

THE Shield

ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH • SPRING 2024 • ISSUE NO. 40

Receiving • Living • Sharing
THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

THE BIBLICAL MODEL OF FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDSHIP: AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION

FROM PARENTING PERFECTION TO CONNECTION:
SHIFTING OUR FOCUS AS WE BUILD A PARENTING COMMUNITY

A CONVERSATION WITH MALONE AND COLIN

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"Friendship ... is born at the moment when one man says to another, 'What! You too? I thought that no one but myself ...'"

—C.S. Lewis
(*The Four Loves*)

Letter from Malone and Colin

Friendship is described as one of those things in life which is not necessary for survival but lends itself to a person's flourishing. Like philosophy or art, it has no survival value. C.S. Lewis affirms this sentiment when he writes in *The Four Loves*, "Friendship ... is born at the moment when one man says to another, 'What! You too? I thought that no one but myself...'"

Perhaps that is true. Friendship might not be integral to our survival in its basest sense. However, friendship serves as an important foundation in a person's meaningful experience of life. It reveals to us that we aren't alone in our perspectives. It confirms something about our identity when we find someone else who shares our values, our endeavors, or even our strange idiosyncrasies or sense of humor.

Chatting about our children, we both feel gratitude knowing they have good friends in their lives. It's reassuring, particularly as they grow up and begin to leave home. Knowing that they have somebody in whom they can confide or share laughter with makes a parent's heart rejoice.

This issue of *The Shield* seeks to unfold many of the wonderful layers of friendship. Our friendships provide an important aspect of our discipleship. Within these "bonds of affection," we experience what it means to love and support, to forgive and reconcile, to partner in a mission or task, to broaden our understanding of the world, and to begin to understand our relationship with God.

John's gospel records Jesus making this warmhearted and inviting statement: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15).

For us to contemplate the reality that we are friends of God can perhaps feel foreign at first - am I allowed to do that? Yes, you are! Jesus calls you his friend!

We want the richness of good friendship for you at St. George's. You might already have good friends - wonderful! But statistics tell us that we struggle more and more in this area; friendship is on the decline. Why? It takes time, sacrifice, and occasionally stepping outside our own agendas and comfort zones.

The gospel is an invitation to participate in the beautiful life of God. One cannot adequately do that if our reference is only from the example of king and subject. This life is one of friendship - sharing joys and sorrows alongside one another. It's sharing in those moments when we realize, "I thought that no one but myself ..."

J. Malone Gilliam, Rector

Colin Ambrose, Vice Rector & Chief of Staff



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THE BIBLICAL MODEL OF

Friendship

by the Rev. Joe Ananias and the Rev. Dr. David Barr

It's become commonplace among social scientists and cultural critics to observe that modern western society is undergoing a crisis of loneliness. In his renowned book *Bowling Alone*, the Harvard professor Robert Putnam documents a marked decline in American participation in social structures like neighborhood gatherings, charitable clubs, sports leagues (bowling!), and yes – church. He argues that these trends represent a fraying social fabric and have contributed to significant decline in mental and physical health. On the flipside, in a recent article for *Christianity Today*, Tyler Vanderweele and Brendan Case of the Harvard-based Human Flourishing Project point to data across a range of metrics which suggest that “religious service attendance powerfully enhances health and well-being.” People who go to church, so it would seem, are statistically less likely to be lonely.

But the antidote to loneliness is not simply to go to church, though that may indeed be a good starting point. What we really need is authentic friendship. We add the word “authentic,” because the kind of friendship we’re talking about goes beyond simply having people around us whom we like and with whom we get along. Indeed, while most of us could say we have these relationships, at least some of the time, close friendship – authentic friendship – is something of a different order. And indeed, a recent *New York Times* article says 15% of American men describe having no close friends¹. So what we’re talking about is something with depth and longevity, and if we find ourselves aware of our need for this kind of friendship, it doesn’t mean there’s something wrong with us. It simply means we’re self-aware. There is something inside the human heart that longs for this kind of relationship, and Scripture gives us a clue as to why.

As human beings, we are hard-wired with a desire to be known and to know, to be loved and to love. And while this desire finds its ultimate fulfillment only in relationship with the triune God, we are also meant to find joy, meaning, and support in our relationships with one another. In the Genesis story, Adam already enjoys a close relationship with God when the Lord says, “It is not good for the man to be alone” and creates Eve as his counterpart (Gen. 2:18). Though we rightly think of this most often in the context of marriage, it also speaks more fundamentally to our need for authentic friendship, which is, after all, at the core of any good marriage. When Adam meets Eve, he feels seen and known in a way he never had before.

The theme of friendship runs throughout the Scriptures. One thinks of Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 18 - 23), Ruth and Naomi (Book of Ruth), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13 - 15), and of course, Jesus and his disciples. When we look at the shape of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, we see the very heart of authentic friendship.

¹ Catherine Pearson, “Why Is It So Hard for Men to Make Close Friends?” in *The New York Times*, June 20, 2023.

In chapters 14 - 17 of John's gospel, we find a substantial section of Jesus' teaching known as the Farewell Discourse due to its setting in the upper room before Jesus is arrested, tried, and crucified. Here Jesus discloses some of the most central realities of life in him which will sustain his disciples in the life of faith after he is no longer physically present with them. He teaches about his own identity in relation to the Father, about our need to abide in him, about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and – astonishingly among these others – about our identity as his friends.

The first thing to point out is that for Jesus, friendship is about allowing ourselves to be fully known. Jesus says, "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). What this means is that because we are Jesus' friends, he lets us in on his interior life. He discloses to us what he has heard from his Father, which is the very heart of Jesus' identity and purpose. When we encounter Jesus, then, there is no pretense, no withholding, no carefully managed distance between us. There is no God "behind" the God revealed in Jesus – in his heart we see the Father's heart, and Jesus describes his own heart as "gentle and lowly" (Luke 11:29). Jesus makes us his friends by disclosing his heart to us. In the same way, then, authentic friendship involves taking the risk of allowing ourselves to be truly known.

Admittedly, there are many obstacles standing in the way of allowing ourselves to be truly known. One is that it takes time. It also takes a setting where authentic friendship feels realistic and safe. Another obstacle is our own fear that if we allow another to see us as we truly are, we'll be rejected or shamed. Or perhaps we've cultivated a public image that affords us certain benefits we couldn't bear to be without. But whatever the obstacles, taking the time and the risk to let another into the truth of our interior lives is eminently worth it.

The second thing we see in Jesus' own life is that authentic friendship involves giving ourselves for the good of the other. We see this throughout the whole of Jesus' life, and we see it supremely at the cross. Again in Jesus' Farewell Discourse, he says, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

In modern western culture, we tend to assume the impermanence of friendship. People will move away, shared interests wane, or perhaps things simply become difficult. It's true: friendship is voluntary in a way that family relationships are not. And yet Scripture seems to put friendship within a stronger covenantal framework. In the stories of David and Jonathan and Ruth and Naomi, we see lifelong, abiding commitment to the good of the other through thick and thin. And our baptismal identity as members of God's covenant people – indeed, as spiritual family in Christ – means that Christian friendship ought, wherever possible, to have this same kind of commitment. When things get hard, whether through an illness, the loss of a job, a family crisis, or some other difficulty – this is precisely when we need to have, and be, authentic friends. And this is part of what it means to "lay down our lives for one another" (1 John 3:16).

Early this past summer, I (Joe) knew that we would be moving to Nashville, and I was also facing a serious medical diagnosis. I had become acquainted with David Barr years ago in South Carolina, and I knew that I would need a good friend close by. I reached out and told him as much, and David committed to befriending me. In time, we committed to meeting weekly for about an hour to share honestly about our lives and pray together. Our friendship has been a source of joy, encouragement, and growth for us both. And while it has certainly required time, effort, and the vulnerability of allowing ourselves to be truly known, and while we are by no means perfect, we have both been richly blessed by our friendship, and we have found it to be a kind of sacramental sign of God's friendship with us.

We were made for authentic friendship: to be known and to know, to be loved and to love. On this side of eternity, a part of us will always be lonely, because we ache for the fullness of unhindered relationship with God. As Paul puts it, "Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12). In the meantime, God abides with us in his Word, his sacraments, and the presence of his Spirit. And he gives us friends, in whose knowledge and love of us we know something of the friendship of God. ✝



**IN JESUS, GOD HAS
BEFRIENDED US.**

Friendship:

AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION

by the Rev. Margery Kennelly

When I think about the central claims of Christianity, I think of the incarnation, that Christ died for our sins, of resurrection, of the eternal life of the church, and of the kingdom of heaven fully manifested on earth. These are all professed in our Nicene Creed. But I have not often thought about the simple fact that binds these elements together: which is that in Jesus, God has befriended us.

In his simple and profound book, *"The Love that is God,"* Fritz Bauerschmidt (brother of our bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt), looks at the centrality of friendship in the gospel message. It is a timely focus in a moment when so many of us struggle with loneliness and isolation.

Bauerschmidt points out that from the moment his ministry is inaugurated, Jesus sets about making friends. He befriends men and women: Mary Magdalene, Peter, Andrew, John, and Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. These relationships involve meals together, visits, and intimate conversations. Yes, Jesus is the teacher par excellence, but he does it in the context of friendship – you might even say that the friendship was every bit as important as the teaching. Bauerschmidt writes:

The thread of friendship runs throughout the story of Jesus's life. We see him befriending Zacchaeus the tax collector and even inviting himself to Zacchaeus's house (Luke 10:1-10). We see Jesus so delighting in sharing food and drink with people that he offends those whose image of a holy man runs in a more ascetic vein, who accuse him of being a glutton and a drunk (Matt. 11:18-19). Wherever Jesus goes, he invites people into friendship with him.

Bauerschmidt looks at how friendship is an agent of transformation. There is a mutual exchange that happens when we drop our guard and enter into friendship with another. For this reason, Bauerschmidt tells his university students that, "the most important moral decisions they have made and will make are those regarding who their friends will be." He points out that we seek out friends for various reasons – compatibility, networking, and sometimes to legitimize our worst habits. But there is such profound opportunity to find ourselves transformed through friendship. When we keep company with those whom we recognize are good, we not only admire them, but we also naturally begin to imitate them. He compares this behavioral

pattern to the violinist who seeks out the opportunity to practice with an ensemble that is better skilled. He argues that as we “strive to be like our friends by engaging in the activity of being good, we experience the joy of human existence at full stretch, just as the musician who is pressed to the limits of her ability by those with whom she plays knows best the joys of musicianship.”

Of course, one of the things we notice in the life of Jesus is that he spends time hanging out with sinners! And in doing so, he does not seem to worry that he will be corrupted by the influence of those he befriends. The other stunning thing is that through Jesus we are invited into what would ordinarily be the most incomprehensibly mismatched friendship: friendship with God. Greek philosopher Aristotle did not even think friendship with God was possible. Because he recognized that true friendship involves mutuality and vulnerability, Aristotle could not envision a divine nature participating in that relationship. But Aristotle did not know Jesus. In Jesus, we come to know that God has taken on friendship with us, with all the vulnerability that entails. Jesus laughs with delight when his band of disciples brings back reports of their successes, and he weeps when his friends fall asleep in the garden of Gethsemane.

Bauerschmidt describes how friendship with Jesus transforms us:

The gift-like character of God's friendship with us helps us understand why Jesus was so unconcerned by the perils of befriendng sinners and outcasts, so unconcerned about the 'contagion' of sin. The love that is God is present so perfectly, so abundantly, in the person of Jesus that his goodness cannot be diminished by contact with fallible and failed human beings. Because God's love is not drawn to our goodness but creates our goodness, because it is active and not reactive, the Spirit can transform God's enemies into God's friends ... As with any friendship, our friendship with the risen Jesus ought to deepen over time, and as it grows in depth we ought to find ourselves changed by that friendship.

In addition to describing how our friendship with Jesus over time transforms us by grace, Bauerschmidt says that friendship with Jesus relieves some of the burden that our other ordinary friendships cannot fully carry. He remarks that our normal friendships and loves are inevitably strained by human imperfections. They disappoint – even the best ones. “When we expect the passing things of this world to bear the full weight of our love, they collapse under that weight, their own structural flaws revealed in the inability to bear that weight.”

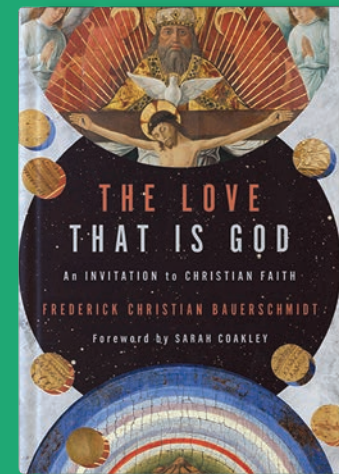
But this is not so with God. As our friendship with God grows, we are given grace and love from the Holy Spirit, who fills in the cracks of these imperfect but very dear relationships. Because God can hold the full weight of our love, our personal friendships don't have to. We can walk alongside our friends with our flawed selves, seeking to love and support one another to the best of our ability, knowing that God will work through us.

As Bauerschmidt reminds us, our friendships can be borne up by the love of God, the love that has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. ✝

RECOMMENDED READING

The Love That Is God: An Invitation to Christian Faith

By Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt



What I especially enjoy about Fritz Bauerschmidt's book, *The Love That Is God*, is its compelling, simple presentation of what Christian faith is about. Apparently, he gave a sermon that was a short poem (Roman Catholics are more concise than us Episcopalians). While greeting people after the service a woman said, “You need to make that into a book so I can give it to my niece.” And he did! This book aims to represent Christianity to a disenchanted generation. It examines the love of God that gives itself for another, what he calls “cruciform love.” It looks at the distinct nature of Christian friendship and the role of the Holy Spirit. He also offers the reader a concise tour of great Christian thinkers of old. A review from Wesley Hill (Trinity School for Ministry) sums it up nicely as he says, “In our day of shrill and overheated religious grandstanding, its quiet witness to the God of cruciform love made me want to become a Christian all over again.”

– Margery Kennelly

MALONE & COLIN



People at St. George's are blessed in so many ways, but in our modern world, it can be difficult to create and maintain deep, intimate friendships with others outside our family. Why do you feel friendship is neglected in our culture?

MALONE: It's easy for us to say, "I've got friends, so I don't need to pay a lot of attention to this." But the fact is, I want everyone to pay attention because this is about more than just acquaintances. St. George's is an incredibly warm and welcoming place. We are focusing on friendship not because people here are unfriendly or because we're trying to correct a wrong, but because we want St. George's to grow in our friendship - friendship with God and one another.

COLIN: Our culture doesn't help foster meaningful relationships. So much of our connectedness is in the cyberworld, where friendship is often equated to a fleeting agreement over something on social media - and we are prone to counting that as friendship.

MALONE: The thing about actual friendship is that it takes sacrifice. Because of the busyness and scale of our lives, we don't sacrifice much. To spend time with somebody else, choosing to slow life down in order to be present in that situation, to listen ... that's what I think of as true friendship.

COLIN: Every relationship requires sacrifice, but friendship is unique in that it's not biologically or socially necessary for our survival. In our society, romantic love takes primacy. If you go to the store and look at magazine covers, they are all about romantic relationships. There are no magazine covers that say, "Best Friends," "Who's friends with who?" or "How to make friends in your 40s." As a culture we focus on family, romantic, and business relationships, neglecting friendships.



Can you speak to why friendships are important in the Christian life?

MALONE: It adds so much depth to our lives. This isn't just a sociological experiment: Christianity is all about relationship. Jesus calls us friends, and that's significant. We need to understand what friendship is. If our idea of friendship is a casual acquaintanceship, then Jesus becomes an easy add-on in our lives. True friendship requires actual involvement, and it takes time. So while it's not necessary in one manner of speaking, it adds richness to our lives, especially when we share those experiences with others.

COLIN: In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates the world. Looking at his creation, God continually says, "It is good." There is only one aspect of creation that is not good – the fact that Adam is alone. Adam aches for companionship, but it's not a fault of his. This is built into his human nature. Friendship is one way we can meet this inherent need for connection.

MALONE: Life is difficult enough on its own! To be able to walk through life and share it - meaningfully - with someone else is valuable.

What role does reconciliation or critical feedback play in this sort of friendship?

MALONE: We tend to want to surround ourselves with people who affirm and agree with us so we can get on with our busy lives. But a strong friendship will be able to give and receive critical feedback. Proverbs says, "iron sharpens iron." It's an abrasive image, but it's doing good for both sides. We are sharpened when there is opposition in our friendships – it broadens our perspectives, and it invites us to consider things outside our comfort zone.

>> Continued on page 8



Are there examples of some people who model this for us?

MALONE: Immediately I think of a few people who have this sort of relationship. Like Tennessee governors Bill Haslam and Phil Bredesen, who do a podcast together called You Might Be Right. They've become friends although they are from different sides of the political aisle. And they talk about how their differences cause them to become better friends - to each other and to others in their lives.

There's also the famous group, the Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and others. They expressed appreciation for their camaraderie but particularly lauded gratitude for healthy opposition that was found in their group. Their critiques were significant in pushing them forward as friends to become better than they would have been alone. One of the inklings said these critiques had a profound impact on C.S. Lewis - that he never would have developed into such a renowned apologist, novelist, or writer without processing the conflict that they worked through together. Making space for opposition in friendship makes us more than we could be alone.

COLIN: I like this quote from Proverbs 27:6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Any true friendship involves accountability because you want the best for each other - you want the other person to grow in the way God has created them to be.

I once heard a preacher say that there is one person who wants us to stay exactly the same, who doesn't want to see us change or experience transformation, and who wants to spend eternity with us - it's the devil!

When a relationship is built on love, you will always want the best for the other person. We see this with our kids, of course. We would fail as parents if we didn't challenge or encourage them to be better - to hope for their flourishing. But this does not mean controlling the other person. To be a friend, you have to give someone the freedom to live their life without trying to control them. And that's ultimately what God does for us.

MALONE: Talk about perfect friendship – he does give us the freedom to love, to fail. But he never abandons us. God is the friend that sticks closer than a brother, allowing that process of growth to take as long as it needs to take. The beautiful thing about God is that he knows transformation will happen.

COLIN: It's powerful to think about God's relationship with us in terms of friendship rather than abstract love.

MALONE: It personifies love rather than feeling like a force out of Star Wars!

COLIN: The promise of the Gospel is that God created us to be friends with him. The mission of the church could even be articulated this way: the mission of the church is to foster friendship with God and one another in Christ.

How will the church and the vestry support this new vision of friendship at St. George's?

MALONE: That's the perfect segue into the new commission on the vestry. This year, we'll have three areas of vestry work: Welcoming, Fellowship, and Friendship. Because we feel so strongly about the purpose of friendship in our lives, we'll have a portion of our vestry dedicated to this. It's so important that we are naming it at the highest level of our leadership for St. George's.

COLIN: The vestry's role will be to create or broaden the context in which relationships are formed. As Christians, we are bound together in our discipleship with Christ. So, we will be exploring and imagining what that might look like for the church – strengthening existing programs, perhaps creating new opportunities. This will reframe how we think about our ministries. We'll be encouraging church members to think about their Christian faith in terms of friendship.

MALONE: Exactly. Back to that verse in John, Jesus says, "I call you friends." We do not serve as a proxy for church members in their friendship with Jesus. Each person is a friend of Jesus. So, this will take a commitment from each person as they engage with Jesus and build a meaningful, two-way relationship.

COLIN: This is why programs like Essentials and others are so formative. When people finish a course, they hopefully have learned several things, but what people tend to talk about the most is the friendships and connections they made.

What could this sort of friendship look like in our everyday lives?

MALONE: Colin and I have even developed our own friendship over the last 18 months, and here we are leading this congregation together. We each have the opportunity to speak freely into the other's life, to be a voice of critique and opposition in a way that's not threatening but meant for the good of the kingdom. You will often say things to me that I've not considered which totally broadens my understanding and vice versa. I am a much better minister because I have you in my life.

COLIN: I feel the same! Paul in Philippians tells the church, "Imitate me." It's a bold thing to do, but as Christian leaders we seek to live faithful lives so people can imitate us. Our hope is that the church might look at our friendship and imitate that with their own friendships in the church.

MALONE: Just like a marriage, friendship invites us into a relationship that is much more vulnerable than an acquaintanceship. These relationships are tender. They're high risk, high reward. Even Jesus is betrayed by his closest, dearest friends. That's why we need a savior, because fostering this kind of deep love – even in the midst of deep hurt – is outside of our human capacity.

COLIN: Friendship carries so much weight and demands so much of us – it means we only have the capacity for a few close friendships in our lives. Our invitation is not to be close-knit friends with 4,000 people; it's to find a group of people in the church to grow in friendship with.

Stay tuned to see ways you might intentionally engage in this mission with us! ✝



Lenten Conversation with Andrew Peterson



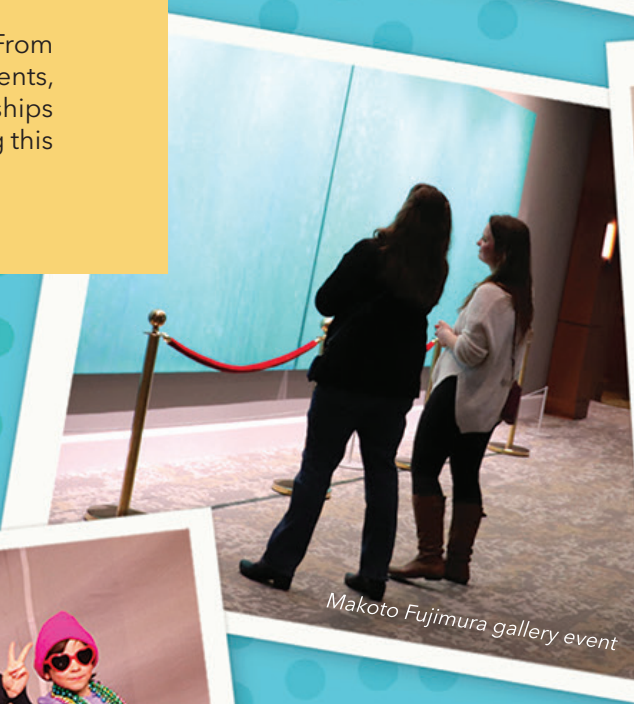
Women's Retreat



Pancake Supper



Friendships abound at St. George's! From worship, to retreats, to fellowship events, there are opportunities to form relationships every time we're together. Thank you for making this a place of warmth across all generations. ✝



Makoto Fujimura gallery event



Pancake Supper



Mardi Gras party



Sunday morning childcare



Boulevard Bolt



Pancake Supper



Men's Retreat



Pancake Supper



Pancake Supper



Baptism



Prime Time



Parenting Event



FROM PARENTING PERFECTION TO

Connection:

Shifting Our Focus As We Build A Parenting Community

by Mary Helman, Associate Director of Parent Engagement



Parenting Event with Daystar Counseling Ministries

In family schedules packed with activities, work, and all kinds of good and necessary endeavors, our margin to invest in intimate and authentic friendships for ourselves may feel small. Most of us deeply understand the need for godly friends to encourage us and share in the work of raising children with us. And we want to model participation in a faith community for our children. Yet how do we find and cultivate these relationships? And how are our friendships at church set apart from our friendships in other contexts?

As we go through the motions of our busy lives, it's easy to forget that God is always at work inviting us into deeper relationship with himself and each other. The "yes" that we give to the still small voice within us may be a seed from which God plans to bring flourishing. The seemingly random people that we encounter as we serve and participate in the life of the church are often there by God's providence. While it takes time, vulnerability, and sometimes an open mind, this is the fertile ground from which life-giving friendships can grow if we open ourselves to the possibility.

St. George's Church and Kindergarten are investing more than ever in opportunities for parents and families to learn, serve, and have fun with one another in faith. If you're interested in learning more about any of the current opportunities that our Family Ministries team is offering for parents, please connect with us, or visit stgeorgesnashville.org/parenting, where we'll be posting new opportunities regularly. ☩

To learn more, contact Mary Helman, Associate Director of Parent Engagement, at mary.helman@stgeorgesnashville.org or 615-385-2150 x 223.



OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE

There are many opportunities to engage with parents and young families throughout the year at St. George's. Here is a selection of upcoming events and opportunities, and we encourage you to participate as you are able.

To learn more, contact Mary Helman, Associate Director of Parent Engagement, at mary.helman@stgeorgesnashville.org or 615-385-2150 x 223.

LEARN

- Special Event with David Zahl | Tuesday, April 16 at 5:30pm
- Moms' Bible Study | Wednesdays at 9:00am
- Sunday School Parenting Series | Sundays at 10:05am
- NEW! Summer Book Club | Stay tuned for details

SERVE

- Volunteer at a children's or youth event
- Greet young families at Children's Check-In
- Chaperone during Kids Chapel
- Volunteer as a family on Mission Day, April 27
- Teach Sunday School with a team of volunteers

CONNECT

- Attend a family event with the church or kindergarten
- NEW! Participate in a grade-level meetup for parents and children

KINDERGARTEN CORNER



St. George's Kindergarten and Church partner together each semester to invite parents for a night at the church with friends to enjoy fellowship, hors d'oeuvres, and new perspectives. In January, Sissy Goff and Dave Thomas from Daystar Counseling Ministries encouraged us with practical tools



for managing worry and anxiety in parenting. On April 16, we'll welcome David Zahl for our next speaking event. His talk, titled "The Religion of Parenting: The Search for Enoughness and the Relief of Grace," will invite us to consider the unlikely keys to a gracious view of ourselves and others. David is Director of Mockingbird Ministries, an organization devoted to connecting the Christian faith with the realities of everyday life. Please mark your calendars and make plans to join us for this free event.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16
5:30-7:30PM

PARENTING SERIES EVENT:
DAVID ZAHL OF
MOCKINGBIRD MINISTRIES

The Religion of Parenting:
The Search for Enoughness
and the Relief of Grace



Details and registration at stgeorgesnashville.org/parenting.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28
8:45AM

KINDERGARTEN SUNDAY

It is a great joy to invite the St. George's Kindergarten families, staff, and teachers to worship with us on Sunday, April 28, at 8:45am. Please join us to celebrate the youngest generation in our parish.



ST. GEORGE'S ENTERPRISE MINISTRY: A RECIPE FOR

Success

One of the ways we can be most impactful as Christians is by forming new relationships with those around us and responding to the needs of others with love and dignity. St. George's Enterprise Ministry (SGEM), seeks to do exactly this by building and maintaining long-term relationships with a lasting impact. SGEM was formed as a mission initiative that would benefit the Nashville community and serve as a catalyst for future St. George's ministry opportunities and relationships. Our social enterprise partners receive grants as well as business mentoring, leadership development, professional and volunteer connections, and support of their social enterprise from our church members. Each year, the SGEM committee solicits and supports new grant applicants who would benefit from this kind of relationship with St. George's. We're delighted to announce our newest SGEM partner: Café Momentum.

Café Momentum is an award-winning restaurant and culinary training facility. They aim to transform young lives by equipping our community's justice-involved youth with life skills, education, and employment opportunities to help them achieve their full potential. Their primary goal is to build a sustainable model that provides justice-impacted youth (ages 15-19) with the holistic support they need to truly thrive.



Café Momentum leaders work alongside the Office of Juvenile Justice and local community partners and strive to give these teens the life skills and marketable employment skills that will allow them to break the cycle of violence and incarceration that surrounds them in their local neighborhoods. Students progress through a 4-tiered internship program with increasing levels of pay and responsibilities:

Tier 1: An introductory 8-week internship, gaining exposure in all areas of restaurant work.

Tiers 2-4: Advanced tiers focus on reaching skill milestones and building knowledge through work at pop-up dinners and catering events.

Originally launched in Dallas, Café Momentum has garnered national recognition because of its unique mission and success in transforming young lives. Founded by Chad Houser, the first café officially opened in 2015. He shares, "I witnessed firsthand just how much the current model for juvenile justice is designed to negatively affect our youth. Rather than building a better system, we are trying the same thing over and over again. I realized that I wanted to open a restaurant - and I wanted to let these kids run it." The Momentum Advisory Collective was founded in the years that followed, creating a model for growth to increase their reach and change the lives of even more students.

Davidson County Juvenile Judge Sheila Calloway was exposed to a presentation about Café Momentum in Dallas, and she was so impressed with the results that she lobbied for the Café Momentum model in Nashville. Thanks to her efforts, our local café opened in Nashville in July 2021. Today, the organization operates out of the McGruder Family Resource Center on 25th Avenue North with skilled leadership from Executive Director Rokeisha Bryant and Executive Chef Star Maye. While their temporary location accommodates 50-60 interns in the test kitchen, they plan to open a brick-and-mortar restaurant soon to help as many as 70 students advance their culinary and hospitality skills. St. George's is honored to support this organization whose mission aligns so well with ours. Together, we are impacting lives for the better. †

Learn more about our SGEM partners at stgeorgesnashville.org/sgem.

NEWS & NOTES

from St. George's



① Christmas Offering

As you may remember, we asked our church community to give generously this past Christmas in support of two organizations responding to critical needs in our community. Thanks to your generous support, we raised more than \$34,000 - a new St. George's record. Your gifts have helped Matthew 25 and Bellevue Community Food Bank as they serve our neighbors in Nashville.



② Welcome, Joe Ananias

In January, the Rev. Joe Ananias joined our clergy team as part-time Priest Associate. He comes to Nashville after seven years on staff with the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School, where he served most recently as Interim Director. He is currently completing a Doctor of Theology program in systematic theology at Duke under Dr. Jeremy Begbie, with a focus on the Holy Spirit, resurrection, and divine healing. Joe is passionate about parish ministry, and he sees his studies as part of a larger vocation to build up the church and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Joe is married to Christina, who teaches theology at Belmont University, and they have two children, Sammy and Lizzy. Joe's ministry at St. George's includes leading worship, preaching, teaching, and supporting the overall ministries of the church.

③ Special Guest Andrew Peterson

More than 400 people gathered for our first Lenten Conversation in February with guest speaker Andrew Peterson. His talk, "The Morning Star Rises," explored how art dispels the shadows of the past and points toward a promised future. The event was in collaboration with the Rabbit Room, a vibrant community of creators, thinkers, writers, and art enthusiasts. Our two missions align in St. George's art ministry, as we seek to contemplate art in its many forms and engage the fullness of the Christian imagination.

④ Shalom: A Theological Vision for Health

In our ongoing partnership with First Presbyterian Church and Duke Divinity School's Initiative of Theology, Medicine, and Culture, St. George's was pleased to host Dr. Patrick T. Smith to speak on "Shalom: A Theological Vision for Health." At the March event, Dr. Smith invited us to imagine what it looks like for Christians to be good neighbors, considering the larger social dimensions associated with health and well-being. Attendees came from both congregations, as well as from Nashville's medical community.

⑤ Lenten Donations for Siloam Health

St. George's organizes a Lenten donation drive each year to benefit those outside our community. This year, members of the parish donated over-the-counter medical supplies to be used by Siloam Health as they provide medical care for uninsured and underserved families in Nashville. Siloam Health's patients often need assistance obtaining first-aid supplies and other necessities for themselves and their families. The donated items will be sorted by St. George's volunteers at Siloam's campus as part of our April Mission Day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

▶ SENIOR APPRECIATION SUNDAY

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

It's a new tradition at St. George's to honor our thriving senior adult ministry and the many gifts they bring to this community of faith. Join us on Sunday, April 14 for a morning celebrating the seniors in our midst.

▶ ST. GEORGE'S FEAST DAY

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

In honor of our patron saint, the women of St. George's are invited to a special evening with dinner, joyful fellowship, and a guest speaker. The event will be hosted by the men of the church as they coordinate all the details of the evening. Learn more and register online at stgeorgesnashville.org/feastday.

▶ MISSION DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

St. George's sends volunteer teams to share in the work of ministry by serving our fellow Nashvillians in a half-day event. Teams learn about the needs in our community and engage in meaningful work together for the betterment of others. There are opportunities for individuals of all ages, and we encourage families to serve together. New this semester is the opportunity to take over-the-counter medical supplies from the Lenten drive to Siloam Health for sorting and distribution.

Learn more & register at stgeorgesnashville.org/outreach.

▶ HYMN FESTIVAL: TOGETHER WE SING!

SUNDAY, APRIL 28 AT 6:00PM IN THE NAVE

Last year, the *In Excelsis* series began with a triumphant Hymn Festival as the opening program for our organ dedication series. We continue the celebration of our beautiful and thrilling Episcopal hymns as the Choir & Choristers of St. George's lead the congregation in joyful singing.

▶ FARMERS MARKET

OPENS THURSDAY, MAY 2, 3:30-6:30PM

The St. George's Farmers Market is open weekly in the summer with new extended hours! Shop the market for local fruit, veggies, meat, baked goods, and more – knowing that proceeds support St. George's outreach ministries. We look forward to sharing details about our vendors and visiting food trucks soon. Visit stgeorgesnashville.org/farmersmarket for updates or follow us on social media @stgeorgesfarmersmarket. See you at the market!

▶ YOUTH SUNDAY

SUNDAY, MAY 5

No Sunday feels complete without the vivacious energy of our youth! Our teens engage in every aspect of our church life, from leading worship as choir members and acolytes to studying the word of God together in small groups. On May 5, we'll celebrate them in a special way at our 8:45am service, followed by a reception in Hampton Hall.



PENTECOST & PARISH PICNIC

PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 19

This annual church picnic is the perfect way to gather as we shift into the summer season. We'll all worship together at 10:00am in the Nave, then meet outside behind the church for food, fellowship, and play. See the back cover for summer worship times. Online registration for the picnic coming soon.

HYMN CHOIR

COMING THIS SUMMER

Have you ever wanted to sing hymns more confidently? This summer, Woosug Kang, our Director of Music, invites you to meet with the choir on select Sunday mornings at 9:15am. You'll learn (or advance) your musical skills – developing your singing voice, reading music, and practicing upcoming hymns. After approximately 30 minutes of rehearsal, you'll rejoin your family and friends in the pews for the 10:00am service, where you can help lead our congregational hymn-singing. There is no formal registration, but please let us know if you'd like to participate by contacting Stephanie Elder at stephanie.elder@stgeorgesnashville.org or 615-385-2150 x 253.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

SUNDAY, MAY 12

Bishop Bauerschmidt makes his annual visitation to St. George's on Sunday, May 12. We look forward to another exciting class of youth and adult confirmands, and you're invited to help us welcome them into this family of God. Youth will be confirmed at 8:45am, adults will be confirmed at 11:00am, and we'll share a reception with the bishop between those services in Hampton Hall.

75TH ANNIVERSARY PREACHING SERIES

In celebration of St. George's 75th anniversary, we are thrilled to announce a monthly preaching series continuing through October. We've invited previous members of our clergy to serve as guest preachers as we reflect on our shared history together. Watch for details to come, and save the dates for a weekend of 75th anniversary festivities on October 25-27.

SUPPORT OUR MINISTRIES



REALM

Under the Giving tab you can make a one-time donation or set up recurring donations on any day of the month you choose. Realm walks you through each step and saves your information securely for future reference.



MOBILE

Text "George" to 73256 from your mobile phone or device. A link will be texted back to you to make your gift with a credit or debit card through a secure site.



ONLINE

Visit stgeorgesnashville.org/givenow and follow the "Give Online" link to make a donation online.



BY MAIL

Checks can be mailed to:
St. George's Episcopal Church
4715 Harding Pike
Nashville, TN 37205.

Please make checks payable to:
St. George's Episcopal Church



STOCK

Donate full shares of stock or mutual funds to fulfill your pledge or as a one-time gift.

For more information, contact Laura Zabaski
laura.zabaski@stgeorgesnashville.org

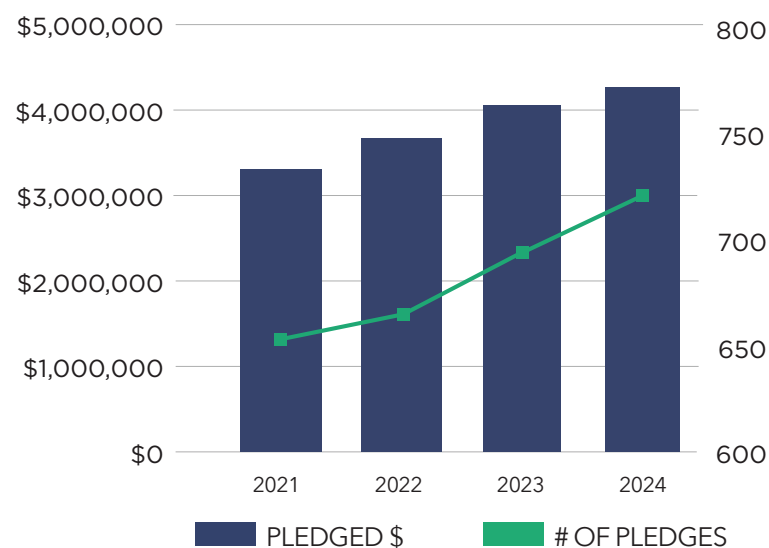
ST GEORGE'S FINANCIALS



2024 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

*Kim Patikas and Paige & Henry Menge
2024 Annual Campaign Chairs*

Thanks to our 2024 Annual Campaign Chairs, Kim Patikas and Paige & Henry Menge, whose leadership was critical to our success this year. We received pledge commitments from 721 families in the amount of \$4.3 million. Each contribution allows us to continue to serve this parish and our community in impactful ways as we seek to receive, live, and share the abundant life of Jesus Christ. Please join us in praying for a fruitful year ahead as we share in that ministry together.



TRANSITIONS

BIRTHS

Benjamin Mark Barr, son of Caroline and David Barr
Hanna Dorine Daniels, daughter of Amy and Dennis Daniels
George Ethen Doyle, son of Elizabeth and Josh Doyle
Benjamin DeLozier Ferguson, son of Meg and Luke Ferguson
Collins Grace Fitzgerald, daughter of Virginia and Richard Fitzgerald
Miller Ann Golden, daughter of Carlyle and Kevin Golden
Minnette Reeves Jackson, daughter of Minnette and Clay Jackson
Matthew Berry Jacques, Jr., son of Anna and Matthew Jacques
Britt Barnum Murphy, daughter of Mamie and Carl Murphy
Hugh Hillman Shell, son of Hayley and Rob Shell
Kathrine Janes Sullivan, daughter of Katie and Clay Sullivan
Charles Aroman Thackston II, son of Katie and John Thackston
Frances Grace Williams, daughter of Annie Deptula-Williams and Shawn Williams

BAPTISMS

Alice Wilkerson Barton, daughter of Foy and Grant Barton
William Reed Boatwright, son of Elissa Estopinal and Ross Boatwright
Hanna Dorine Daniels, daughter of Amy and Dennis Daniels
Mayer Michael England, son of Rakiyah Marshall and Seth England
Julia Murray Lowe, daughter of Michele and Robert Lowe III
Camille Martha May, daughter of Lauren and Philip May
Myers Adams Milosevski, son of Logan and Steven Milosevski
Maren Virginia Mondul, daughter of Jane and Corey Mondul
Caroline Ann Moore, daughter of Kennedy Kelly and Roe Moore
Annie Herrington Petro, daughter of Kathleen and Christopher Petro
Willa Worthington Pursley, daughter of Brooke and Turnbull Pursley
Avery Charlotte Stroop, daughter of Ellen and Stephanos Stroop

NEW MEMBER FAMILIES

Suzanne & Brad Alexander
Jackie Arthur
Susan Barr
Foy & Grant Barton (Alice)
Win Bassett
Laura Clay (Stewart, Annie James, and Tommie)

Caitlin Costello

Tee Dzwondowski

Phil Hanks

Tameron Hedge

Jessica & McLain Hoogland (Mac, Henry, Owen and Wells)

Evelyn Juckett

Meredith & Spencer Karney (Andrew)

Jodie & Hal Lawton (Grant)

John Leaf

Lyle McLevain

CC & TJ Mihelic (Charlotte)

Ashley & Harlan Milkove (Mason)

Margaret & Whit Murray

Megan & Bryan Paylor (Parks and Olivia)

Abbey & Charles Payne (Ragland)

Tyler Reedy

Meghan & Tyler Rhoades (Rivie)

Sheila Hobson & Denver Schimming

Erin Sullivan

Susan Trefil

Mary Wade

Baxter Webb

Judy & Brian Wilcox

Katherine Wilson

Amanda & Chase Young (Rhodes)

Katie Van Schaik & James Zainaldin (Cyrus)

DEATHS

Susan Adams Andrews

Harold Joy Castner

David Michael Hercules

Fred (Ted) Lazenby

Ruth Janice Conder McCabe

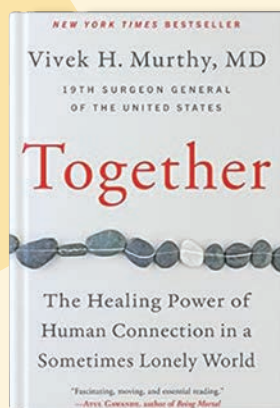
John Overby Montgomery

John Thomas Mynatt

Caroline Trabue Reed

Gayle Dearborn Vance

BOOK NOOK



TOGETHER: THE HEALING POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION IN A SOMETIMES LONELY WORLD

by Vivek H. Murthy M.D.

Vivek Murthy is a renowned physician and served as Surgeon General under three US presidents. In his *New York Times* bestselling book, Murthy makes the case that social disconnection is a root cause and contributor to our present-day epidemics, including alcohol and drug addiction, violence, anxiety, and depression. Murthy shares stories and looks to the latest science in his effort to understand better the causes and impact of our loneliness as a society. He found that insufficient connection with others carries an increased risk of developing heart disease, stroke, dementia, and even premature death. But there is good news. Practicing his four key strategies for a "culture of connection" will help us combat loneliness and positively influence our physical health and mental well-being. As humans we are social creatures and being made in God's image, we have an innate desire to connect with God and each other.

—Agatha Nolan

WORSHIP WITH US

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Through Sunday, May 12

- 7:30am Traditional
- 8:45am Traditional *♦♥
- 9:00am The Table ♦♥
- 10:05am Sunday School ♦
- 11:00am Traditional ♦♥
- 5:00pm Evening Prayer

* *Livestreamed at stgeorgesnashville.org*

♦ *Nursery available (8 weeks – 2 years)*

♥ *Childcare available (3 – 5 years)*

SPECIAL SERVICES

Compline

Wednesdays, April 17 and May 15 at 9:15pm

Choral Evensong

Sundays, April 14 and May 12 at 5:00pm

Pentecost Sunday, May 19

7:30am Traditional Eucharist 10:00am Combined Worship *(no Table Service)*
11:30am Parish Picnic 5:00pm Evening Prayer & Eucharist

Trinity Sunday, May 26

7:30am Traditional Eucharist 10:00am Combined Worship
10:00am The Table 5:00pm Evening Prayer & Eucharist



Junior girls churchball team

— ISSUE NO. 40 —

The Shield is a publication of St. George's Episcopal Church and is shared with members and friends to engage and inform readers about the life and mission of our church community.

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All photos used with permission. Special thanks to Café Momentum.

For the most up-to-date information on all our worship offerings please visit stgeorgesnashville.org

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 Podcast | Sermons at St. George's

 Follow us on YouTube/St. George's Episcopal Church, Nashville