

- Small group meetings for Appreciative Inquiry
- HoCo 2023 Annual Parish Meeting
- Gold Chicken returns to HoCo
- A Message from Hilary
- Un mensaje de Hilary
- No February Men at the Movies
- February book club - The Devil's Half Acre
- Adult classes for Lent, Sundays, and Mondays
- The Shawl Ministry
- Mardi Gras Monday
- The Baptism of Samuel Scott Souder
- Lent Madness - Holy Fun in Lent
- How to become a Deacon in 11 steps - wikihow
- Nominees standing for Vestry - 2023
- And another thing -
- The Back Page (current schedule information)

## *HoCo Music - 2023*

*The choir singing the offertory anthem "Two Fishermen" by Suzanne Toolan a Cappella with violin and tambourine  
January 22*





## ***Small group meetings for Appreciative Inquiry***

*By Joella Rhoades*

Beginning January 29th, the Vestry is asking for your participation in a small group meeting sometime during Feb - March. Signup will be in the Narthex. An explanation of what Appreciative Inquiry is below. Please help us with our endeavor. Results of this experience will be published in the Spring.



AI is the study of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal and organizational change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams are themselves transformational.

AI, at its best, suggests change is a relational process of inquiry grounded in affirmation and appreciation.

AI is the “art of the question.” Our survey will include three basic questions. Appreciation has to do with recognition of one’s ideas, valuing of those ideas, and gratitude for those ideas. Dialogue is conducted in a group format. AI was created in 1987 at The Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. It is used in various forms nationally and internationally.

If you have any questions, please contact Steve Van Voorhees or me.



## ***HoCo 2023 Annual Parish Meeting***

*Ron Cox, Senior Warden*

We will hold our 2023 Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, March 5th, immediately following the 10am service. During the meeting we will hear from our Rector, Senior Warden, Treasurer and Foundation Chair. New Vestry members will be elected. Please plan to attend.



*By the Rev Jay Sidebotham, © CPG.org*

### **Hoco Birthdays** **For the month of February:**

*Caroline Nichols, 1st; Shawn Sthresley, 3rd;  
 Nan Ottenritter, 5th; David Baggett, 6th;  
 Lorraine McCarthy, 7th; Mary Mitchell, 7th;  
 Kathy Hayfield, 10th; Heather Baggett, 11th;  
 Fritz Doran, 11th; Stephen Herr, 14th;  
 J. Ronald Cox, 15th; Deb Love, 16th;  
 Elizabeth Lowry, 16th;  
 Melvin Alvarez Del Pilar Dyer, 19th;  
 Reid Hall, 19th; Carol Gibbs, 21st;  
 Hilary Smith, 21st; Julie Turner, 23rd;  
 Bonnie Weber-Lehman, 24th*



## Gold Chicken returns to HoCo

By Ellen Hall

“In a world where you can be anything, I’ll be kind to you. Would you be kind to me?” After a long Covid hiatus the Gold Chicken Players are back. For those who don’t know, Gold Chicken Players began back in 2015 after a benefit show for L’Arche Metro Richmond, a group for adults with disabilities, see



2015 after a benefit show for L’Arche Metro Richmond, a group for adults with disabilities, see



Holy Comforter until our projected March show; details TBA. How can you be a part of this joy? There are several ways. We are currently looking for buddies. If you like performing and want to be a part of something special, come join us any Sunday at 2:30. We’d love to have you. This is a very laid back low pressure rehearsal. You’ll have fun. Not into performing but really want to help? We could use donors for things like our sound system and t-shirts for the cast. No amount is too small. And, of course, you can come to the show. Tickets will go on sale soon. Even if you can’t come, you can sponsor group homes by buying tickets for them. So many ways to **be kind**.

<http://larchemetroricmond.org/>. We thought it would be a shame to take all this joy and energy and not use it so Gold Chicken was born. We pair performers with disabilities and their buddies and put on a big musical show. It’s truly the best thing I’ve ever done. The cast is rehearsing the new show, “Be Kind,” every Sunday afternoon here at



## *A Message from Hilary +*

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

On February 22, Ash Wednesday, we enter our Lenten journey. Traditionally, at its most basic level, Lent is a time to prepare for

Easter. But the days are over when we could leave it at that and think traditional church practices and focuses will be sufficient or speak to everyone. Just using the word “sin,” is enough to turn people off and away from the church.



Recently, Pope Francis stated that being gay is not a crime but it is a sin. People have praised the Pope for criticizing anti-gay laws, and while we hope that his statements will help mitigate the legal persecution of gay people around the world, calling being gay a sin is another kind of abuse. What the Pope calls a sin, we call a gift from God for we who are in the LGBTQIA+ community as we too have been created in God’s image. Many who are not LGBTQIA+ but are allies have come to Holy Comforter and the Episcopal Church because of our unwavering support of the rainbow of diversity that we find expressed in humanity. Talk of sin is problematic for one person’s idea of what constitutes a sin, is another’s truth.

Our Ash Wednesday services can be problematic for some, if not many of you, because of the traditional language used for sin and forgiveness. Others will find the familiar words comforting. I find the practice of receiving ashes with the words “remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” to be grounding and comforting in the sense that I am part of creation and that God loves us and cares for us now and forever. As we will hear in psalm 103, God remembers that we are but dust and that God’s merciful goodness endures forever.

Rather than focusing on sin and repentance as the primary concern of Lent, the question for each

of us might be, “what is God’s invitation to me?” Most spiritual paths have times of fasting and self-examination as part of a regular rhythm for spiritual growth. We talk about growing closer to God during Lent. I encourage you to take time for prayer and any practice that helps you grow closer to God or we might say feel God’s closeness, for God is as close to you as your breath in this very moment. In prayer, you could talk with God about what God hopes for you this Lenten season. How do you imagine God? Where do you imagine talking with God/Jesus/Spirit? Put yourself there in your imagination, rest in the presence of the Divine, and after talking, listen.

Wishing you every blessing,

*Hilary+*

### **Ash Wednesday Services**

**12:00 p.m.**

**Liturgy for the Day with music**

**2:00 pm to 3:00 p.m.**

**Ashes to Go at the corner of  
Monument Ave and Staples Mill  
Rd, in front of the church**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Liturgy for the Day with music**





## ***Un mensaje de Hilary +***

Queridos amigos y compañeros de ministerio,

En el 22 de febrero, Miércoles de Ceniza, iniciamos nuestro camino de Cuaresma.

Tradicionalmente, en su nivel más básico, la

Cuaresma es un tiempo para prepararse para la Pascua. Pero se acabaron los días en que podíamos dejarlo así y pensar que las prácticas y los enfoques tradicionales de la iglesia serían suficientes o hablarían a todos. Solo usar la palabra “pecado” es suficiente para alejar gente de la iglesia. Recientemente, el Papa Francisco afirmó que ser homosexual no es un delito sino un pecado. La gente ha

elogiado al Papa por criticar las leyes contra los homosexuales, y aunque esperamos que sus declaraciones ayuden a mitigar la persecución legal de los homosexuales en todo el mundo, llamar pecado a ser homosexual es otro tipo de abuso. Lo que el Papa llama un pecado, nosotros lo llamamos un regalo de Dios para nosotros que estamos en la comunidad LGBTQIA+ ya que también hemos sido creados en la imagen de Dios. Muchos que no son LGBTQIA+ pero son aliados han venido a Holy Comforter y a la Iglesia Episcopal debido a nuestro apoyo inquebrantable al arcoíris de diversidad que encontramos expresado en la humanidad. Hablar de pecado es problemático porque la idea de lo que constituye un pecado para una persona, no es la verdad de otra.

Nuestros servicios del Miércoles de Ceniza pueden ser problemáticos para algunos, si no para muchos de ustedes, debido al lenguaje tradicional usado para el pecado y el perdón. Otros encontrarán confortante las palabras familiares. Considero que la práctica de recibir cenizas con las palabras “recuerda que eres polvo y al polvo volverás”, es un fundamento y un consuelo en el

sentido de que soy parte de la creación y que Dios nos ama y se preocupa por nosotros ahora y por siempre. Como escucharemos en el salmo 103, Dios recuerda que no somos más que polvo y que la bondad misericordiosa de Dios permanece para siempre.

En lugar de centrarse en el pecado y el arrepentimiento como la principal preocupación de la Cuaresma, la pregunta para cada uno de nosotros podría ser: "¿cuál es la invitación de Dios para mí?" La mayoría de los caminos espirituales tienen tiempos de ayuno y autoexamen como parte de un ritmo regular para el crecimiento espiritual. Hablamos de acercarnos más a Dios durante la Cuaresma. Te animo a que tomes tiempo para la oración y cualquier práctica que te ayude a acercarte más a Dios o podríamos decir sentir la cercanía de Dios, porque Dios está tan cerca de ti como tu aliento en este mismo momento. En oración, podrías hablar con Dios sobre lo que Dios espera para ti en esta temporada de Cuaresma. ¿Cómo te imaginas a Dios? ¿Dónde te imaginas hablando con Dios/Jesús/Espíritu? Ponte ahí en tu imaginación, descansa en la presencia de lo Divino, y después de hablar, escucha.

Deseándote todas las bendiciones,

*Hilario+*

### **Servicios del Miércoles de Ceniza**

**12:00 p.m.**

**Liturgia del día con música**

**2:00 pm a 3:00 p.m.**

**“Ceniza en la calle” distribuida  
en la esquina de Monument Ave y  
Staples Mill Rd., frente a la iglesia**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Liturgia del día con música**



## No February Men at the Movies

By Steve Van Voorhees

In November 2022, we moved our regularly scheduled movie night to a Wednesday because of Election Day and voting at HoCo. In February, our regular movie night falls on Valentine’s Day, February 14th. At our January movie gathering, we voted to favor our Valentines over movies.

After looking over the HoCo calendar, I realized that February, the shortest month, is loaded with already booked



commitments. Also remember that Tuesday, February 21st is a special election for the 4th Congressional District, and Wednesday, February 22nd is Ash Wednesday (also the traditional George Washington’s birthday!). So we will not have a February Men at the Movies.

Our next regularly scheduled Men at the Movies will be Tuesday, March 14th. Watch for details!



## February book club - The Devil's Half Acre

By Stephanie Turner

The Book Club selection for February is *The Devil's Half Acre: The Untold Story of How One Woman Liberated the South's Most Notorious Slave Jail* by Kristen Green. We will be meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. We will be using our old link to access the meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/99461451877>.

This story is of particular interest to our group

because the jail (Lumpkins Slave Jail) was located here in Richmond.



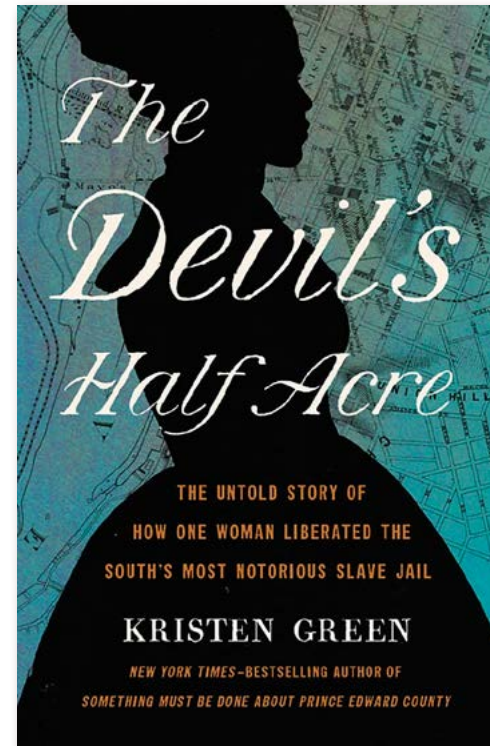
From Amazon.com:

“The inspiring true story of an enslaved woman who liberated an infamous slave jail and transformed it into one of the nation’s first HBCUs.

“In *The Devil's Half Acre*, New York Times bestselling author Kristen Green draws on years of research to tell the extraordinary and little-known story of young Mary

Lumpkin, an enslaved woman who blazed a path of liberation for thousands. She was forced to have the children of a brutal slave trader and live on the premises of his slave jail, known as the “Devil’s Half Acre.” When she inherited the jail after the death of her slaveholder, she transformed it into “God’s Half Acre,” a school where Black men could fulfill their dreams. It still exists today as Virginia Union University, one of America’s first Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

“A sweeping narrative of a life in the margins of the American slave trade, *The Devil's Half Acre* brings Mary Lumpkin into the light. This is the story of the resilience of a woman on the path to freedom, her historic contributions, and her enduring legacy.”





## **Adult classes for Lent, Sundays, and Mondays**

*By Peggy Hombs, Adult Formation*

**Wednesday Night Lenten Program** via Zoom: Again this year, we will offer a Wednesday Night Program via Zoom (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84376998441>) from 7:00 to 8:00pm,



beginning on March 1st and concluding on April 5th. Hilary will lead and facilitate the program, which will use the Sanctified Art series *Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith* and includes Sanctified Art images, scripture passages, commentaries, and poems. The materials will be distributed weekly. Please let Hilary ([hbshococlergy@gmail.com](mailto:hbshococlergy@gmail.com)) know if you plan to attend the program.

**Sunday Morning Class:** We will conclude our current DVD-based curriculum *Jesus and His Jewish Influences* with Professor Jodi Magness on



Sunday, March 19th . The class will be on break until after Easter and resume on Sunday, April 16th. We will then begin a 6-week DVD-based course with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine entitled *Signs*

and Wonders: A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus. This class will conclude on May 21st; we will then be on break for the summer.

### **Monday**

#### **Evening Class:**

The class continues with the DVD-based course with Professor Cynthia R. Chapman. As we have the last several years, this class will pause during Lent, while our Wednesday Night Lenten Program is offered. We will resume after Easter on April 17th until the curriculum is concluded on May 22nd . The class will then be on break for the summer.



### **The Shawl Ministry**

*Interview with Nancy Deane, member of the Shawl Ministry*

The shawl ministry meets the fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am in the parlor. We spend an hour crocheting or knitting prayer shawls. We give them to people who are ill or grieving as a reminder that they are loved and being prayed for. We've been doing this at least since 2010 and have given over 100 shawls. After knitting some new shawls, we ask to have them blessed at a Sunday service. The picture is of the blessing on January 22nd. If you knit or want to learn, come join us on the fourth Wednesday.





## **Mardi Gras Monday**

**By the Rev Dr Hilary Smith, Rector**

Mardi Gras Monday, Music, Potluck  
~ Join us on Monday, February 20, for a fun



night with music, food, and fellowship. Please bring a dish to share with a Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras theme, if you like, or any dish. I celebrate my 55th birthday the next day, so there will be cupcakes! Because we are a polling place, and Shrove Tuesday is also Election Day, we have had to move our Shrove Tuesday celebration to Monday. One benefit of this is that our new Girl Scout troop meets that night and will be joining us. To get an idea of how many are planning to attend, please sign up using the sign-up sheet at the back of the church or email me at [hbshococlergy@gmail.com](mailto:hbshococlergy@gmail.com). Please also let us know what dish you plan to bring. Thank you.



## **The Baptism of Samuel Scott Souder**

**By Hilary Smith, Rector**

On Sunday, January 8, we baptized Samuel Scott Souder, son of Emily and Brad, and brother of Charlie. What a joyful event on a Sunday devoted to baptism. We heard about the baptism of Jesus in our Gospel reading. We reaffirmed our Baptismal vows, as Samuel's parents and Godparents made them on his behalf. What is your favorite baptismal vow? You can find them beginning on page 292 of *The Book of Common Prayer* as part of the Easter Vigil service. One of the vows that I particularly like and feel is a

touchstone for our ministries at HoCo, is “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” We will hold our Easter Vigil service this year on April 8 in the evening, and once again reaffirm our baptismal vows, and have some baptisms. After the



service on January 8, during our reception, everyone was invited to sign the matting of the frame for Samuel's baptismal certificate. We all agreed to support Samuel “in his life in Christ” during the service, and this was a great way to show our support.



## **Lent Madness - Holy Fun in Lent**

**By Bruce MacAlister**

Even if we didn't have the dreariness of Lent, the less-than-celebratory worship, and the sense of having to give something up, the weather during this season is often overcast and rainy, almost depressing. It feels like Lent, it looks like Lent, it is Lent.

The “Lent Madness” tradition provides a piece of fun every day while teaching about the most



obscure saints you've never heard of. Monty Python would do this. (Under 50? Look it up.)

You've probably heard of St Augustine; what



about Enmegaghbowh? There are 32 saints in the brackets. With your involvement, one of them will get the Golden Halo for 2023. A trophy - a Golden Halo coffee mug - is produced in celebration and as “merch” for you to buy. “Saints” in this competition are in the Anglican and Episcopal tradition and are not limited to the “pontifical” saints. On the webpage you see who chose these saints, the “Celebrity Bloggers” and the “Supreme Executive.”

Like March (basketball) Madness, there are brackets. For 2023 they are *Ancient & Apostolic*, *Mostly Monastics*, *Royals Roundup*, and *Modern Mayhem*. (By the way, you can get with your friends and play a bracket, see [www.lentmadness.org/#Bracket](http://www.lentmadness.org/#Bracket).)

Here's the way I play it:

- I subscribe for the email version, see [www.lentmadness.org/](http://www.lentmadness.org/).
- Every day I get a smile from an email note of the two saints up for a vote today.
- I click the note that takes me to the Lent Madness ballot.
- I see a biographic sketch of each saint (religious education).
- Using rational analysis or holy inspiration I pick one and I'm immediately rewarded with

the votes so far today.

As saints are eliminated, we get the “Saintly 16,” the “Elate 8,” the “Faithful 4,” and finally the winner of the Golden Halo.

An alternative to the email notification is Facebook where you “like” <https://www.facebook.com/lentmadness/> that gets you to the same place.

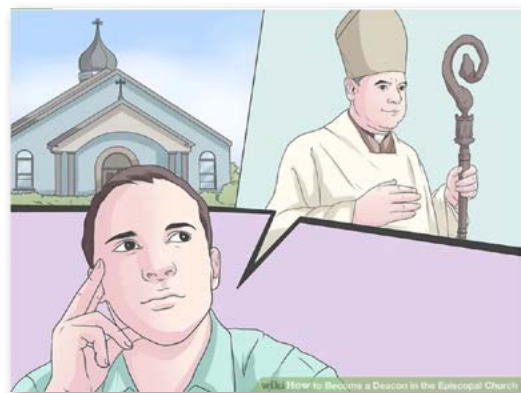
Lent Madness is from that venerable institution Forward Movement that for decades has produced books and booklets for study and for spiritual discipline. It's not all your grandmother's stuff; they have fresh work at [www.forwardmovement.org/](http://www.forwardmovement.org/).



## How to become a Deacon in 11 steps - wikihow

By Bruce MacAlister

I find the wikihow ([www.wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com)) to be very useful on how to build, fix, and repair lots of things. I even make donations to the group. I did not expect to find “How to become a Deacon in 11 steps,” <https://www.wikihow.com/Become-a-Deacon-in-the-Episcopal-Church>. It seems pretty complete. With 28 co-authors, I wonder where it came from. The “Community Q&A” has interesting topics on gender and marriage.



Adding to the fun, there are wikihow articles on “4 ways to get ordained” and “how to become a cardinal.” Indeed, wikihow seems very open since it has how to become a priest: Catholic, Episcopal, and Shinto. Go to wikihow and click the “Religion” category and be both amazed and entertained. I found these much more entertaining than the usual fare “4 Stylish Ways to Cuff Pants.”



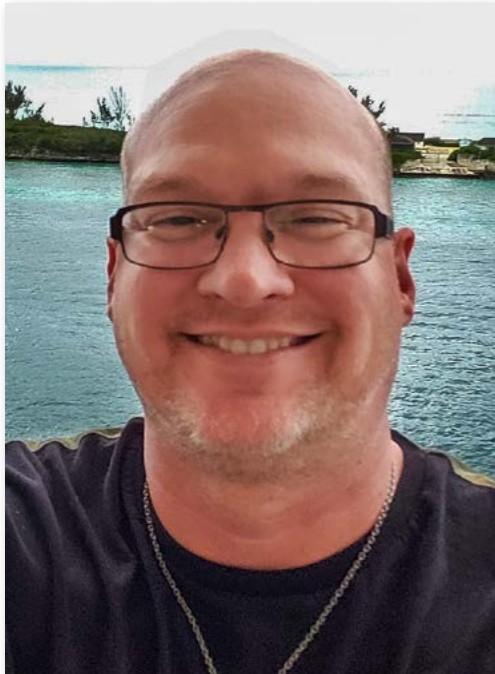
## Candidates standing for Vestry - 2023

### Jamey Hooks

I am interested in serving on the Vestry to help the church move forward in the vision and goals it has set, and to continue to grow and develop my skills in my calling within the church.

A little about myself: I grew up in the Church of Christ and on my spiritual journey I found the Episcopal church and have been an episcopalian for about 10 years now.

I am married and have been with my husband for 14 years. Professionally, I am a money



laundering investigator with a bank located here in Richmond. Outside of work my interests include Karaoke, gaming, reading, and I have recently begun to trying my hand at photography. I started attending Holy Comforter

during the pandemic and attended the Zoom services, where I worked up the nerve to stay on for the breakout groups where I found everyone to be incredibly welcoming. I have now been with Holy Comforter for about a year and a half or so and during that time I have become a part of the choir and served on the music director search committee. I have been an intercessor, reader, Eucharistic Minister, and was recently trained in the role of Crucifer. I am very excited to be at Holy Comforter and for the things ahead.

# Vestry

### Susan Boze

Our journey to The Church of the Holy Comforter began with Carol Gibbs's and Deb Love's wedding. (What a wedding!) In the following months my husband Fred and I would periodically worship at HoCo when we were in Richmond visiting our daughter. Over time, I knew Holy Comforter would be our church home when we moved from Virginia Beach after I retired from Old Dominion University. At ODU I was a member of

the Distance Learning/ Online Learning team.

I was a member of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach and worked with the Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) for a number of years. In addition to EYC I served one term on the Vestry. In addition to my home church work with the young people I served on the Happening Committee (a program for Senior High Youth that is patterned after Cursillo) and sponsored two weekend retreats every year. In addition to Happening, my experience at Chanco Camp and Conference Center included Summer Camp, Cursillo weekends, and a term on the Board. After I phased out of Youth Ministry I completed the EfM (Education for Ministry) program and assisted with retreat planning at Chanco.

We moved to Richmond in Fall 2018 and my husband became seriously ill within days of the move. Holy Comforter has been a large part of our healing journey since 2018.



**Jerry Scholder**

On this 26 day of January, I, Jerry Scholder submit the following statement as my qualifications, and reasons for wanting to join the Vestry of The Church of the Holy Comforter.

First, my statement of belief - when my son was 11 he had encephalitis, and went into a coma for many days. As he lay connected to tubes in PICU, I sat beside him and prayed, without knowing the story of Abraham and his son. God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost gave Brandon back his life. I had been involved in church on and off throughout much of my life, but from then on, I wanted to share the Good News.



These are some of the services I have performed for church thus far in my life:

- Altar boy for many years in Syracuse, NY
- Prepared game supper that drew thousands to our little church in Bradford, VT
- Youth group leader, with my wife, Eliz., at

the same church

- Helped make dinner for church volunteers of all Episcopalian churches in Brevard, FL
- Helped at silent auction, St David's by the Sea

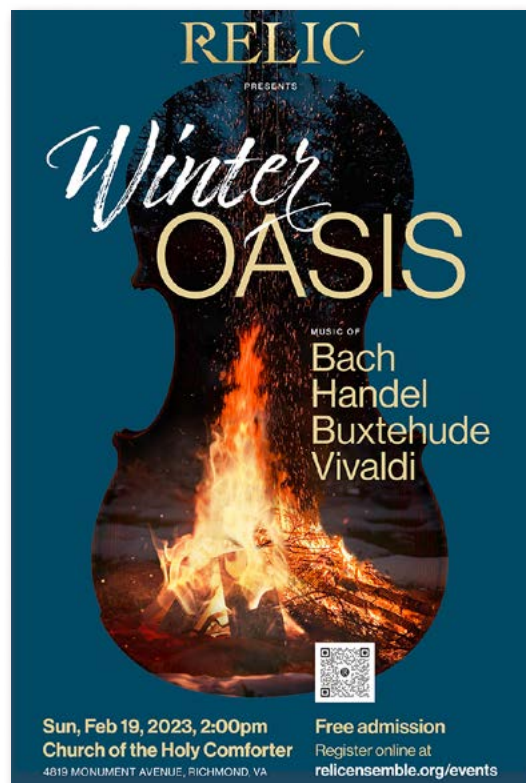
I am a retiree who would like to be instrumental in positive change through Holy Comforter. I have already been volunteering time and energy to cleaning grounds and building maintenance with Gayle Turner.

I have begun serving as an Crucifer as a show of faith and service to HoCo. I have learned of the multiple ways Holy Comforter has been beneficial to its parishioners and our community, even beyond our borders! As such, I feel compelled to contribute to our church in any way I can.



*Freshly ordained Maria with our new bishop the Rt. Rev. Mark Stevenson*

***And another thing -***  
***Winter Oasis*** concert at HoCo on Feb 19, 2pm



# 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](http://www.hoco.org); e-mail - [office@hoco.org](mailto:office@hoco.org);

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

*Coming Events at the Church of the Holy Comforter*

See the [Hoco web site calendar page](#) for detailed calendar and rota

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

- **Sundays:**
    - ◇ 8:45am Sunday Morning Adult Class, in person in the Parlor
    - ◇ 8:45am Sunday Morning, Choir practice in the choir room (through January 1st).
    - ◇ 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
    - ◇ 4:30pm Story Time, in person on the 3rd Sunday of the month, 4:30pm
  - **Mondays:**
    - ◇ 7:00pm Adult Class via Zoom
  - **Tuesdays:**
    - ◇ 7:30am Morning Prayer, Facebook
  - **Wednesdays:**
    - ◇ 11:30am Centering Prayer, in person in the in the church
  - ◇ Noon Holy Communion, in person in the church
  - **Thursdays:**
    - ◇ 7:30am Morning Prayer, Facebook
    - ◇ 4:00pm Lectionary Study, Zoom
    - ◇ 7:00-8:15pm Weekly choir rehearsal
  - **Segundo sábadó de cada mes:**
    - ◇ 11:00am Misa en español
- Food Pantry Hours:**
- First and third Saturdays, 11:00am to noon
  - First and third Tuesdays, 5:30 to 6:30pm
- Veterans Shelter Dinner:**
- Fourth Thursdays, prep in HoCo kitchen, 5:00pm
  - Fourth Thursdays, delivery to the shelter, 5:45pm

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

*The March Messenger will be available Sunday March 5th. The deadline for that edition is Friday*

*February 24th. 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](mailto:editor@hoco.org)

