word, be transported on the wings of the spirit, and commune with the one Beloved. Feelings of fellowship and common cause are generated, particularly in the spiritually heightened conversations that naturally occur at such times and through which the "city of the human heart" may be opened."

The participation of Reverend Diane and the members of her congregation have brought these words to life in this space. Reverend Diane has also brought a sense of certitude, calm assurance and love, filling our hearts with the love of Christ and His message, which so resonates with the Baha'i Teachings.

The Baha'i community of Arlington, along with Baha'is around the world are engaged in a process of community building. We hope this space will become a refuge for those who are grieved by the present conflicts in the world, a place to reach out and lend a hand in creating something new, no matter our race, religion or political convictions. We want to foster unity that speaks, love that will reign and spread, and actions based on pure intentions. Thank you St. John's for all that you have done for us.

Respectfully submitted,

Farjam Mohtadi
Baha'i Community of Arlington

Congratulations

Viktoriya Kuchrak and Lars Moeller were married at St. John's on 7/19/25.

Laurel Stewart was born in June, 2025.

Vrai Icyda was born in December, 2024.

Benjamin Sherburne was born in November, 2024.



Giving Beauty at Last

By Frank Foster

My mother finished the call with the Rev. Elsa Walberg who was serving at St Paul's, Bedford and called to me to go into the garden to pick some day lilies. The Rev. Elsa Walberg had just told her that she had given Holy Communion to my mother's cousin at Llewysac Lodge. She advised coming to see Adelaide for a final goodbye this afternoon. Mother and Adelaide both "went back a long way" in the family. Mother very much wanted to have a short last visit with her. I found shears and a paper cup and very carefully went down the steep steps and cut two day-lily blooms.

I held the cup with its two lilies and a small amount of water very carefully as mother drove to Llewysac. She took the cup and went to dear Adelaide's room. After about half an hour, she came back and said that she had had a lovely talk with Adelaide who had exclaimed when she saw the day lilies: "Pretty flowers. Pretty, pretty flowers."

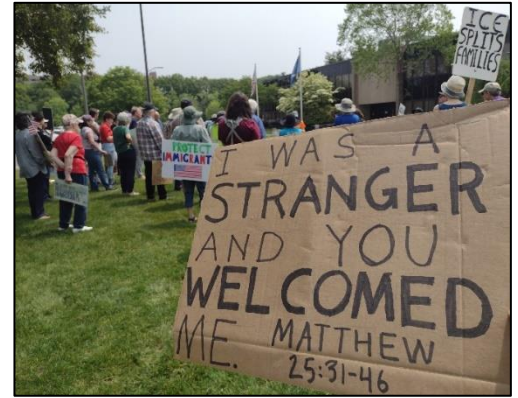
How blest I felt to do even the smallest of ministries by holding the cup so that dear Adelaide could have a last glimpse of beauty!

Bearing Witness at the ICE Burlington Field Office

By Anson Stewart

Did you know that ICE is detaining people in a field office right next to the Burlington Mall? As [inhumane as the conditions within the building are](#), I have also experienced moments of grace outside in the weekly acts of Bearing Witness organized by Burlington Area Clergy 4 Justice -- waves of support from passersby, cold bottles of water passed out to people holding signs in the shade, interfaith conversations, songs from the civil rights movement, and recitation of parts of the Constitution. If you are interested in learning more, see this [Facebook group](#) or sign up for emails [here](#).

You can also see more in this [short news clip](#).



Organ Concert at Methuen Hall - Aug 6

On Wednesday, August 6 at 7:30 p.m., former St. John's parishioner Savannah Curro (daughter of Joe Curro), will be performing organ works by Mendelssohn, Beach, Reger, de Jong, Still, and Franck. The program, entitled "Mercy, Mourning, and Motherhood in Music," will be presented at Methuen Memorial Music Hall, home of the historic 1863 Great Organ.

Savannah, who was confirmed at St. John's and has served us as a supply organist and choir director, graduated in 2023 from Mercer University with dual degrees in organ performance and history. She is a seminarian at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale and an aspirant for the Episcopal priesthood. Savannah coordinates music for St. Andrew's-by-the-Sea Episcopal Chapel in Rye Beach, NH, and she is currently working as a chaplain at the Barbara C. Harris Camp & Conference Center.

More information about the August 6 concert is at <https://mmmh.org/events/summer-concert-series-savannah-curro/>.

“To walk into nature is to witness a thousand miracles.”- Mary Davis

By Jan Ford

Although we can't walk into St. John's garden, we can sit surrounded by the many miracles that are the plants and the critters who visit them. We can stand and listen to the sounds of the birds as we immerse our senses in the beauty of the flowers. What a gift we have been given in the miracle of the relationship between the plants, pollinators and birds. As insect populations are decreasing, we are grateful that our little garden supports them without the use of any chemicals. Caring for the garden is a gift that works for the garden and the gardener as well. We love our gardening days and welcome gardeners, new and experienced.



This native sweat bee is enjoying a meal of nectar while picking up pollen to take back to the nest. As it moves to another flower, it will drop off some of the pollen and in turn pollinate the new plant. The bright yellow on its back legs is a pollen sac. The petals have been eaten maybe by a “bad” bug which in turn may be eaten by one of the birds that visit the garden. Or it may be a “good” bug that will become a beautiful butterfly. In either case, in the words of the song, “All God’s creatures have a place in the choir.”

**St. John's Episcopal Church
74 Pleasant Street
Arlington, MA 02476**

Rev. Diane Wong's office hours: Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. John's.

Please feel free to arrange with Rev. Diane for other times to meet.

Her cell phone number is 617-417-8102. Her email is dianeckwong@gmail.com.

Church Office hours: Tues 2-6, Wed 10-3, Fri 10-3

Church Office phone: 781-648-4819 Office Email: admin@saintjohns-arlington.org

Treasurer Email: treasurer@saintjohns-arlington.org

Web site: <http://www.saintjohns-arlington.org>