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Christmas 2023

Caroling, the Pageant, Candle Making, and a Christmas Day Service with St Marks.

*See Page 6 & 7
for more!*





A Message from Hilary +

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

Happy New Year! I pray that this year will be filled with joy for you. I'm excited to see what 2024 brings for us as a church community.



Here are some of my predictions: reaching out to our neighborhood will go well; our new youth acolyte program will grow; more social activities, such as Supper Club, will help us know each other more as we have fun together; our Spanish-language ministry will continue by connecting with people outside of worship. Those are a few

thoughts that come to mind. I am hopeful and trust that God will bless our efforts, our ministries, and our expression of what a Christian community can be.

In 2024 year, we will elect the next president of our country; we will continue to view terrible images of suffering nationally and internationally owing to war, climate disasters, gun violence, immigration as people seek a better life, and more situations that we hold in our hearts. One of the important aspects of having a church is the support for our prayer and our spirits as we deal with difficult things, be they personal or more wide-reaching. God is in what is real, not in what we wish it to be. In 2024 we will rejoice with God and weep with God; we will stand together and pray together. These words and prayer from the Northumbria Community speak to how we may wish to invite Christ to cross the threshold of our homes and our hearts as we begin this new year:

In Scotland and the northern parts of England New Year is given much importance: folk go from house to house wishing each other a good year ahead, and celebrate their good wishes with food and plenty of drink. It is often seen as important who should be the first to cross the threshold and 'bring in the year' once midnight has passed. This is known as 'first-footing'. It is

good for Christians to ask Christ Himself to come and 'first-foot' for us, to welcome Him into our home and invite His blessing, whether He comes in silence or in the company of other guests. We could light a candle in the darkness and ask for the love of Jesus to light us.

The suggested prayer for today is based on a poem by Minnie Haskins (1875-1957): "Lord Jesus, You are the man who stands at the gate of the year. Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. As I go into the darkness, I put my hand into Yours, for that is better to me than any earthly light and safer than a known way! Amen."

[\(https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/saints/new-year-january-1st/\)](https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/saints/new-year-january-1st/)

Blessings,

Hilary+



Un mensaje de Hilary +

Queridos amigos y compañeros en el ministerio,

¡Feliz año nuevo! Oro para que este año esté lleno de alegría para ustedes. Estoy emocionado de ver lo que nos traerá el 2024 como comunidad eclesial. Estas son algunas de mis predicciones: el programa de acercarse a nuestro vecindario irá bien; nuestro nuevo programa de acólitos jóvenes crecerá; más actividades sociales, como Supper Club, nos ayudarán a conocernos más mientras nos divertimos juntos; nuestro ministerio en español continuará conectándonos con personas fuera del culto. Estos son algunos pensamientos que me vienen a la mente. Tengo esperanza y confío en que Dios bendecirá nuestros esfuerzos, nuestros ministerios y nuestra expresión de lo que puede ser una comunidad cristiana.

En el año 2024, elegiremos al próximo presidente de nuestro país; Seguiremos viendo terribles imágenes de sufrimiento a nivel nacional e internacional debido a la guerra, los desastres climáticos, la violencia armada, la inmigración de personas buscan una vida mejor, y otras situaciones que guardamos en nuestros corazones. Uno de los aspectos importantes de tener una iglesia es el apoyo a nuestra oración y a nuestro

espíritu mientras enfrentamos cosas difíciles, ya sean personales o de mayor alcance. Dios está en lo real, no en lo que deseamos que sea. En 2024 nos regocijaremos con Dios y lloraremos con Dios; estaremos juntos y oraremos juntos. Estas palabras y oración de la Comunidad de Northumbria hablan de cómo podemos desear invitar a Cristo a cruzar el umbral de nuestros hogares y nuestros corazones al comenzar este nuevo año:

En Escocia y el norte de Inglaterra se le da mucha importancia al Año Nuevo: la gente va de casa en casa deseándole unos a otros un buen año por delante y celebran sus buenos deseos con comida y mucha bebida. A menudo se considera importante quién sera el primero en cruzar el umbral y “traer el año” una vez pasada la medianoche. Esto se conoce como “primer paso”. Es bueno que los cristianos le pidamos al propio Cristo que venga y dé el “primer paso” por nosotros, que le recibamos en nuestro hogar e invitemos a su bendición, ya sea que venga en silencio o en compañía de otros invitados. Podríamos encender una vela en la oscuridad y pedir que el amor de Jesús nos ilumine.

La oración sugerida para hoy se basa en un poema de Minnie Haskins (1875-1957): Señor Jesús, Tú eres el hombre que está a la puerta del año. Dame una luz para que pueda caminar con seguridad hacia lo desconocido. Mientras entro en la oscuridad, pongo mi mano en la tuya, ¡porque eso es mejor para mí que cualquier luz terrenal y más seguro que un camino conocido! Amén.

<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/saints/new-year-january-1st/>

Bendiciones,

Hilary+



Ballet, a family tradition

By Lian-Marie Munro

James Munro had the wonderful opportunity to perform as the “gold boy” in Richmond Ballet’s production of *The Nutcracker* this year. It has been wonderful and surreal to see him on stage as I have vivid memories of my

parents dancing Sugarplum Fairy and Cavalier (both were international Ballet Dancers) and I myself danced almost every youth role (including Clara for 3 years) with the Boston Ballet. It has been a very full-circle life event and we are grateful!



Hoco Birthdays

For the month of January:

**Marion Wells, 2nd; Maria Hayman, 10th;
Catherine Rey, 13th; Norm Marshall, 17th;
Bonnie Steffey, 20th; Jay Deane, 22nd;
David Lehman, 22nd; Phyllis Dawson, 23rd;
Craig Anderson, 26th; Hilary Raymond, 28th;
Abie Richardson, 30th**



Laying on of hands ***By Bruce MacAlister, editor***

To celebrate the eleventh anniversary of the ordination of the Rev Heather Baggett, the Right Rev (aka Bishop) Susan Goff led the church assembled in laying hands on Heather and praying in thanksgiving for her ministry and that it continue in the years ahead. Heather is a priest-in-residence whose day job is as a hospice chaplain. (We all missed her



tenth anniversary.) This “all together” laying on of hands was common at Holy Comforter to send people off, pray for healing, or celebrate milestones. The pandemic stopped it. Now it is started again.



Baptism and Confirmation ***By Hilary Borbón Smith, Rector***

Baptism is open to everyone of any age in the Episcopal Church. We baptize babies because we want them to be part of our community and to be "marked as Christ's own forever" at the start of their lives. Some traditions want people to wait to be baptized until they understand what baptism is and can make a personal affirmation of faith. While I respect other traditions and their ideas and rules about baptism, we in the Episcopal Church embrace the mystery of our faith and question whether anyone can fully understand the grace of baptism. We also uphold the practice of making a mature affirmation of faith, and our way of doing that in community is through Confirmation. Confirmation is done by bishops and thereby shows that we are in a larger Christian community than just our one parish

church. It is important to emphasize that baptism makes one a member of the church; confirmation is not needed for that. As a baptized member, you can participate fully in all our ministries. Confirmation (or reception) is required to serve on the vestry.

If you would like to be baptized or have your child or family member baptized, please let me know. Because they are days of great spiritual importance and celebration, the next dates

designated for Baptism are the First Sunday after the Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, and All Saints' Sunday. The First Sunday after the Epiphany, which is January 7, celebrates the Baptism of Jesus; we will renew our Baptismal Vows even though we do not have any baptism scheduled. For Easter, we hold our baptisms during our Easter Vigil service, which is the first service of Easter and happens

the night before Easter Sunday; this year it is March 30. Pentecost 2024 falls on May 19 and All Saints' Sunday is November 3.



Because the Diocese of Virginia is so big, we do not have an Episcopal visitation (a bishop visit) every year, but we will have one in 2024. Bishop Stevenson, our Bishop Diocesan, will be with us on Sunday, April 14. During our 10:00am service, you can be confirmed, received, or reaffirm your baptism vows with the bishop. If you have been confirmed in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or

Luthern Church, you would be received into the Episcopal Church. Confirmation is for those who have not yet been confirmed by a bishop. If you have already been confirmed or received but feel moved to make an affirmation of faith at this time, you can reaffirm your baptismal vows.



Please let me know if you are interested in confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation. I am planning to offer an “Episcopal 101/ Confirmation” class and will decide on the day and time based on who would like to be part of the class. This class is open to everyone; it does not need to end with you being confirmed, received, or reaffirming.



Diocesan Website Renamed From E-Communiqué, Diocese of Virginia

As announced at Convention, our website name is no longer thediocese.net. Our online home is now www.episcopalvirginia.org. Why the change? It's a better representation of who we are and a friendlier way for church seekers to find the Diocese and its churches through a generic search.

Accordingly, all diocesan staff addresses follow the format of first initial, last name, @episcopalvirginia.org. Please make a note of these changes and update our email addresses in your contacts. Questions? Contact Erin Kamran at ekamran@episcopalvirginia.org.



Saint Martin of America

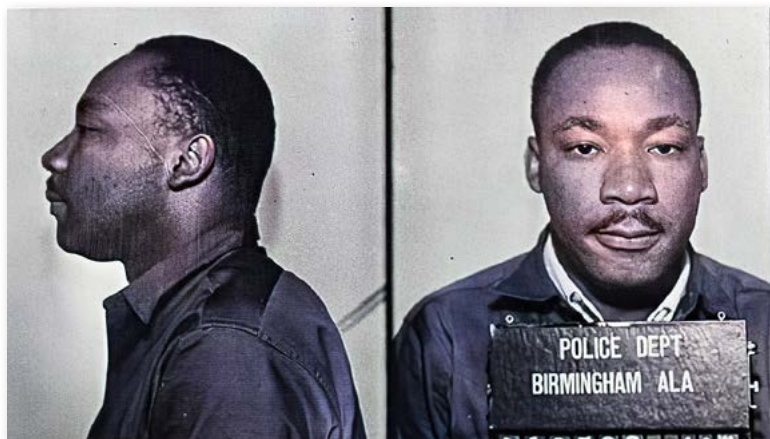
By Bruce MacAlister, Editor

There are seven saints named Martin from Saint Martin of Tours, c. 316–397, to Saints Martin Tho and Martin Tinh Duc Ta, two Vietnamese Martyrs who died between 1745 and 1862.

In the Episcopal church there is an eighth, the Rev Martin Luther King, Jr. Those of us lucky enough to have lived through the turmoil of civil rights marches, sit-ins, violence from bigots and bullies, police misbehavior, and massive anger on both sides remember how “our” saint Martin led the work of desegregation with, of all things, no violence on his side. It was following the model of Jesus’ behavior like few have had the fortitude to do before or since.

The federal holiday, often called “MLK Day,” is January 15 this year. (It is the third Monday in January.) His “Saints Day” in the Episcopal church is April 4th. April is also the month for my other favorite modern saint, the Rev Dietrich Bonhoeffer who also battled against injustice. (His day is April 9th.)

Our St Martin did expect violence from those opposed to integration, but he would not countenance violence by his colleagues. Of course it got him assassinated. But what he started continues still. It is necessary to knock down bigotry and racism in every generation.



King was arrested in 1963 for protesting the treatment of blacks in Birmingham.



Candle Decorating Workshop

By Kipley Herr

A jolly group of folks enjoyed a pre-holiday candle decorating workshop. We made votive



candle holders by decorating glass jars with dried flowers and tissue paper. This fun project was a complete success! All skill levels, and all ages had a wonderful time.



Caroling With a Purpose

By Julie Edwards

Big thank yous going out to the 14 participants who loaded into cars on Saturday, December 17th and dispersed out to Mechanicsville, far western Henrico, Glen Allen, the Fan, Northside, and HoCo's neighborhood. We visited many of our members who live alone in facilities and our folks at home who have limited





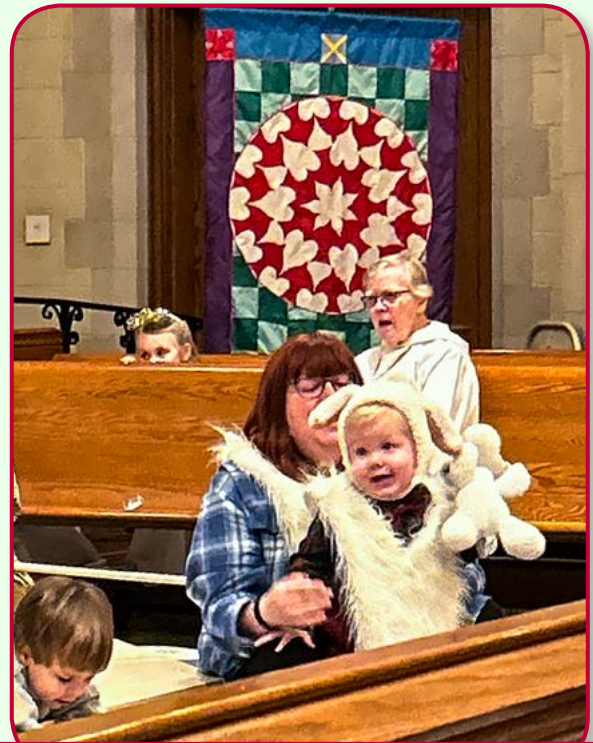
Also, a big thank you to **Anne Snyder**, who put the bags together, had caroling booklets printed, and supplied many of the goodies back at the church for the “after caroling” party. Many of us hung around to share fun stories of good visits, eat delicious snacks, and drink hot chocolate or cider.

It was a consensus: “Let’s do this again!” Be on the lookout for more to come....

We were able to capture some of our visits in photos. Enjoy!



Oh yes, there was a Christmas Pageant this year.



mobility. We handed out 11 bags filled with goodies and gifts, including handmade HoCo Christmas tree ornaments made by our Girl Scout leader. Carols were sung, conversations ensued, and much fun was had by all who were able to participate!

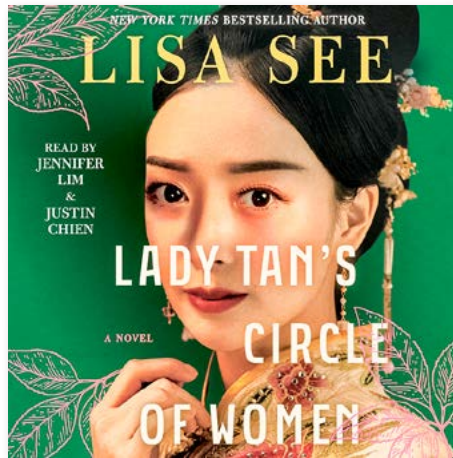


January Book Club - Lady Tan's Circle of Women

By Stephanie Roberts-Turner

"One of those special writers capable of delivering both poetry and plot" (*The New York Times Book Review*) an immersive historical novel inspired by the true story of a woman physician in 15th-century China - perfect for fans of Lisa See's classics *Snow Flower* and the *Secret Fan* and *Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*."

According to Confucius, "an educated woman is a worthless woman," but Tan Yunxian - born into an elite family, yet



haunted by death, separations, and loneliness - is being raised by her grandparents to be of use. Her grandmother is one of only a handful of female doctors in China, and she teaches Yunxian the pillars of Chinese medicine, the Four Examinations - looking, listening, touching, and asking - something a man can never do with a female patient.

From a young age, Yunxian learns about women's illnesses, many of which relate to childbearing, alongside a young midwife-in-training, Meiling. The two girls find fast friendship and a mutual purpose - despite the prohibition that a doctor should never touch blood while a midwife comes in frequent contact with it - and they vow to be forever friends, sharing in each other's joys and struggles. No mud, no lotus, they tell themselves: from adversity beauty can bloom.

But when Yunxian is sent into an arranged marriage, her mother-in-law forbids her from seeing Meiling and from helping the women and girls in the household. Yunxian is to act like a proper wife - embroider bound-foot slippers,

pluck instruments, recite poetry, give birth to sons, and stay forever within the walls of the family compound, the Garden of Fragrant Delights." Courtesy Amazon.com.



Rowan Academy and HoCo

By Hilary Borbón Smith, Rector

Our first semester with Rowan Academy has gone well, given me joy, and filled the parish house with the sounds of children as they walk from their upstairs' classrooms to the playground. We often see them walk by during our Tuesday Morning Book group, which meets in the parlor. At the invitation of the teachers, twice a month, I read a story to the children. They seem to enjoy it; Dave the Dinosaur has made an appearance; and it is very fun for me. I am delighted that the leaders of Rowan are participating in church events with enthusiasm, such as Neighborhood Night Out and our Halloween Event.



Shrine Mont Camp News

From E-Communiqué, Diocese of Virginia

Shrine Mont Camp 2024 Dates Now Available

Mark your calendars for Shrine Mont Camp Sessions in 2024! Dates are posted on the camp website. Rates will be posted soon.

According to the 2023 Parent Survey:

- 98% of parents said their child had fun at camp.

- 97% said they are planning to send their kids to camp at Shrine Mont in the future.
- 95% of parents said it's clear that Shrine Mont Camp had an impact on their child.

Shrine Mont Camp Camper Reunion



January 13, 2024, 1:00-5:00 p.m. | The Falls Church, Falls Church

Shrine Mont Camp campers are invited to reconnect at the annual camper reunion.

All past campers ages 7-17 are invited! Contact

Jennifer Cox, Shrine Mont

Camps Administrative Assistant, at jcox@episcopalvirginia.org for more details.



Adult Formation Classes

By Peggy Hombs

The **Sunday Morning Adult Class** resumes its course of study on Sunday, January 7th, at 8:45am in the Parlor with “The History of Christianity II: From the Reformation to the Modern Megachurch.” The presenter is Dr. Molly Worthen, associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a freelance journalist.

The **Monday Evening Adult Class** resumes on January 8th, from 7:00-8:00 pm. via Zoom. (The Zoom link is found on the Holy Comforter website homepage.)

The class curriculum is “The Fall of the Pagans and the Origins of Medieval Christianity.” The lecturer for this 24-session course is Kenneth W. Harl, Professor of Classical and Byzantine History, at Tulane University.

All are welcome: join us in the New Year to ‘taste and see’!!



Devastating Fire at St. Peter's, Oak Grove

From E-Communiqué, Diocese of Virginia

In the early morning hours of December 19, a fire broke out at St. Peter's Church in Oak Grove.

Thankfully, it appears that no one was in the building and no one was harmed. Firefighters responded to the scene and extinguished the fire, however, the damage is extensive.

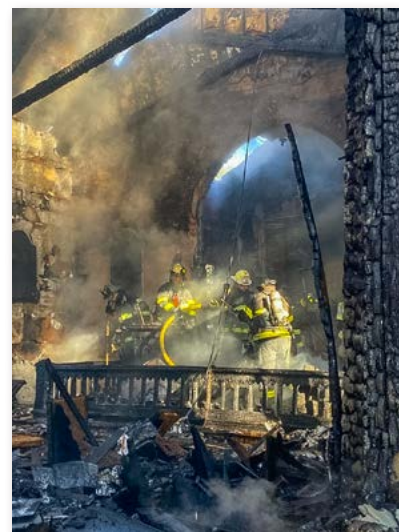
The community and churches of the area have

rallied around St. Peter's. St. Mary's in Colonial Beach has opened its doors to St. Peter's for the [December 24th] Sunday service Bishop Stevenson [was] with the congregation for the service.

“We pray earnestly for the people of St.

Peter's and the Oak Grove community," said Bishop Stevenson. “Losing a house of worship is heartbreaking. And we also know a church is more than a building, it is a family of believers who gather to offer praise and worship to our Lord Jesus Christ. In this season of Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus into the world, we have a sure and certain hope that Jesus is joyfully present with us, even in this time of sorrow. May God bless the people of St. Peter's, the first responders who acted quickly, and all who will assist in the journey before us.”

The Diocese has set up an online donations page where you can make gifts to support the St. Peter's Restoration Fund.





Pantry Visits Increase in 2023

By Phoebe Winter, Cindi Hanayik, and Marie McGranahan-Turner

The number of households served by the HoCo Pantry continued to grow significantly this year. In 2023, the Pantry provided groceries for 336 households, up from 235 in 2022 (+43%) and 180 in 2021 (+30.5%). We had a total of 1,346 recorded visits, with some households coming multiple times throughout the year, compared to 928 in 2022 and 623 in 2021. Most households



feed more than one person -- we provided food for almost 3,000 people, compared to approximately 2,000 people in 2022 (+50%) and 1,200 (+67%) in 2021. Two-thirds of our guests are between 18 and 59 years old, and the rest are 60 and over, with about one-fourth of the family members receiving food are under 17 years old.

The HoCo congregation and its surrounding community, St. Mark's Methodist Church, Aetna, the Virginia Department of Aviation, and Monument Heights Baptist Church have all donated food and supplies to the Pantry this year. St. Mark's Methodist continued its fellowship

with us and delivered trunk loads and truckloads of food. Aetna Better Health of Virginia outreach staff began serving at the Pantry monthly, providing toiletries and health care information to our guests.

Feed More, part of Feeding America, is our main source of food, providing donated food to the Pantry for 9 cents a pound and providing food it buys at prices considerably lower than retail. Unfortunately, at the same time as the need for food increased, the variety and amount of food available from Feed More decreased. Because of this shortage, we have been buying food at grocery stores to have enough food for HoCo's Pantry guests, using monetary donations from the congregation that have accumulated over the past few years. We anticipate we will have spent over \$4,000 by the end of the year, up from \$250 in 2022. Since this is not sustainable, we have reconfigured our distribution system to reflect food groups rather than specific items. For example, in the old system, Pantry guests were



able to receive one can of beans, one bag of dried beans, and one jar of peanut butter. In the new system, guests can select 3 items from among all our plant-based protein items. This way, for example, if a guest doesn't need peanut butter, they can select 2 cans of beans and a

bag of dried beans. This allows us to make better use of the food we get from Feed More while maintaining the same amount of food available to each guest. An average visit means most guests leave with two full bags of groceries.

The necessary changes have been good for the

Pantry, helping us to focus on serving our guests efficiently and keeping their expressed needs as the foundation of our Pantry model. We're looking forward to keeping HoCo's strong relationships with the community and our guests as we move into 2024. We see our client base continuing to grow and look forward to exploring opportunities for the Pantry to grow.



Rabbi Jack Spiro has died

By Peggy Hombs

Jack Spiro was someone many of us knew for many years - he and his family lived a block or two from us [Hombs-VanVoorhees] in the Fan - he regularly walked the 'hood and chatted; many of us took classes from him at VCU; we knew him from his collaboration and presentations with the late great Jack Spong. He was a great teacher and a lovely guy. Count many of us at HoCo in his "fan club."

Excerpts from his obituary:

"Rabbi Jack Daniel Spiro, 90, passed away peacefully on November 27th, 48 days after the passing of his beloved wife of 67 years, Marilyn L. Spiro.

"Jack and Marilyn enjoyed seven loving decades of dancing, learning, adventure, travel, scuba diving and horseback riding. They lived in many countries and gave birth to their eldest child in London, their middle child in Israel and their youngest in New Jersey.

"Jack was a true renaissance man, as fluent in Shakespeare, poetry, history and religion as he was with boxing, tennis and football. Jack loved all creatures, great and small. He had many beloved dogs and a pet tarantula spider who he named Igor Arachstein.



"Jack served his community in multiple capacities, with significant roles in the Richmond United Way, Richmond Human Relations Commission and other service organizations. Jack earned his undergraduate degree with honors from Tulane University and earned graduate degrees from Hebrew Union College and University of Virginia.

"Jack's wife used to joke about Jack's three briefcases: one for Congregation Beth Ahabah, one for VCU teaching and one for his community service and volunteer work.

"Jack served as a Chaplain in the Air Force for three years, Third Air Force European Command, based in London, where he was responsible for personnel on bases in Great Britain and Scandinavia. When Jack was stationed in San Antonio, Texas, he was known for driving around in a bright pink convertible.

"In 1972 the Spiro's moved to Richmond, Virginia where Jack served as the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Ahabah for 25 years.

"In 1972, Jack co-authored a book with the Reverend and future Bishop, Jack Spong, called "Dialogue: In Search of Jewish-Christian Understanding."

"Jack was a beloved professor at for over 40 years. His course "Death: Myth and Reality" was one of VCU's most popular and long-running classes.

"The Spiro's lived on the 1800 block of Hanover Avenue for over 40 years. They loved walking around the Fan and dining with VCU hipsters at Manny Mendez's Kuba Kuba restaurant and other local spots.

"Donations in honor of Jack can be made to the Rabbi Jack Spiro Adult

Education Fund at Congregation Beth Ahabah: <https://www.bethahabah.org/rabbi-jack-spiro-adult-education-fund>





Men at the Movies - Deep Cover

By Steven Van Voorhees

“What would you do?” January’s men at the movie asks this question.

Once again, the hero/protagonist of our January film *Deep Cover* is talking to us. As we saw in *Ship of Fools* and *The Opposite of Sex*, one of the people in the movie is narrating while playing a part. In this case, it is one of the leading characters, acted by Laurence Fishburne. This question comes at the end of the movie, and we are left to answer it. We will in our discussions on Tuesday night, January 9th, 2024.

“What Would You Do?” could be a question for all of us in these times. It may even be a good theme for us in



2024 and our Men at the Movies gatherings. This question is posed to us by Russell Stevens, Jr./John Hull, who is the undercover cop, drug dealer, rogue cop, survivor now looking at his future. He is a Black man, son of a junkie, a cop, and a survivor of the racism that encompassed him all of his life. I resonate with this man who is of my two sons’ generation. He benefits from being a professional law enforcement officer, but because he is Black, he has to deal with all the micro and macro aggressions of a white male dominant system. I grew up knowing this system existed; my sons confronted a good deal of its evils and structures, thanks to school desegregation and the general civil rights movement effects still being experienced by all of us today. (Note what happened here in Richmond when the “Lost

Cause” monuments came down.) What my sons did not experience is what it felt like as Black men. But from what they told me, what I read, and what my Black male friends said, coupled with my own experiences of the last fifty years, I think I can understand at least some of what Russell Stevens, Jr., is feeling, thinking and saying.

So, we have a Black man fighting racism and a criminal drug network as an undercover cop. He



discovers that the “War on Drugs” is a sham and that civil rights has a long way to go, and that he is pretty much alone in both fights. *Deep Cover* has

so many layers and so many different things going on that we will only scratch the surface in one viewing.



This is a film noir, police procedural, morality tale, psychological essay, crime caper, biographical study, and a general sociological expose of 20th-21st century life in America. A movie this complex is rare and deserves our rapt attention.

The movie’s story is derived from a non-fiction account of the Drug Enforcement Agency-Central

Intelligence Agency's undercover operations against the on-going Latin American drug trafficking cartels and networks. Interestingly, it is told from the perspective of a Black man realizing that the "Anti-Drug War" (with an office in the White House) is actually a sham war with no real victories and with corrupt government and dark private and international players reaping proceeds from it. The antagonist in the story is David Jason, played by Jeff Goldblum, who is a white, Jewish lawyer for the drug network. He's drawn into dealing drugs, and he partners with John Hull, Russell Steven, Jr.'s undercover personality. They are essentially frenemies. Two other notable characters in the story are the DEA boss of Russell Stevens, Jr., the racist Gerry Carver, played by Charles Martin Smith to perfection, and the LAPD Detective Tate played by Clarence Williams III, as a Christian crusader against the sins of drugs and violations visited on the Black and Latino communities.

Our perennial movie raters give us these scores: Rotten Tomatoes - 87%; Metacritic - 67/100; Entertainment Weekly - "B- and the movie peels away every layer of hope, revealing a red-hot core of nihilistic despair"; Roger Ebert - 3 ½ stars out of 4. Not everyone loved the film, partly because of its frenetic pace, bordering on cartoon-like violent action. The sound track achieved its own fame. Performed by Hip Hop icon Dr. Dre, introducing Snoop Dog, and containing R&B, Hip Hop and Reggae tracks, it hit #9 for Hip Hop, R&B, Reggae albums, and 166 of the Billboard 200.

Join me and the other movie junkies for this multi-faceted noir film in deep color. It will be a southern California trip, a treat during the winter cold of the "Right Coast." We will gather in the Parlor at 6:00pm, the film will roll at 6:30pm with discussions before and after. Bring a friend, bring food and drink.



HoCo Girl Scout Troop 221

***By Deborah Taliaferro, Troop 221
adult leader***

To paraphrase the camel in the Geico commercial, "Guess what time it is?"

"It's GIRL SCOUT COOKIE time!"

Girl Scout Cookies sale starts on January 1. The price of the cookies this year is \$5.00 a box. This is the first increase in 10 years! We're hoping our supporters will understand the need for the increase. Cookies will be available after the Sunday service, online, and from our newest Daisy Scout, Samantha Baggett, the daughter of the Rev. Heather Baggett's.

Troop #221's year is progressing very well. The troop has expanded to include high school girls for the first time. We now have every level of Girl Scouts -

Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and

Ambassadors! Our Senior, Kayden, has been with us since she was a Daisy. She has

started preliminary work on her Gold Award. (The Gold

Award is the equivalent of the Boy Scout Eagle Award; we Girl Scouts believe it's harder to earn.)

Last month a parent brought a few animals to visit our meeting. The three rabbits, a lamb, a pig, and a llama helped the girls earn their "Animal Badges". We hope to start "Outdoor Badges" by starting a small garden in the backyard of the church.

We saw "Frozen" on Girl Scout night at the Altria in November. Our mothers and scouts now love going to the theatre. Although we couldn't pay for the girls' tickets, parents still wanted to take the girls to see "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" in December.





Supper Clubs are Back

By Kipley Herr

Sign up in the Narthex (at the back of the church) or on line. We'll gather in groups of about 6-8 people to share a meal and get to know one another. You don't need to host to participate. Meals may take place in your home or in a restaurant. The names will be put into a hat and randomly sorted into groups. We'll share the groups in early February.

Sign up on line by clicking https://bit.ly/hoco_supperclub.

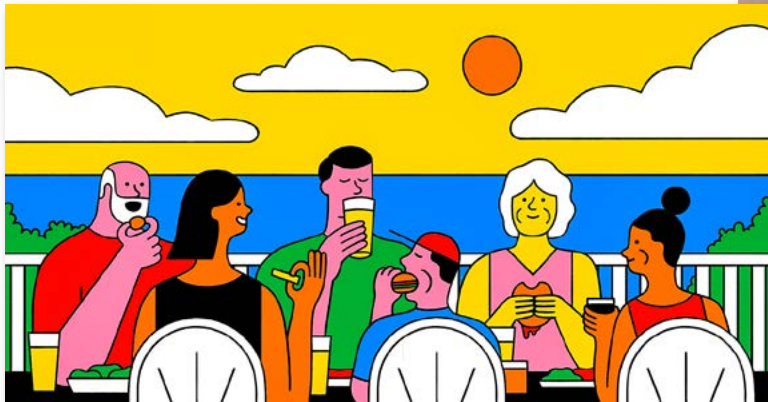


Illustration by Raul Soria



Annual Parish Meeting with Vestry and Foundation Elections

By Steven Van Voorhees, Senior Warden

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place immediately following the 10 am service on

Sunday, January 28, 2024. There will be Finance and other reports, as well as Vestry and

Foundation elections. We have a lot to rejoice over from 2023, and some continuing concerns regarding property and finances to be updated. "Be There or Be Square" for this important gathering!

Vestry



Carol's Creation Care Banner

This banner is the final one done by Carol, mentioned in the December Messenger but without a picture.

Says Carol about this one:

The Creation Care banner is a new creation. It reflects several of the same design elements as the others but it is an entirely new design that I hope speaks for itself.





Ministry leaders, send us your reports!

By Bruce MacAlister, Editor



For our January 28th annual parish meeting we need your reports. Please send them as an **email attachment** to office@hoco.org by January 17 so Vera Limn has time to merge them into the Parish Report we hand out to all the parishioners. Please send the attachments as

Word documents (doc, docx, rtf) or simple text documents.



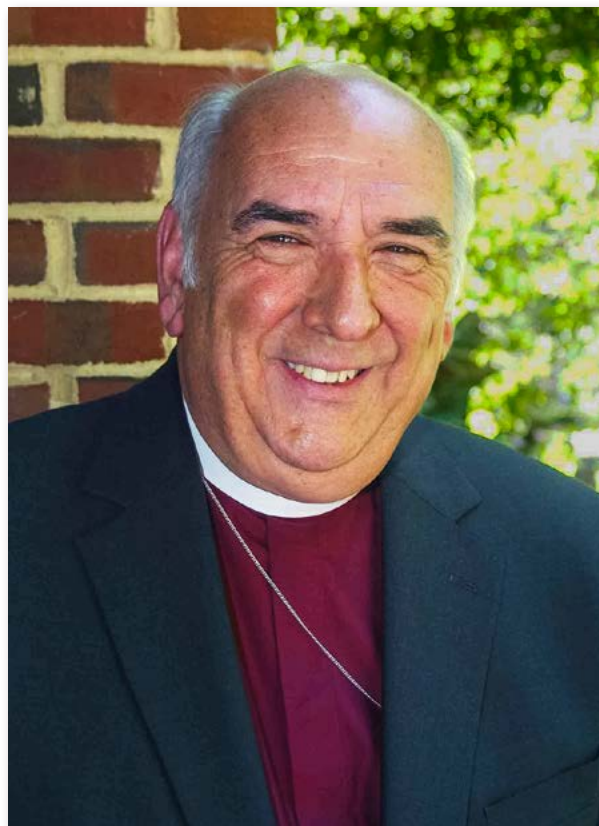
Bishop Shand to Serve in Northern Virginia

Excerpted from the Diocese of Virginia website, www.episcopalvirginia.org

Diocesan bishop Mark Stevenson has appointed the Rt. Rev'd James Joseph "Bud" Shand as a Visiting Bishop in the Diocese of Virginia. He will serve in the Diocese from January through May of this year and will be based in Northern Virginia.

Bishop Shand is the retired Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Easton (Maryland), where he served from 2003 to 2014.

"Bishop Shand is a Jesus-loving disciple whose easy-going style and pastoral gifts will be a wonderful addition to our diocesan staff and a blessing to the clergy and parishioners of the entire Diocese," said Bishop Stevenson. "I'm so grateful he will join the diocesan family on our journey in Christ."



Ordained in 1972, Bishop Shand began his ministry as rector of St. Mary Anne's Church in North East, Md., where he served from 1975-1989. He was then called to Christ Church Parish, Kent Island in Stevensville, Md., where he served as rector from 1989 to 2002.

While in parish ministry, Bishop Shand was heavily involved in youth ministry and in the development of active church schools in each community. During his time at Christ Church, he was also a Field Work Supervisor for Virginia Theological Seminary. In service to the wider church, Bishop Shand was a six-time deputy to General Convention and also served on the Convention's Standing Committee for the Church in Small Communities.

Bishop Shand became a member of the Board of Trustees of Virginia Theological Seminary in 2002 and served as Chairman of the Board from 2009 to 2017.

"It's an honor to share ministry with all the people of this historic and vital diocese," said Bishop Shand. "I look forward to proclaiming the message of God's love, forgiveness, and peace for all of us in this world."

Raised in Plainfield, N.J., Bishop Shand graduated from Canaan College in Canaan, N.H. with a Bachelor of Arts. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the Philadelphia Divinity School in 1972. He also holds a Master of Arts in Christian Education and an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from VTS.

Bishop Shand and his wife of 49 years, Lynne, have two children, Jonathan and Meghan, and one grandchild, Connor.

Church of the Holy Comforter, Richmond

a parish in the Diocese of Virginia under the Episcopal Church in the USA

which is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion

Monument Avenue at Staples Mill Road

web - www.hoco.org; e-mail - office@hoco.org;

phone 804-355-3251; fax 804-355-0049

[Hoco web site calendar page](#)

Schedule of church events following the Covid-19 period (still evolving)

- **Sundays:**

- ◇ 8:45am Adult class in the Parlor
- ◇ 9:00am Sunday Morning, Choir practice in the choir room
- ◇ 10:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II, in person with nursery available; the service is live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and posted following the service

- **Mondays:**

- ◇ 7:00pm Adult class, Zoom

- **Wednesdays:**

- ◇ 11:30am Centering Prayer, in person in the church
- ◇ Noon Holy Communion, in person in the church

- **Thursdays:**

- ◇ 4:00pm Lectionary Study, Zoom
- ◇ 7:00-8:15pm Weekly choir rehearsal

Food Pantry Hours:

- ◇ First and third Saturdays, 11:00am to noon
- ◇ First and third Tuesdays, 5:30 to 6:30pm

Veterans Shelter:

- ◇ Fourth Thursdays, prep in HoCo kitchen, 5:00pm, delivery to the shelter, 5:45pm

Side by Side Dinner:

- ◇ Fourth Thursdays, prep in HoCo kitchen, 4:00pm, deliver to Side by Side, 5:15pm

Editing of the Messenger is done by Bruce MacAlister, the layout by George Collier.

The February Messenger will be available Sunday February 4th.

The deadline for that edition is Friday January 26th.

Earlier submission would really help the volunteers who put it together.

If you feel that you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Bruce MacAlister at

editor@hoco.org

