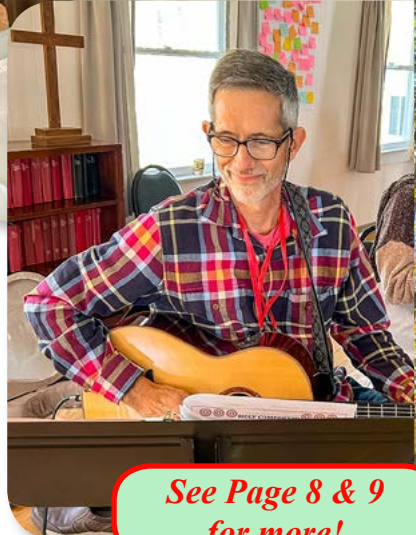


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A Message from Hilary +

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,



Every Sunday, members of my family have a Zoom call at 6:30 p.m. This began during covid lockdown and has continued. Our deeper connection through these Zoom calls is one of the graces that God brought out of covid for my family. On the call, almost every week, have been the four siblings: my dad David, the eldest, then his brother Mark, brother Alan, sister, Anita; and their cousins Carmen and Enrique. The younger generations are less consistent in attending but recently, with Uncle Mark going into Hospice Care, most of us are there every week, which includes me, my sister Miranda, my cousin Elisa, cousin Nick, and cousin Elena. With all the troubles in the world, I value my family connections more than ever.

Last Sunday's Zoom call, after our talk about Mark and supporting his wife Beth, we turned to Israel and Gaza. The four siblings grew up with their Jewish Dad encouraging robust debate at the dinner table, and they continue to debate or they would say, "discuss." As a family, we have different ideas, beliefs, and views about the conflict. As is probably true in our congregation.

My heart is heavy as I go about my daily life, and always on my mind is the horror that has happened and is happening to so many in Israel, Gaza, and the region. I pray for everyone involved, and as unlikely as it seems, for peace and a better life for all. I like to think that our prayers for peace and justice connect with a Divine reality that rings through eternity and that one day will be fully realized on earth. Our prayers now connect us to the strength of our God of Peace and Justice and inspire us to be about the work of God in our world.

As those who follow in the Way of Jesus, we

know that every person is a beloved child of God, everyone. Knowing the value of everyone, how can we be and act in the world to increase justice and peace in our communities? Acting locally can be one way to increase goodness in our world. As we approach our Thanksgiving holiday, we can give thanks for the abilities that we have to make a difference where God has called us to be and with those we see every day.

God bless you that you may be a blessing,

Hilary+



Un mensaje de Hilary +

Queridos amigos y compañeros en el ministerio,

Todos los domingos, los miembros de mi familia tienen una llamada de Zoom a las 6:30 p.m. Esto comenzó durante el confinamiento por el covid y ha continuado. Nuestra conexión más profunda a través de estas llamadas de Zoom es una de las gracias que Dios sacó del covid para mi familia. En la llamada, casi todas las semanas, han estado los cuatro hermanos: mi papá David, el mayor, luego su hermano Mark, su hermano Alan, su hermana, Anita; y sus primos Carmen y Enrique. Las generaciones más jóvenes son menos consistentes en asistir, pero recientemente, con el tío Mark ingresando a Hospice Care, la mayoría de nosotros estamos allí todas las semanas, lo que incluye a mí, mi hermana Miranda, mi prima Elisa, mi primo Nick y mi prima Elena. Con todos los problemas del mundo, valoro mis conexiones familiares más que nunca.

En la llamada de Zoom del domingo pasado, después de nuestra charla sobre Mark y el apoyo a su esposa Beth, nos dirigimos a Israel y Gaza. Los cuatro hermanos crecieron con su padre judío fomentando debates sólidos en la mesa, y continúan debatiendo o dirían "discutir". Como familia, tenemos diferentes ideas, creencias y puntos de vista sobre el conflicto. Como probablemente sea cierto en nuestra congregación.

Mi corazón está apesadumbrado a medida que avanza en mi vida diaria, y siempre en mi mente está el horror que les ha sucedido y les está sucediendo a tantas personas en Israel, Gaza y

la región. Rezo por todos los involucrados y, por improbable que parezca, por la paz y una vida mejor para todos. Me gusta pensar que nuestras oraciones por la paz y la justicia se conectan con una realidad Divina que resuena por la eternidad y que algún día se realizará plenamente en la tierra. Nuestras oraciones ahora nos conectan con la fuerza de nuestro Dios de Paz y Justicia y nos inspiran a participar en la obra de Dios en nuestro mundo.

Como quienes seguimos el Camino de Jesús, sabemos que cada persona es un hijo amado de Dios, todos. Conociendo el valor de todos, ¿cómo podemos ser y actuar en el mundo para aumentar la justicia y la paz en nuestras comunidades? Actuar localmente puede ser una forma de aumentar la bondad en nuestro mundo. A medida que nos acercamos a nuestro feriado de Acción de Gracias, podemos dar gracias por las habilidades que tenemos para marcar la diferencia donde Dios nos ha llamado a estar y con aquellos que vemos todos los días.

Dios te bendiga para que seas bendición,

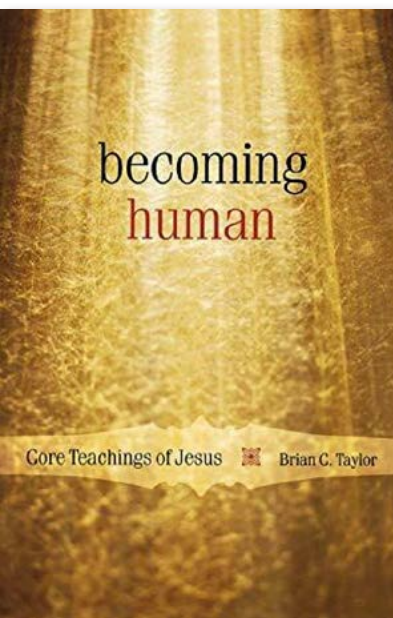
Hilary+



***Tuesday Book Group –
Becoming Human, the Core
Teachings of Jesus***

By Hilary Smith

Tuesday Book Group - 11:00 a.m. in the parlor



We are reading *Becoming Human, the Core Teachings of Jesus*, by Brian C. Taylor, in November and December. After one meeting with this book in October, we realized that we needed more time with it than just a few weeks. *Becoming Human...* touches on many topics of life and spirituality in ways and with words that inspire great conversation around such topics as, "become

simple," "change the world," "drop your pride and shame," "heal and be healed," and so much more. These are just a few of the chapter titles of 37 chapters; each chapter is just a few pages long. In November we will meet on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 29; we will take Thanksgiving week off. Come and join us for a week or every week. Drop in any Tuesday at 11:00 am and we will be so happy to see you.



Recycling Team

By Kipley Herr

Hoco has participated in curbside recycling since March of 2013! Wow - 10 years (plus) of diverting recyclables from the landfill. To continue this valiant effort we need to refresh our Rota of volunteers.

With our current team we take care of the chore about one time per month; we would like to add more folks to lighten the load.

The work requires collecting (mostly) paper from several stations around the church and parish hall, dumping it into the recycling carts and placing the carts on the street. We usually do this after church for (every other) Monday morning pick up. It takes about 15 minutes to accomplish. We work in pairs, so you'll have a buddy to help!

Please contact me if you would like to join the team.

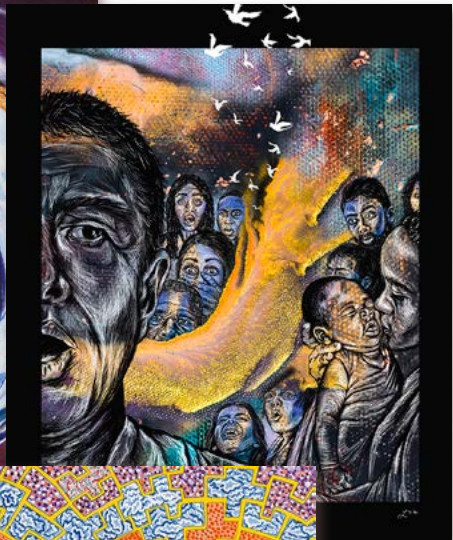




Advent - How does a weary world rejoice?

By Hilary Borbón Smith, Rector

We are using resources from Sanctified Art for Advent as we have done the last few years. Each Advent and Lent, a wonderful team of artists, poets, and musicians develop a theme and produce inspired creative offerings. The theme of this Advent is, "How does a weary world rejoice?" While that is a good time for theme year, it seems particularly perfect for this year with the violence in the world that makes us, and all who seek peace and justice, weary. For the Lectionary class that I lead on Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays, during Advent, we will be using these resources.



Voting Faithfully

Episcopal Church Office of Development

It is a Christian obligation to vote, and more than that, it is the church's responsibility to help get souls to the polls.

- Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Through the Office of Government Relations, The Episcopal Church leads the way in creating and sharing curriculum for individuals and parishes to [Vote Faithfully](#). This means recognizing the importance of our faith communities to be spaces for honest and grace-filled

conversations during this turbulent political season. As Christians and Episcopalians,

we must endeavor to heal the breach and salve the wounds of this country together faithfully. Two helpful tools to promote understanding and spark healthy, thoughtful discussions are the [Make Me an Instrument of Peace: A Guide to Civil Discourse](#) or through the Braver Angels With [Malice Towards None](#) program and pledge.

VOTE *faithfully*



Grief and the Holidays - Honoring Our Loved Ones

By Julie Edwards

Sunday, November 12th after worship in the Parlor 11:30-12:30

This time of remembering is for anyone who has lost a loved one, no matter how long ago.

Grief is an interesting phenomenon. It can hit us like waves, even after the passing of time and it can ease as we learn to live with



loss, but, grief is a presence in our lives. During our time together on November 12th, we'll talk a little about grief, and we will honor our loved ones.

In the most recent season of The Crown, Prince Phillip had wise words for a grieving mother. Whether he actually said these words doesn't matter. Whoever wrote them for the script, wrote these wise words:

“A long time ago, I lost my favorite sister, Cecile, in an airplane crash. I learned then what grief was. True grief. How it moves through the body. How it inhabits it, how it becomes part of your skin, your cells, and it makes a home there, a permanent home. But, you learn to live with it. And you will be happy again, but never in the same way as before. That's the point. To keep finding new ways.”

Let's find new ways together.



All Saints' Sunday November 5

By Hilary Borbón Smith

All Saints' Day is always November 1, which falls on a Wednesday this year. It is the tradition in the Episcopal Church to observe All Saints on the Sunday following November 1, which we will do on Sunday, November 5. During our service, we will read the names of our loved ones and friends who have died since the last All Saints' Sunday. We honor them in this way, and we name them knowing that they continue to be, enjoying eternal life with God. They stay with us in our hearts and minds; we will always be connected with them through love, which never ends. We also celebrate that we are all God's saints on earth and that we are part of what we call “the communion of saints.” God is all about connection and relationships and we are connected to those who have gone before us and to those who will come after us. On All Saints' Sunday, I always enjoy thinking about our Holy Comforter Saints, some of whom recently died and some who died long ago. With God's help and inspiration, they created the church that we now enjoy and for which we care. We are the stewards of their legacy, and we give them thanks for showing us the way. You can

see pictures and video of our HoCo Saints on our website, in a video that was made for our 100th anniversary in 2002, see www.hoco.org/history.



Hoco Birthdays

For the month of November:

***Edna Johnston, 1st; Sam Baggett, 4th;
Katherine Raymond, 4th; John Richardson, 4th;
Bill Smith, 8th; Robin Kranitzky-Hurdle, 10th;
Mary Fender O'Brien, 11th;
George Collier, 22nd;
Elliot Rathbun-Cook, 22nd; Judy Harris, 23rd;
Kim McCarthy, 26th; Siyano Prach, 29th***



Back Together Again - St. Mark's and HoCo

By the Rev Dr Hilary Smith, Rector

I am delighted that we are reestablishing our Thanksgiving and Christmas Day Services with St. Mark's.



St Mark's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

For several years before covid, we had a joint Thanksgiving service at St. Mark's or HoCo, and then Christmas Day would be at the church that did not host Thanksgiving. This year our joint Thanksgiving service will be at HoCo, on Sunday, November 19, at 4:00 p.m. The service will feature music, directed by Jim Bennett with participation from St. Mark's singers and musicians. I hope you can join us for a wonderful musical celebration on the 19th.



Annual Giving Season

By Steven C. Van Voorhees, Senior Warden

Holy Comforter is in its annual fall giving campaign. In years past, in the Episcopal Church in which I grew up, this was known as the Every Member Canvass. Later, it was renamed the Stewardship Campaign with people pledging (promising) a fixed amount of money for the coming year.

"Every Member" denotes paying your annual dues. Today we know that we have people here who do not see Holy Comforter as a membership organization to which they pay dues in order to belong. We have people here who have pledged and those who haven't, while both groups give. This year we also had significant anonymous donors, who gave thousands of dollars without pledging.

I am recommending that this year we all try a different understanding. For next year, I am asking you all to provide the Vestry a giving estimate for 2024 on a card you can return in person, electronically or by mail. This 2024 Giving Estimate will be used by the Finance Committee of the Vestry to build a budget for next year. The Giving Estimate is not a fixed amount of "dues" or a contractual obligation. We know everyone could have ups and downs financially throughout the year and will need to raise, maintain or lower your giving throughout the year, as your particular situation changes. And, we also invite you to reflect on your blessings throughout the year and to give thanks for unexpected or unplanned financial windfalls by word and deed, such as a monetary gift to your church in that moment.

Holy Comforter's recent yearly deficit budgets are "eating into our seed corn," to put things in farmer's terms. We need to stop this!



Two ways we can do this together: increasing the number of givers and increasing the amounts we give. A third way is reducing spending. Your Vestry is actively looking for such opportunities in the budget. You need to know that we are using a "bare bones" approach.

Please help us in all these areas. Here's an idea - when you are reimbursed for something by Holy Comforter, consider giving back all or a portion of that reimbursement to the church. (We need to keep track of actual expenses, so filing for reimbursements is important to do!) Also,

consider what Peggy and I do each year (if you are old enough!), give all or a portion of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) of your 401K as a gift to Holy Comforter. You will also be getting more information on creative “legacy giving” after Epiphany.

Finally deep thanks to all of you who are supporting the missions and ministries of Holy Comforter. You are the heart and soul of this outpost dedicated to being God’s witnesses to the world God created in Love. With your help, we will continue to move closer to God’s dream for us.



On a lighter note ... Jesus needs your money

From YouTube

If we want Jesus to come back, then apparently we’ll have to dig deep into our pockets, according to right-wing evangelical pastor Jesse Duplantis.

During a four-day, live 2021 TV event inVictorython on the Victory channel, Duplantis made

the bizarre claim that people aren’t donating to their churches generously enough, and this is the reason why Jesus has not yet made a reappearance.

“I honestly believe this — the reason why Jesus hasn’t come is that people are not giving the way God told them to give,” he said, “when you understand this, you can speed up the time.”

For the entire sermon see <https://www.indy100.com/viral/evangelical-pastor-jesus-return-donate-money>.



Finding the Sacred Feminine

By Joella Rhoades

This three-session offering on the sacred feminine will explore the roles of goddesses in various religious traditions and will focus on Mary Magdalene and the Black Madonna.

A short presentation including various art work followed by discussion and then meditation will be the format.

Join us for three Sundays in Advent:

12/3, 12/10, and 12/17, following the service.





Shrine Mont Parish Retreat 2023

By Hilary Borbón Smith

We had a great time at Shrine Mont this year, spending October 20 - 22 in the mountains. My cousin Elisa Soto-Dansecó led our program on Creation and Climate; she shared great resources from her studies and work in the field of Climate Justice. One of the activities she invited us to

retreat. Thanks also to Sue Taylor for help in preparing and planning. As always, having time with everyone who attended was wonderful. Our attendance



has been growing over the last three years that we have gone, and for next



do related to “climate grief.”

She encouraged us to acknowledge our feelings and name what we are grieving as our climate is changing. We wrote what we grieve on ribbon and tied the ribbons around a branch. Jim Bennett led our music, and I offered prayers and two program segments on Faith, Bible, and Climate. I loved working with Jim and Elisa to plan and lead the

year, we have asked for 25 spots. Plan now to attend; the dates are Friday, October 18 - Sunday, October 20.



of his love for the stories of the Round Table knights, especially their code of honor.

So many “coincidences.” I had a masters from Columbia in medieval literature, and here was a medieval knight. I had just returned from a week in Virginia where I had toured Civil War battlefields. He was from Richmond and had just returned from his first trip to England, my favorite country in the world. From Kentucky, where he had been born, to Virginia, where he had gone to college, to a small town in Texas, where he was now teaching Chemistry and

Biology in a Catholic school – he had come to Connecticut to enroll in a master’s program in Humanities.

The next morning, I found a poem addressed “To Guinevere” underneath the door of my dorm room. I was charmed that he would address me as King Arthur’s wife. We bought a picnic lunch and went to a nearby lake to read poetry to each other. He loved Keats as I loved Shelley

On Monday, the third day after we’d met, he took me to dinner. In the 70’s I used to wear long floral dresses, and I wore a white one that evening. He seemed to compliment me, saying it would make a lovely wedding dress, but added, “That wasn’t a compliment. That was a proposal. I knew Friday night when we talked for six straight hours that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you.” It was love at first conversation.

But it was also destiny. His name was Robert Hunt, and when I married him that Christmas, I became Laura Hunt, the name of the character in the movie after which I had been named 27 years earlier. God or destiny had ordained our meeting.



Fifty years of marriage

By Laura Hunt

Nothing about my 50 years of marriage was as extraordinary as the day I met my husband.

When I was born, my father named me after a 1940’s film noir called “Laura.” Twenty-seven years later – July 6, 1973 – I was walking across the campus of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where I had come to escape New York City and take some summer courses. I was carrying a book I had purchased that spring at an Antiquarian Book Fair: an 1893 edition of Sir Thomas Malory’s medieval masterpiece *Le Morte d’Arthur*, gilt edged, bound in red Moroccan leather, its cover decorated with floral gold tooling, every page illustrated with Art Nouveau drawings.

A stranger, a tall young man with a reddish beard and shoulder-length brown hair, stopped me and asked me about the book. Shy as I was, I told him it was King Arthur, and he began to talk





Men at the Movies – The Opposite of Sex

By Steven Van Voorhees

Busting through the “forth wall” again!

Last month, in the film, *Ship of Fools*, Herr Glocken broke the “fourth wall” and talked to us in the audience at the beginning and the end. This month one of our principal characters, Dee Dee Truitt, talks to us throughout the movie. One of my regularly cited movie critics, Roger Ebert, said this about that, “I hate people who talk during movies, but if she were sitting behind me in the theater, saying all this stuff, I’d want her to keep right on talking.”

This month’s film story, *The Opposite of Sex*, starts out as a dark, maybe even, black comedy featuring a “mean girl of 16 years who thinks only three things can happen as a result of sex: disease, babies, or ‘ugh’ relationships. And all of them are bad. But, she has no limits for using it to get what she wants. Dee Dee is walking, talking evil Barbie. She is the 16-year old embodiment of Ego Rampant, riding the Id horse into the fray of human interaction. Borrowing from Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, in Dee Dee, we have Ego as rider and Id as horse with a very weak Superego in the back. Dee Dee is a maturing Id, but has a very weak Superego. Human babies, using this same theory, are rampaging Ids that over time, well into their 20’s, develop Egos and Superegos.”

So, reader, you’re wondering why are we, a Church Men’s Group, going to watch a movie that appears to be anti-Christian, anti-gay, and even anti-societal? One of the best reasons is that this movie confronts us with the too often overlooked culture we have collectively brought to the extreme fear of sex and religion and, especially today, politics. Have you noticed that there is a very unholy American trinity woven out of those three cultural markers? Dee Dee is representative of too many of our children who are responding, even reacting, to this environment the adults have made: broken marriages, child abuse, political cynicism, ineffective education, violence worship, and sex obsession. We created Dee Dee and her

peers. If there is any hope in this story, it is that Dee Dee learns there is a really good outcome to human intimacy - love in all its many forms and wonders.

She is, in a way, at the end of this story a symbol of rising truth, hope and love, even through her pointed



cynical “laugh out loud” comments and actions. At the end of the film, she is still Dee Dee but a Dee Dee who is wiser and more understanding of how to be human.

Wait a moment! The central figure in this story is really Bill Truitt, Dee Dee’s half-brother. Bill is a “straight gay man.” He is the kind of guy that everyone wants to know and everyone loves and respects. He is a kind, effective high school teacher who even corrects the spelling of a student’s graffiti in the bathroom. He lives a life of morality, love, loyalty, and conscience. He is the “North Star” for all the others in this story. And, Dee Dee is about to take a wrecking ball to Bill’s heaven-like universe.

Another person on this story is brought to full three-dimensional life - Lucia De Lury, Bill’s sister-in-law. She is played by Lisa Kudrow and is the opposite of Phoebe from “Friends.” We get to watch her change profoundly from a bitter “spinster” to a wise woman who demonstrates a compassion and loving concern for others. She becomes the strong person on whom others can lean.

Finally and importantly, this movie is a rollicking, funny ride through the end of the millennium into the 21st century. Like Stanley Kramer, last month’s director, Dan Roos wrote and directed the film. His other movies included *The Boys in the Band* and *Single White Female*. He is known and respected for writing strong female characters and dark comedies. He is a gay married man with two children. Also, one of his

later movies is *Marley and Me*, 2008, based on a true story. He was one of the script writers for the 2018 film *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Pie Society*, a WWII story set on the German-occupied island of Guernsey off the coast of France.

We will gather in the HoCo Parlor at 6:00pm and the film will roll at 6:30pm with discussion. NOTE: Due to my own schedule and no November Book Group, I am changing the November Men at the Movies to the 3rd Tuesday, November 21st (from the 2nd Tuesday, November 14th) - still in the Parlor



Next book club meeting is January 2024

By *Stephanie Roberts-Turner*

Our book club will be taking a holiday break during November and December. This is such a busy time for us all. But we have a great selection for January 2024: *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See.



December 3rd is the New Year?

By *Bruce MacAlister, Editor*

We celebrate three, maybe four, “new year” holidays each year. The calendar new year is, of course, January 1st. What is often called the “program year” is as summer vacations end and schools start, usually in late August or early September. There is the Jewish new year – Rosh HaShanah or רֹשׁ הַשָּׁנָה – that is celebrated near the new program year. Finally there is the church year that starts the first Sunday in Advent. This year it is December 3rd.

From the font of much knowledge, Wikipedia, “in the Western Rite of the Orthodox Church, and in the Anglican, Lutheran, Moravian,

Presbyterian, and Methodist calendars, Advent commences on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (always falling between 27 November and 3 December), and ends on Christmas Eve on 24 December.”



By the Rev. Jay Sidebotham, (c)
Church Pension Fund

“History: It is not known when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent began, though it was certainly in existence from about 480; the novelty introduced by the Council of Tours of 567 was to order monks to fast every day in the month of December until Christmas.”

This is also “Christmas season” with all the expectations of making everyone happy with the exact presents they want (a Lexus with a red ribbon around it), attending the obligatory holiday parties (what to wear), and getting the end of year “deals” done that determine our bonuses or annual performance reviews. The pressures are often enormous.

We are not monks in a cloister so we can’t just fast. One way to counter the pressures is to find a time every day to pray or to meditate or to read something frivolous and fun. It’s helps to set a fixed time every day. That means the family agrees and the cats or dogs leave you alone.

The Episcopal church has some resources including a calendar with suggestions of something each day at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/09/EN-2023-Advent-Calendar-for-Design-2.pdf>.

As the Jay Sidebotham’s cartoon shows, it can be most stressful for our clergy. Probably our best Christmas gift them is to back off and give them some space.

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
 - ◇ 10:00am Third Sunday of each month, bilingual Eucharist in English and Spanish
 - **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 & Side by Side Dinners:**
- ◇ Suspended during November & December, to resume fourth Thursdays in January

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

The December Messenger will be available Sunday December 3rd.

The deadline for article submissions is Friday November 24th, the day after Thanksgiving!

We really like to have your articles before the deadline!

If you feel that you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Bruce MacAlister at editor@hoco.org

