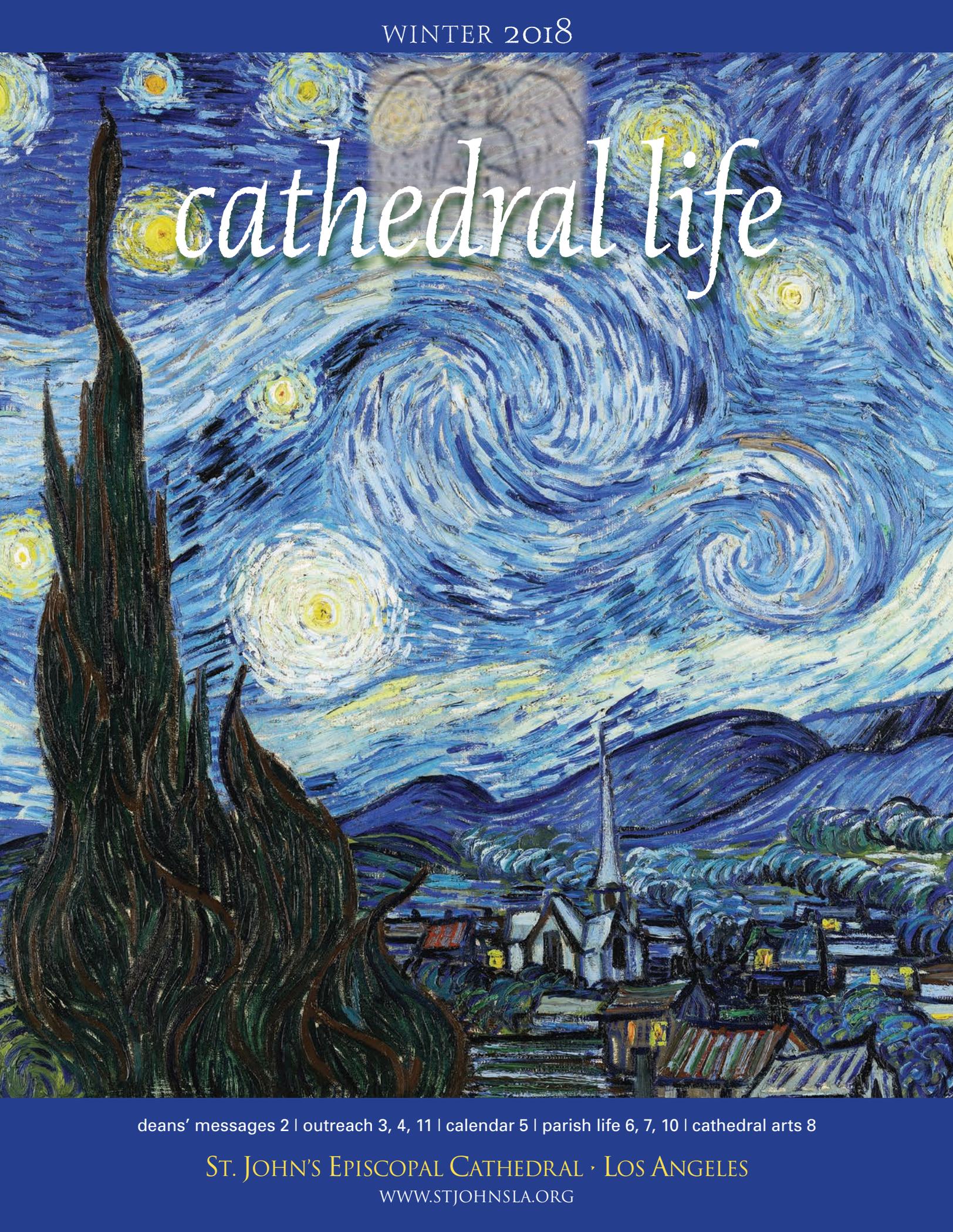


WINTER 2018

The background of the cover is a reproduction of the painting 'The Starry Night' by the Dutch Impressionist painter J.M.W. Turner. The painting depicts a night scene with a turbulent, swirling sky filled with bright, glowing stars and a crescent moon. In the foreground, a dark, jagged cypress tree stands on the left, and a small village with a prominent church spire is visible in the distance. The overall mood is one of awe and wonder.

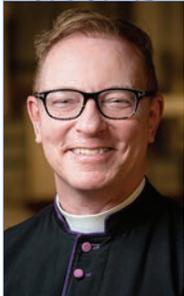
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ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL · LOS ANGELES

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TIM SULLENS



Finding our bearings

by Fr. Mark Kowalewski

What helps you understand your place in the world and where you are headed?

What's your guiding story?

How do you make sense of the world?

One of Vincent Van Gogh's most famous paintings is depicted on the cover of this edition of *Cathedral Life*. Of course it evokes the wise men from the east tracking a star to find Jesus. And one of the most famous hymns of Advent begins, "Creator of the stars of night, your people's everlasting light." All of these themes of Christmas and Epiphany direct us to finding light in the midst of darkness.

What star do we follow to orient us? The alt rock band, Plain White T's asks: "The stars at night burn so bright but where do I fit in? Am I too small to matter at all?" That's a fundamental human question.

I've recently written a book,

Traveling Home: Tracking Your Way Through the Spiritual Wilderness (forthcoming from Church Publishing in 2019) where I explore the question of finding our bearings. Here's a brief excerpt:

What helps you understand your place in the world and where you are headed? What's your guiding story? How do you make sense of the world?

I have lived in Los Angeles for most of my life now. At night when I look out from the roof deck of my house, the towers of downtown L.A. sparkle with lights and make the sky glow with their brightness, but when I look up I don't see many stars. They're obscured by all the artificial illumination.

The city lights Continued on page 7

TIM SULLENS



Meeting God through our senses

by Fr. Daniel Ade

The great Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, writes that Christianity is the most materialistic of religions. By that he means that we meet God through our senses, in real human beings, but also in the beauty of art, or ritual, of sight, sound, smell, hearing and taste.

The metropolitan Museum in New York City staged a fascinating exhibition this year titled *Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination*. The museum paired magnificent vestments, liturgical items and art from the Vatican with high couture fashion inspired by these spiritual images. It has had the largest attendance of any show the Metropolitan has mounted.

The exhibition was effective at demonstrating the embodied sense of the Catholic religious tradition. A quote by author and priest Andrew Greeley greets visitors as they enter the gallery, "Catholics live in an enchanted world, a world of statues and holy water, stained glass and votive candles, saints and

religious medals, rosary beads and holy pictures. But these Catholic paraphernalia are mere hints of a deeper and more pervasive religious sensibility that inclines Catholics to see the Holy lurking in creation" (*The Catholic Imagination*).

That sensibility of seeing the Holy lurking in creation is part of our Anglican catholic tradition as well. The great Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, writes that Christianity is the most materialistic of religions. By that he means, as Greeley suggests, that we meet God through our senses, in real human beings, but also in the beauty of art, or ritual, of sight, sound, smell, hearing and taste.

I had the privilege of touring the exhibition this Continued on page 7

The Guibord Center *Religion Inside Out*

Compassion & Conscience

By THE REV. DR. GWYNNE GUIBORD

The Guibord Center will continue to be a clear voice of compassion and conscience in these challenging times as you will see in the programs we have chosen to end this year and begin the next. Our final program of 2018 will share at the ways that people of faith affirm hope in the darkest of times. *Holy Days of Light: The Roots of Hanukkah and Christmas* will be presented at Temple Beth Shir Shalom in Santa Monica on **Saturday afternoon, December 8th**. The Very Rev. Canon Mark Kowalewski will speak about The Light of the World and Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels will share the songs, foods



and traditions of affirmation that come alive with Hanukkah. Please join us in this ingathering of strength and promise that will help us move into the New Year.

We will start 2019 on our feet addressing the issues that need to be addressed by people of faith and good conscience. As the #MeToo movement has brought much needed attention and awareness to sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace, so The Guibord Center has contin-

In 2015, the Guibord Center held a program called "Saving Grace: A Faithful Response to Violence against Women and Girls" at St. John's, (above). In response to that event, this year's event, "Saving Grace Too" is a new, even more poignant and powerful program.



PHOTOS/ WWW.THEGUIBORDCENTER.ORG

Upcoming Guibord Center Programs

"Holy Days of Light: Roots of Hanukkah and Christmas"
with Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels and the Very Rev. Canon Mark Kowalewski
December 8, 3 – 5pm
Temple Beth Shir Shalom,
1827 California Ave., Santa Monica

"Faith at the Table: The Intersection of Faith, Gender and Sexual Identity "
A vegetarian meal with conversation driven by questions from participants
January 26, 6:30 – 8:30pm
UCC Simi, 370 Royal St., Simi Valley

"Saving Grace Too: Continuing Our Faithful Response to Violence Against Women and Girls "
A program exploring the distortion of scripture across faiths by the cultures of misogyny they are embedded in.
February 23, 7 – 9pm at St. John's

The Guibord Center's Fundraising Dinner "One Heart"
April 30 at St. John's

For more information, visit us at www.theguibordcenter.org

From Deacon
Margaret
McCauley



TIM SULLIVANS

Our Alternative Christmas Fair donation selections are to Laundry Love, the St. John's Food Pantry and Episcopal Relief & Development/Clean water.

Prophetic Social Witness

in this season of Advent, we are preparing for the birth of our Savior. Let us together remember we are the body of Christ Jesus: the hands, feet and heart. Old and New Testament commands: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself".

The Alternative Christmas Fair will be held on the first three Advent Sundays: **December 2nd, 9th and 16th**, following both the 8am and 11am services. Our selections are St. John's Food Pantry, Laundry Love, and Episcopal Relief & Development/Clean Water. We'll also have hand-made items from Virginia Classick, jams from Father Mark and hand-decorated planters from Father Dan. We welcome your cash, checks, and credit cards to "love your neighbor as yourself". We invite you to "shop 'til you drop".

Our Town Hall meeting on gun violence enabled an honest, focused, respectful, faithful sharing of ideas that will proclaim our St. John committed response. We're discussing new wording for our St. John's sign, limiting access to guns and acquiring informa-

*"He has shown you,
O mortal, what is good.
And what does the
Lord require of you?
To act justly and to
love mercy and to walk
humbly with your God."*

— Micah 6:8

tion about mental health resources for perpetrators and victims.

Our St. John's community is committed to act on our sacred command to: "Love your neighbors as yourself." ✦



St. John's Cathedral Choir sings during a holiday service, 2017.

GUIBORD CENTER

Continued from page 3

ued to bring to light the ongoing distortion of scripture across faiths by the cultures of misogyny they are embedded in. In January 2015, we did a very large liturgical event right here at St. John's called *Saving Grace: A Faithful Response to Violence against Women and Girls*. Many, many people have asked us to repeat the program and so four

years later we have created a new, even more poignant and powerful program. Please mark your calendars for **Saturday evening, February 23, 2019**, right here, as *Saving Grace Too* arrives.

And speaking of programs at St. John's Cathedral, please save the date for The Guibord Center's Annual Fundraising Dinner, *One Heart*, **Tuesday, April 30, 2019**. We have been sold out for the past three years. Plan to attend now. ✦

Advent & Christmas

Join us as together
we discover the
sacred in the
heart of the city.

AT ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

Advent

■ Advent I, December 2

8am: Holy Eucharist

11am: Holy Eucharist

■ Saturday, December 8

9am: Advent Quiet Morning

■ Advent II, December 9

8am: Holy Eucharist

11am: Holy Eucharist

■ Saturday, December 15

1pm: St. Lucy's Day cookie sale preparation.

3pm: Holiday High Tea for the St. John's Seniors. All women and men are cordially invited.

5pm: *Lessons and Carols*
Both solemn and joyful, this service highlights the dual themes of hope for the Messiah with the Second Coming of Christ.

■ Advent III, December 16

8am: Holy Eucharist

11am: *Gaudete Sunday*
Celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
Bishop Diane Bruce presides at both services.

After the 8am & 11am Mass
on December 16:

St. Lucy's Day Cookie Sale
Cookies, Fr. Mark's Jams and other handmade treasures.

■ Advent IV, December 23

8am: Holy Eucharist

11am: Holy Eucharist

■ Advent Sundays December 2, 9, 16

After the 8am & 11am Mass:

Alternative Christmas Fair
Want to give a meaningful gift to your loved ones this year? Donate to a worthy charity in their name with a \$25 gift. This year our donation selections are Laundry Love, the St. John's Food Pantry and Episcopal Relief & Development/Clean water.

Prepare for Christmas by making time through Advent to attend an evening service:

■ Sunday, December 2

8pm: *Compline at the Cathedral*
A 30-minute service of candle-light, stillness, prayer, and song, followed by simple food and fellowship.

■ Tuesdays

6:30pm: *Evening Prayer*

A 20-minute service of quiet, meditation, scripture and prayer.

■ Wednesdays

6:30pm: *Contemplative Mass*
A candlelit, quiet Mass.

Christmas

■ Christmas Eve, December 24

5pm: *Family Christmas Service*

10:30pm: *Solemn Christmas Mass*

The Choir and Chamber Orchestra of St. John's Cathedral playing Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, Haydn's *Missa Sancti Nicolai*, Lauridsen's *O magnum mysterium*, and traditional carols of the season. **Music starts at 10pm.**

■ Christmas Day, December 25

11am: *Christmas Day Mass*

A Christmas Day Mass with joyful carols.

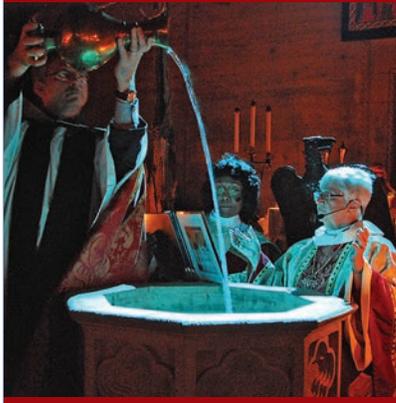
New Years Day

■ Tuesday, January 1

11am: Holy Eucharist

4pm – 6pm: Open House at Clergy House.

Christian Formation
2019



The program culminates at the Easter Vigil on the night before Easter. There we gather with the rest of the congregation and those who have never been baptized will be baptized.

What do you seek?

What are you looking for? These are the first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John. Similar words are addressed to those preparing for Baptism: “What do you seek?” Many of us are spiritual seekers. Jesus asks us the same question, what are we looking for? That is the central question we explore every year in our Basic Christian Formation Program.

Beginning **February 10th** a community of spiritual seekers will form and for ten weeks will explore more deeply what it means to make a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ. During this program, we will consider why believing in God at all is a reasonable decision. We’ll look at the story of the Bible and how the story of our lives intersects with it. We’ll consider the person of Jesus and what he has to do with our lives and what it means to become his disciples. We’ll look at spiritual practices and living out our faith in daily life.

This experience is meant for people at various points in their spiritual journey, whether you are brand new

to Christianity or a lifelong Christian, whether you’ve never been baptized or confirmed, or if those events happened a long time ago. The common denominator is that you want to explore your faith more deeply.

The program culminates at the Easter Vigil on the night before Easter. There we gather with the rest of the congregation and those who have never been baptized will be baptized, Bishop Chester Talton will be with us for those who seek to be confirmed and received into the Episcopal Church. If you have already been confirmed, you will have the opportunity to reaffirm your faith in Christ. Each year those who are part of this community of seekers finds it a meaningful experience for their faith lives.

Each week we gather at 9:15am and then attend the 11am mass together. We will read sections of the Bible, along with *Traveling Home: Tracking Your Way Through the Spiritual Wilderness*, a book Fr. Mark wrote especially for this program, soon to be published by The Church Publishing Group. During Lent the group is prayer for by the whole congregation. If you think this may be something you are looking for, please see Fr. Mark. More information about specifics will be available soon. ✕

Deacon Seminarian Profile

Dominique Piper



My name is Dominique Piper. I’m a postulant for the Vocational Diaconate here in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

I’m from Georgia, born and raised. I currently work for the Federal Aviation Administration

as a Office Administrator. Prior to that, I worked at the Long Beach VA Medical Center as a Medical Support Assistant. After high school, I enlisted in the Navy and met my husband Christopher in 2005. My husband and I attended St. John’s for 5 years, being confirmed and married here in 2010. Our 5 year old twin sons, Charles and Edward, we

also baptized here as well.

Beginning in January, the Deans invited me to return for some extra liturgical training to help my formation and St. John’s being the diocesan hub for liturgical events, the experience here will be invaluable. I’m very happy that the place that formed my family as Episcopalians will also help to form me in my vocation. ✕

FR. MARK

Continued from page 2

and the starry skies help me think about the difference between the world around me constantly drawing my attention to mundane things that distract me from the bigger picture, the greater questions and direction of my life. Maybe, like me there are all sorts of things that compete for your attention on a daily basis. We get up; we think about all that the day ahead holds for us — usually work or school or the many activities we might have on our schedules. There are lots of things we need to get done, lots of busyness. Yet as we go through all

of the day to day stuff, do we know who we are? Do we know where we're going, where we have been? Do we know how we fit into the world?

So that's the question of Advent and Christmas and Epiphany and I believe there's an answer. A light to guide us appeared in a little town called Bethlehem and that bright morning star still shines guiding us, giving us direction. You are not too small. You matter. You were created by the God of the universe and the light of that same Christ shines in your heart and mine. "Bright morning star arising, day is a'breaking in my soul." ✦

FR. DAN

Continued from page 2

summer and I thought about the way beauty places us in touch with the Holy, even when we least expect to have the experience. The artists who created the dramatic fashion on display were in their way responding to the beauty of the sacred. In a similar way, we at St. John's present the beauty of the Holy and the holiness of Beauty by the very presence of our building here in the middle of the Los Angeles metropolis.

We have had the opportunity to host many artists and performers who are struck with the beauty of this place when they see it. Each month hundreds of people come to St. John's for an experience of light and sound meditation enhanced by the extraordinary space we have received in trust. Dancers from the Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre will perform here next year with music by the great Christian mystic Hildegard of Bingen. This Christmas, Open Fist Theatre Company, under the artistic

direction of Martha Demson, will present a production of *BOTH*, a traditional telling of the nativity story using the untraditional music of the Beatles (see the article **on page 9** in this edition of *Cathedral Life*). Even though these many people may not be with us on a Sunday morning, we provide them the ability to glimpse the Holy lurking in the physicality of creation.

This is why the preservation of this artistic treasure of a building is a high priority for us at St. John's. It stands as a proclamation of faith written in stone and mosaic and glass, pointing spiritual seekers and pilgrims in our day toward the Holy as much as the cathedrals of earlier generations have done through Christian history. We in our time have the challenge and the responsibility of caring for this gift and passing it on to the next generations as it has been handed over to us. So that even in the midst of the noise and hardness of the urban life around us, future seekers may see the Holy lurking in creation. ✦

Upcoming Events at St. John's

Saturday, December 8, 9am **Advent Quiet Morning**

As Episcopalians, we come to Advent to reflect upon the coming of Christ and to remind ourselves that He made a promise to come again. For some, the Advent season is a time of meditation, soul-searching, and hurried joy. For others, the season is a reminder of aspects of our lives which no longer exist along with loved ones lost. This Advent, the Writer's Group invites you into a sacred space wherein you are welcome no matter what your situation. We recognize that Christ comes in the midst of our excitement — the midst of our sadness — the midst of our pain — and in the midst of our hearts. Come as you are this Advent season.

Thursday – Saturday December 20, 21 & 22

BOTH: A Hard Day's Silent Night

The Open Fist Theatre Company will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of its Nativity concert with the congregation of St. John's, using well loved songs of the Beatles in dynamic new arrangements.

See page 9.

Exhibition: January 11 – March 5

See Me: Portraits of Foster Youth

St. John's will host an exhibit from the Foster Youth Museum, which reveals stories of an invisible community and shares stunning black and white photography. **See page 10.**

Starting Sunday, February 10

Christian Formation Class

A community of spiritual seekers will form and for ten weeks will explore more deeply what it means to make a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ.

See page 6 (opposite).

News

From the
Cathedral Arts Guild



A Lesson on **Lessons & Carols**

By CHRISTOPHER G. GRAVIS, D.M.A.
CANON FOR MUSIC MINISTRY & CATHEDRAL ARTS

admittedly, I'm an evangelist for *Lessons & Carols*. I can't get enough of the beautiful choral service and I'm pretty zealous about spreading the word. However, as my wife likes to frequently remind me, I can be downright nerdy about the topics of church and music. I suppose not everyone waits with bated breath to find out which descants will be sung at Kings' College this year (either the Willcocks descants or the "bad" ones!). I'll tell anyone who will listen about the glories of our uniquely Anglican choral service of *Lessons & Carols*. But I tend to notice a puzzling half smile and glazed over look when I invite people around town. Their quizzical and half-interested counte-

nance seems to say, "What and carols? Wait, it's a concert of Christmas music? No, not Christmas? What's Advent? Who's Carol?"

Anyone who has awoken early on Christmas Eve and listened to public radio, or flipped on PBS, will attest: the choral service of *Lessons & Carols* is one of Anglicanism's great gifts to the world. The live broadcast of *Lessons & Carols* from King's College Chapel, Cambridge seems to be one of those interesting moments in an increasingly secularized world when there is a mass public desire for an unapologetically sacred and religious celebration of the season. Hundreds of millions of people listen worldwide every Christmas Eve on BBC radio. This year, the Los Angeles Master Chorale is programming an entire holiday concert in Disney Hall entitled *English Cathedral Christmas*. There is indeed a desire for just this sort of thing, but what is this all about?

It's more than a warm cup of tea and quick respite from the usual hustle and bustle of holiday preparation — a token of quaint musical traditionalism to check off our holiday checklists. Amidst the disturbing political landscape, encroaching nationalism, violence, wars, disease, and famine, *Lessons & Carols* is the act of "calm and bright" we so eagerly await to get on our knees and sing about come midnight mass. We pause to light the candles, read the lessons, and sing the songs awaiting the coming of the Prince of Peace. It's a service of aspiration as we move from darkness into light.

In fact, the first service of *Lessons & Carols* in King's Continued on next page



St. John's Cathedral Choir sings during a holiday service, 2017.

CATHEDRAL ARTS

Continued from previous page

College took place 100 years ago this year, born out of Dean Eric Milner-White's horrifying experience of trench warfare in WWI. Even today, this is a service we so desperately long for because the chaos of our daily existences seem to work against such ordered beauty. Viewed in this way, *Lessons & Carols* is much more than some iconically Anglican choral service where we fling smoke and make pretty processions around our closed church. It becomes an act of protest against the forces of evil around us. The service expresses our own experiences, walking in darkness, hoping, waiting, and moving toward resplendent light.

Such a service has traveled far and wide, adopting the customs of local communities. At St. John's, we celebrate the service on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, lending our service a distinctively gorgeous Angeleno expression. After the lesson detailing the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in which this young girl responds to God's call with a profound yes, the icon of Our Lady is ceremoniously presented and blessed. The choir sings, incense rises, and our hearts are drawn, like Our Lady, to affirm God's call in our own lives. And in that moment, though there may be no room at the inn, we make room in our hearts for the coming Christ child.

This year I want you to bring someone with you to our service on **December 15 at 5pm**. Bring someone who maybe doesn't know anything about St. John's Cathedral, the Church, the Anglican Communion,

BOTH: A Hard Day's Silent Night

The 10th Anniversary Concert

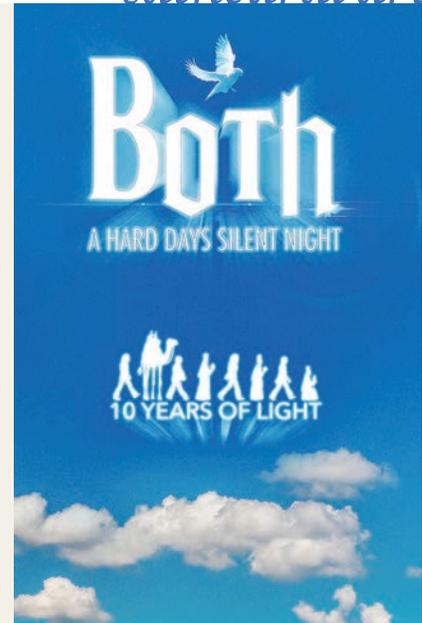
The Open Fist Theatre Company is excited to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of its Nativity concert *BOTH: A Hard Day's Silent Night* with the congregation of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral on **December 20th, 21st and 22nd**. Featuring a large gospel choir and Broadway, rock 'n' roll and gospel soloists from around the country, *BOTH* tells the story of Mary and Joseph, using well loved songs of the Beatles in dynamic new arrangements.

The aim of this uplifting holiday event is to remind everyone of the importance of becoming "a manger" to protect those who are most vulnerable among us. *BOTH* is presented each year as a benefit concert to raise money for children's charities. In this way, the very act of coming to the theatre (or cathedral) becomes an



BOTH tells the story of Mary and Joseph, using well loved songs of the Beatles in dynamic new arrangements.

or what we do here week to week. Trust that the profound beauty of this place, our voices raised heavenward, the pageantry of the service, and the Spirit of God present, will richly bless them in ways we cannot yet know or comprehend. I invite you to come experience the ordered beauty of holiness, and build a room in our hearts for that tiny child. ✦



Thursday December 20, 8pm
 Friday December 21, 4pm & 8pm
 Saturday December 22, 3pm & 7pm

act for good in the world. This year's collection will benefit two distinct missions: UNICEF in its work to combat human trafficking, and St. John's Cathedral's own program to provide instruction in choral music to elementary school children who live in the community. Tickets are \$20 and will go on sale this weekend at www.openfist.org. ✦

If you would like to make a donation for Christmas Music and Flowers in honor or in thanksgiving of someone, please go to www.stjohnsla.org & click on the DONATE button. Select the "Christmas Music and Flowers" option and note your dedication in the "Optional" field.
Thank you for your generosity!

Learning to Speak God

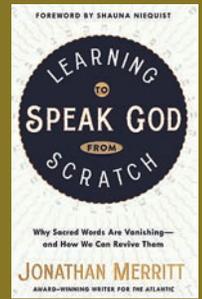
In our contemporary, secular society, talk about God becomes less part of daily life. Words like “sin” and “lost” take on toxic connotations and many people don’t understand words like grace or gospel. People don’t speak the language of faith at a time when we could most use it. During the Season of Epiphany, the Church reflects on its mission to tell the good news of God in Christ — a phrase itself that carries its own baggage for some folks. But how do we share the message of Jesus in a world that has lost its fluency with the sacred?

These are questions raised by Jonathan Merritt, author and columnist for *The Atlantic* in his

new book: *Learning to Speak God from Scratch: Why Sacred Words Are Vanishing—and How We Can Revive Them*. In a recent opinion article in *The New York Times* Merritt writes: “Christians in 21st-century America now face our own serious “rhetorical problem.” We must work together to revive sacred speech and rekindle confidence in the vocabulary of faith. If we cannot rise to this occasion, sacred speech will continue its rapid decline — and the worst among us will continue to define what the word “Christian” means.”

During the Epiphany Season we will read this engaging book and open our minds and hearts to the vocabulary we often use —

During the Epiphany Season we will read this engaging book and open our minds and hearts to the vocabulary we often use — or avoid using. The 4-week forum starts January 6 at 9:15am.



or avoid using. How do we move from speaking a kind of short-hand church language, to giving voice to our own experience of faith? How can we redefine the power of sacred vocabulary as distinct from the religious voices using political bullhorns? Beginning **Sunday January 6**, the Feast of the Epiphany, through **January 27** at 9:15 come ready to discuss your own experiences of faith and the “God Talk” we use to describe it. Let’s struggle together with our language and our experiences. The more voices we have at the table, the richer will our conversation become. ✦

See Me: Portraits of Foster Youth

January 11 – March 5 at St. John’s

See Me: Portraits of Foster Youth reveals stories of an invisible community and shares stunning black and white photography from Foster Youth Museum.

Conceived by current and former foster youth, Foster Youth Museum is the largest collection of art, artifacts and video portraits about youth experiences in foster care. California has more than 20% of the nation’s foster youth (over 62,000) and 28,000 of them live in Los Angeles County. Foster youth are students, workers, artists, parents, friends, neighbors. Foster youth are executives and entertainers, they are young and old. They have stories and visions and dreams and loves.

Join Foster Youth Museum and youth artists representing Fostering Media Connections in a photography and storytelling program that invites you to consider how youth see, and should be seen. ✦



Instead of suitcases, foster youth are often given trash bags to transport their belongings from placement to placement. For Latrendia, garbage bags evoke memories of shame. “The clear ones were the worst, because you could see through them.” She remembers holding her most prized possessions tightly in her arms, so they wouldn’t get damaged or lost if the bag ripped. Photo by Ray Bussolari. www.fosteryouthmuseum.org.

[★] About **Advent Conspiracy**

We all want our Christmas to be a lot of things. Full of joy. Memories. Happiness. Above all, we want it to be about Jesus. What we don't want is stress. Or debt. Or feeling like we "missed the moment". Advent Conspiracy is a movement designed to help us all slow down and experience a Christmas worth remembering. But doing this means doing things a little differently. A little creatively.

In 2006, three pastors, Chris Seay, Greg Holder, and Rick McKinley, decided to try something different. They called it the Advent Conspiracy movement, and came up with four tenets — Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All — to guide themselves, their families, and congregations through the Christmas season.

The movement started small — just a handful of churches who would try this experiment and make the Advent story personal again. That first Christmas they got creative, changed their tradi-

tions, and ended up raising enough money for a water-well in West Africa.

Over the last decade, thousands of churches have embraced Advent Conspiracy, and have celebrated with more relational traditions, partnered with more organizations, and have channeled more resources to the poor, marginalized, and forgotten.

Advent Conspiracy is about the entire body of Christ at work in the world. As we worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all, something begins to happen that is greater than any single person, church, or denomination.

Our prayer is that more churches join together to live out the story of Jesus' sacrificial love. God is not finished with our world and He is inviting us deeper into the Christmas story.

Be a part of a different story this Christmas, one that celebrates out king and brings hope to the watching world. For more information about Advent Conspiracy, visit www.adventconspiracy.org. ✨

Join the groundswell of Christ-followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be — a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth that enriches our hearts and the world around us.



Worship Fully

by allowing ourselves the time and space of personal prayer and coming together as a community, not just on Christmas but throughout the Season of Advent.

Each day, spend a few moments in quiet with Scripture.



Spend Less

by being more thoughtful about the gifts we give to those we love. Flashy and lavish does not equal love.

Light an Advent wreath with your family. Spend time with each other. Give presence.



Give More

by participating in our alternative Christmas fair and sharing with those who have less than we do.

Pick up a gift at our alternative Christmas Fair table on Dec. 2, 9 & 16



Love All

by transforming the way we think about Christmas. Focus on the headline message of Christmas:
God so loved the whole world that God became one of us in Jesus.

Volunteer with our Food Pantry or Laundry Love and live Jesus' commandment to care for the poor.



Advent through the reality of vulnerability

By JAKE PUTICH
CANON FOR YOUNG ADULT AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Advent is a special time in the life of the church when we “remember” by looking forward. It is a season of preparation in which we order our life and worship toward the reality of Christ breaking into the world as the seed of the New Creation (that’s what Christmas is all about!) But, it’s not uncommon for the church to “sentimentalize” Jesus around this time of year. Glowing images of a “silent night” with a haloed newborn fast asleep, cuddled softly into a bed of straw, have little to do with how the Gospel writers described the conditions of Christ’s birth!

The form of Christ’s arrival is drastically significant. The arrival of Jesus our King subverts all expectations. Christ came not in a bright royal splendor, but rather in the darkness of vulnerability to the fanfare of birth pangs and infant cries. Christ came not in wealth and security, but rather in poverty under the threat of execution. If Christ is rightly called our King, then his reign is entirely different, uncommon, miraculous. Advent teaches us to expect this uncommon reign here and now:

- Advent reminds us that God took form the form of a child.
- Advent reminds us that God took form the form of a refugee.
- Advent reminds us that God has chosen sides.

This stands as an abiding challenge to every community that strives to follow Christ — How do we love those who today incarnate the same vulnerability into which God was born? Can we call ourselves disciples if we blind ourselves to the presence of God in the lowliest of our neighbors? What does it mean to follow a King who confronts us in such a form? What might it mean to prepare for such an arrival? How do we live now in the expectation of Christ’s advent through the reality of vulnerability?

If we call ourselves disciples of Christ, surely these questions must haunt us and draw us ever beyond ourselves toward those who best exemplify the reign of God — the poor, the rejected, the destitute. If we’re looking for New Creation — for the in-breaking reign of God — the season of Advent reminds us where to look. ✦



St. Lucy’s Day Cookie Sale

TO BENEFIT THE FOOD PANTRY

Sunday, December 16

After both the 8am & 11am services

Everyone at St. John’s is cordially invited to donate at least two dozen cookies for the sale, (home-made, if possible).

Saturday, December 15, at 1:00pm

Please help prepare assorted cookies on festive plates for the sale. Please sign up for this event!



cathedral life

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514 West Adams Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90007-2616
213.747.6285
www.stjohnsla.org

The Rt. Rev. John H. Taylor
Bishop

The Very Rev. Canon
Mark Kowalewski
Dean
frmark@stjohnsla.org

The Very Rev. Canon
Daniel Ade
Dean
frdan@stjohnsla.org

On the cover: The Starry Night, oil on canvas, Vincent Van Gogh, 1889.
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