

PENTECOST 2024!

IN THIS ISSUE

- A Message from the Rector
- Mensaje del Rector Verano 2024
- A Trip to Toby Town
- HoCo Welcomes Dale Davis
- The Messenger has a new Layout Artist
- Julian of Norwich Wins Golden Halo
- General Convention 2024, What does it mean?
- Gender-Affirming Worship Service
- Pentecost Garden Planting Day is a Success!
- HoCo Helping Veterans
- What is Juneteenth?
- Proposed Memorial for Local Medal of Honor Recipients
- HoCo Summer Yard Sale 2024
- What makes it a Gay Bar?
- Summer Birthdays at HoCo

<http://hoco.org/newsletter.htm>



EASTER & PENTECOST FESTIVITIES AT HOCO



A MESSAGE FROM HILARY +
THE REV. DR. HILARY BORBÓN SMITH

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

What is hope? To some, hope is a wish not based on reality. To others, hope is real and strong and creates reality. As people of faith, as those who walk in the Way of Jesus, what does hope mean to us and for us? Bishop Steven Charleston, in his book *Ladder to the Light, An Indigenous Elder’s Meditations on Hope and Courage*, defines hope in a number of helpful and expansive ways. He writes, “Hope arises when we embrace a sacred reality. That vision is not a dream, but a goal. What we project into our future through faith is not just the wishful thinking of dreamers out of touch with reality; it is the blueprint for a future our faith sees clearly before us. Hope is not a wish, but an intention.”

One of the greatest dangers we face is getting used to the darkness....Hope is not only our horizon, but our home.” For people of faith, hope is our home. Bishop Charleston writes of hope being the home of his ancestors when the Choctaw Nation was forced from their homes, and “made to walk the death march we call the Trail of Tears. Thousands of our people died. We lost our homes, our way of life, even our graveyards. We lost everything. Everything, that is, except the one thing they could not take from us: hope.” People with hope are also people who endure terrible things. Charleston explains how that is possible, “I am not talking about wishful thinking. I am not talking about miracles. I am talking about hope as a tool to create light, a spark that can suddenly illuminate the gloom that creeps into our lives.”

As we read in Romans 8:24, hope that is seen is not hope, meaning that we do not hope for what already is. Hope is our intention. Hope creates light, and the light shows us the way forward. Thanks be to God.

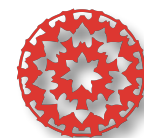
May you know the hope that God has in you,

HILARY+



HILARY WITH CHERYL GROCE-WRIGHT
& DOUG THORPE

This is the sort of hope that we can bring to every challenge in our lives and in our church – a hope that is active and based on our faith in God and each other. Charleston writes, “Hope changes history.



UN MENSAJE DE HILARY +
THE REV. DR. HILARY BORBÓN SMITH

Queridos amigos y compañeros en el ministerio,

¿Qué es la esperanza? Para algunos, la esperanza es un deseo que no se basa en la realidad. Para otros, la esperanza es real y fuerte y crea realidad. Como

personas de fe, caminando en el Camino de Jesús, ¿qué significa la esperanza para nosotros y para nosotros? El obispo Steven Charleston, en su libro Escalera a la luz, meditaciones de un anciano indígena sobre la esperanza y el coraje, define la esperanza de varias maneras útiles y amplias. Escribe: “La esperanza surge cuando abrazamos una realidad sagrada. Esa visión no es un sueño, sino una meta. Lo que proyectamos en nuestro futuro a través de la fe no es sólo la ilusión de soñadores desconectados de la realidad; es el modelo para un futuro que nuestra fe ve claramente ante nosotros. La esperanza no es un deseo, sino una intención.”

Este es el tipo de esperanza que podemos aportar a cada desafío en nuestras vidas y en nuestra iglesia: una esperanza activa y basada en nuestra fe en Dios y en los demás. Charleston escribe:

“La esperanza cambia la historia. Uno de los mayores peligros que enfrentamos es estar acostumbrados a la oscuridad... La esperanza no es sólo nuestro horizonte, sino nuestro hogar..” Para las personas de fe, la esperanza es nuestro hogar. El obispo Charleston escribe que la esperanza fue el hogar de sus antepasados cuando la nación Choctaw fue obligada a abandonar sus hogares y “se vio obligada a caminar en la marcha de la muerte que llamamos el Camino de las Lágrimas. Miles de nuestras gentes murieron. Perdimos nuestros hogares, nuestra forma de vida, incluso nuestros cementerios. Lo perdimos todo. Es decir, todo, excepto lo único que no nos pudieron quitar: la esperanza”. Las personas con esperanza son también personas que pueden soportar cosas

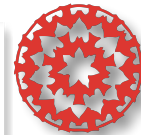
terribles. Charleston explica cómo eso es posible: “No estoy hablando de ilusiones. No estoy hablando de milagros. Me refiero a la esperanza como herramienta para crear luz, una chispa que de repente puede iluminar la oscuridad que se infiltra en nuestras vidas”.

Como leemos en Romanos 8:24, la esperanza que se ve no es esperanza, esto significa que no esperamos lo que ya es. La esperanza es nuestra intención. La esperanza crea luz y la luz nos muestra el camino a seguir. Gracias a Dios.

Que conozcas la esperanza que Dios tiene en ti,

HILARY+

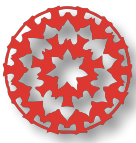
Charleston, Steven, Escalera a la Luz, Meditaciones de un anciano indígena sobre la esperanza y el coraje, Broadleaf Books, Minneapolis, 2021, págs. 57-74.



TOBY TOWN



ON MAY 11, HILARY BLESSED DOGS AND HAD GREAT CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY PEOPLE. TOBY TOWN IS A DOGGIE DAYCARE AND STAYCARE OWNED BY OUR PARISHIONERS GLORIA AND KATH RUGGERI, LOCATED NEAR HOCO AT 2100 MAYWILL ST. DASH LOVES GOING TO PLAY WITH HIS FRIENDS AT TOBY TOWN.



INTRODUCING DALE DAVIS

BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

With George Collier's retirement as the Messenger layout artist, the Editorial Board discussed other changes including staffing by volunteers. With his background in writing and advertising, Dale Davis said he would be glad to do some editing. So, for this coming time of seasonal newsletters, he and I will divide up the editing tasks with Keyan Herron as the layout artist.

Dale is the son of a Richmond Times-Dispatch reporter who took him to work from time to time. Dale majored in English at VCU and headed for New York after two years in government as a typist. He worked for Simon & Schuster and their Prentice Hall division amongst others in New York. He then went to work for Fiserv financial services and its subsidiaries. Most folk know about their subsidiary Card Services that helps banks with their credit and debit cards. When his employer permitted working from home, he moved back to his hometown of Richmond in 2017. Shortly after that he retired to help take care of his mother in her final years.

Dale and his husband Arnaldo Cardona love collecting. Vintage dolls and action

News of The Church Of The Holy Comforter



DALE & ARNALDO WITH THE BISHOP AND HILARY,
APRIL 14

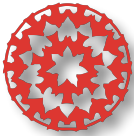
figures, CDs of music from the '40s, '50s and '60s, and puzzles resulted in moving five U-Haul trucks to Richmond. Dale and Arnaldo met in Manhattan in February 2000 and fell in love at first sight. They have been together for 24 years and were married in 2014 by an Episcopal priest who also had a husband.

Arnaldo is a retired landscape architect, author, and educator with degrees in landscape architecture and education. He is an adjunct student supervisor at VCU's art education department.

Dale was brought up Baptist and Arnaldo Roman Catholic. In New York they alternated between St Francis Xavier Church and Marble Collegiate Church. In Richmond they started looking around for a church, liked what they saw on the HoCo website and decided to try it. On entry they were met by the Rev Hilary Smith, the Rev Briggett Keith,

and Helen Reese who were very welcoming. Dale says they found the whole congregation warm and friendly. Dale was baptized in March of this year. He was confirmed, and Arnaldo received, during Bishop Stephenson's visit on April 14. They decided this is their church and are getting more involved in HoCo activities.

You can expect to see his byline in future articles.



INTRODUCING KEYAN HERRON –
NEW MESSENGER LAYOUT ARTIST
BY LAURA HUNT &
CAMERON HUNT

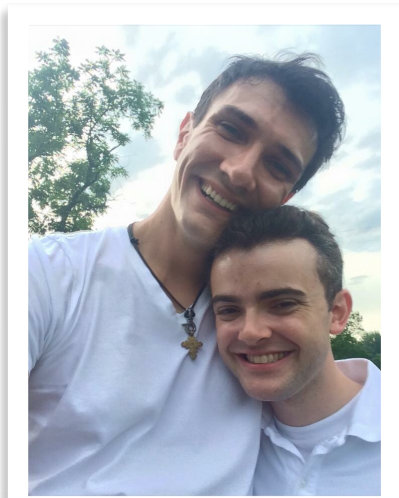
Born and raised in Richmond, Virginia, Keyan earned a BA degree from VCU in Urban Studies and Political Science in 2013. He's an expert in legal history and a cradle Episcopalian.

He met his husband Cameron Hunt in 2009, just after Obama took office, at VCU's

Queer Action, while protesting against anti-gay legislation in Virginia.

He began attending Holy Comforter with Cameron, and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 2012. He has served as

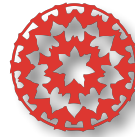
an acolyte for years. Hillary legally married



him and Cameron in 2015.

Keyan is an avid actor and artist, working mainly in 3D arts including graphic design and 3D printing. Keyan has worked in art special education, at the same school where his mother taught theater for 20 years, but after working as a bartender through college, he and Cameron bought a local bar called Thirsty's in 2019 and turned it into the happy little gay bar it is today.

While most of their time is spent keeping the bar running, Keyan loves his two dogs, his daily park walks with a coffee in hand, and his weekly games of Dungeons and Dragons with his friends and husband.



2024 GOLDEN HALO
WINNER: JULIAN OF NORWICH
BY LAURA HUNT

Since 2012, the Episcopal Church's Forward Movement has sponsored Lent Madness, an engaging way for people to learn about the Calendar of Saints. Each year 32 saints are placed into a "tournament-like single elimination bracket." People vote online for their favorite saint in each pair, gradually narrowing the field to the Elite Eight and the Faithful Four, until the winner is awarded the Golden Halo.

This year's winner, the first woman to write in English, has been called "the greatest English Mystic." She lived in the 14th century as an anchoress in a small hermitage attached to the parish church of St. Julian in the city of Norwich. At the age of 30, she became so seriously ill that she was given last rites. On that day—May 8, 1373—she also witnessed 15

healing visions or “showings,” as she called them. Over the next decade, she produced a theological work called Revelations of Divine Love, interpreting her visions and explaining God’s message.

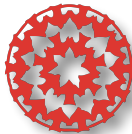
She spoke of our union with the God of Love, of “one-ing” (becoming one) with him: “Our soul is so completely one-ed to God that there is absolutely nothing separating our soul from him.”



communion. As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother.”

Today, Julian still speaks in her steady, gentle voice, reminding us across the ages that God loves us: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” Indeed, she is patron saint of the anxious (also writers, solitary women, and cats).

Her constant prayer was “God, of your Goodness, give me yourself, for in you alone, I have everything.”



WHAT DOES GENERAL CONVENTION 2024 MEAN TO ME?
BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

2024 GOLDEN HALO WINNER



JULIAN OF NORWICH

She also spoke of the Motherhood of Jesus: Jesus Christ is “God the Loving Mother, whose Incarnation and then death on a cross gave us a new birth, a birth of the soul. And like a mother he feeds us—with the precious food of life itself in the sacrament of

That’s the title of an informative Episcopal church website, www.episcopalchurch.org/development/what-does-general-convention-2024-mean-to-me.

But first, what is a “General Convention?”



“The Episcopal Church (TEC) is governed by a General Convention and consists of 99 dioceses in the United States proper, plus eleven dioceses in other countries or outlying

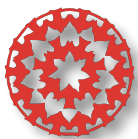
U.S. territories and the diocese of Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, for a total of 111 dioceses,” Wikipedia.

Every three years delegates from these dioceses gather to legislate the rules (called constitution and canons) and work out the budget for the national church. They also get to confirm (and rarely, not) bishops elected by dioceses.

This year is special because they will select from amongst the bishops one who will become the Presiding Bishop of the church. The nine-year term of the Most Rev Michael Curry ends and a new “PB” is elected. What we call the Presiding Bishop is called an Archbishop in Anglican churches outside the United States. The PB speaks for the national church to the media and at international church meetings. Given that the last two PBs have been first a white woman and then a black man, it will be interesting to see who is elected.

This year is special to Holy Comforter because our own Rector, the Rev Dr Hilary Smith, was elected by the Diocese of Virginia to be a delegate to the General Convention.

So, on to Louisville, Kentucky for the 81st General Convention to take place on June 23 - 28, 2024.

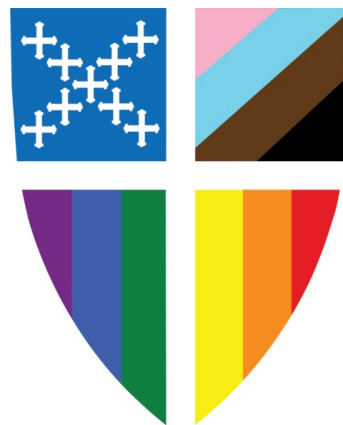


GENDER-AFFIRMING
WORSHIP SERVICE
BY CHARLES WOLFE

On June 8th, 2024, we will have HoCo’s first annual Gender Affirming Worship Service. This service is a time when everyone can come and celebrate their authentic self. Celebrating

your authentic self is very important for everyone. Doing it through a church service is a great opportunity to open our doors as a church community and support the LGBTQ+ community. When I came out as trans in 2022, I did not have much support besides my family. I moved to Richmond last year.

I wanted to find a place where I could get support and that’s when my mom introduced me to HoCo. I went to a couple of services and after some time joined the church community. Since then, my time at HoCo has allowed me to express myself for who I am with no judgment and to find support, especially when I had my surgery. I am very grateful for this and very excited to not only be a part of the service, but also to open the doors to the church to welcome others so they can feel the same way I do at HoCo.



The service is unlike any other; instead of the Holy Communion, we are doing something a little different: a candle-lit blessing. There will also be personal prayers and blessings with the clergy for those who would like

them. We have invited some clergy outside of HoCo to join us and be a part of this service as well. There will be a reception after the service with members of HoCo and folks outside of church helping with food and decorations. I want to thank everyone who is helping to make this service come alive. I hope you will join us on this amazing day!



PENTECOST GARDEN
PLANTING DAY A SUCCESS
BY LAURA HUNT

A huge thank you to everyone who donated plants and money for Holy Comforter's new Creation Garden on Monument Avenue. We raised \$900, including both memorial and anonymous gifts. Later in the summer, we will post a sign in the narthex listing all of those honored or memorialized.

Five children—including Hannah Banton, Nick Chiddo, Lily Hawes, and James and Thomas Munro—planted six different varieties of native plants: milkweed, Beebalm, Blue-eyed Grass, Beadle's Tickseed, phlox, and black-eyed Susan, all pollinator-friendly native plants.



They were assisted by Evan Herr, Susan Boze, Tracy Councill, Briggett Keith, Lian-Marie Holmes Munro, Carrie Hawes, and Ellen Hall. Arnaldo Cardona (Mr.C, as the kids call him) read stories—Green, Green and Sam the Landscape Architect—during Children's Chapel and had the kids write signs labeling the plants. He then guided the planting.

At an earlier Garden Work Day in April, a small but mighty crew of five (see photo) cleared the ground of weeds and invasives, dug holes, brought peat moss, and planted blueberries, irises, and mountain laurel. Arnaldo also brought cylindrical logs to create a wooden sculpture.

Our next steps will be to add echinacea and more black-eyed Susans, to put down pine bark mulch over the beds to suppress weeds and visually define the plantings, and to add a layer of gravel in the rain garden to help with drainage.



WEEDING CREW



In the coming weeks, watch the plants spread and the flowers bloom. If anyone has echinacea plants or black-eyed Susans they could donate, we'd love to have them.



ARNALDO WITH GARDEN PLANTS





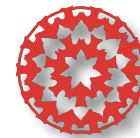
HOCO HELPING VETERANS
 BY BRUCE MACALISTER, MEMBER,
 SOCIAL JUSTICE & OUTREACH MINISTRY

For decades, HoCo has been fixing and serving dinner once a month at the Liberation Veteran Services (LVS) homeless shelter on Hull Street. Started by Liberation Church (<https://liberationrva.org/>), it was spun off as a separate non-sectarian service agency so that it could use Veterans Administration funds and contributions to house and counsel homeless veterans.

transformational challenge grant of \$4 million for Veterans Village from the Red Gates Foundation. In December, LVS received a \$500,000 challenge grant from The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation.

Veterans Village will have independent rooms with baths, communal meals and recreation. It will supplement or replace the barracks-style housing at the Hull Street shelter. They currently have two matching gift challenges - one is 1:1 and one is 2:1, so that, for instance, a contribution of \$100 brings an additional \$150 - for a total of \$250 to LVS.

You can see more about the shelter we serve at www.lvsrva.org/.



WHAT IS JUNETEENTH?
 BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. No slaves were freed. It was the promise once the union defeated the southern states in the war of (pick one) southern rebellion or northern aggression they would be freed. On June 19, 1865, U.S. Major General Gordon Granger ordered the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas. A History

In 2021, according to LVS's brochure, it was the only agency in the Commonwealth of Virginia to receive a special one-time allocation of \$1.9 million in capital funds from the US Veterans Administration (via the CARES Act) to develop a brand-new supportive housing facility with micro-apartments for homeless veterans to be known as Veterans Village. In May 2023, LVS received a



Channel website has an excellent description at <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>.

In Richmond the celebration is a weekend event:

Friday, June 7 from 5 to 9 pm, Friday night will feature science writer, editor and ethicist, Harriet Washington, who will discuss her book “Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present.” Friday night will also feature Elegba Folklore Society’s performers giving excerpts from “The Talking Drum.”

The Elegba Folklore Society’s Juneteenth 2024, A Freedom Celebration will kickoff on Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8, at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, located at 428 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd. On Sunday, June 9, the celebration will take place at the Manchester Dock, located at 1308 Brander St.



PROPOSED MEMORIAL FOR LOCAL
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS
BY BRUCE MACALISTER
SUGGESTED BY BONNIE ATWOOD

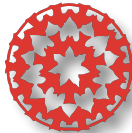


TRI-SERVICE MEDALS OF HONOR

“The Medal of Honor (MOH) is the United States Armed Forces' highest military decoration and is awarded to recognize

American soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardians, and coast guardsmen who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor. The medal is normally awarded by the President of the United States (the commander in chief of the armed forces) and is presented ‘in the name of the United States Congress.’” (Wikipedia)

“Monumental Honor is a community development nonprofit that seeks to memorialize the legacy of Richmond’s Medal of Honor Recipients.” At its website <https://www.monumentalhonor.org/>, are the stories of local MoH recipients. The organization has proposed a monument to honor these recipients. The proposal is accessed from the website.



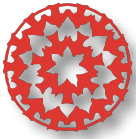
HOCO YARD SALE!
BY KIPLEY HERR

The yard sale is Saturday, September 28th, with a Friday evening silent auction gala for HoCo family

& friends. We will begin taking donations in September, **please** do not bring donations

to the church until an announcement is made to do so. Volunteers are needed to help sort, price, advertise, make signs, and organize. Contact Angie Palmer, angiepalmer730@gmail.com, for more information.





WHAT'S A GAY BAR?

BY CAMERON HUNT

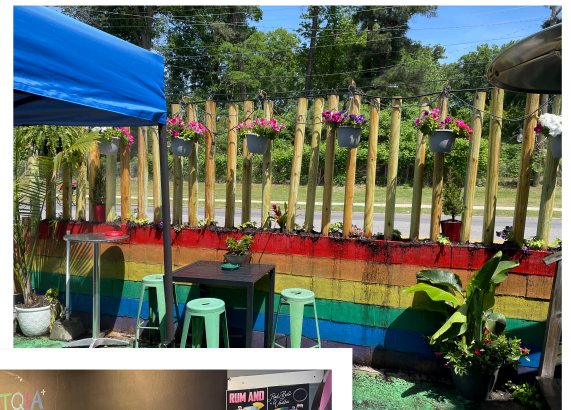
I'll always remember the first time I walked into a gay bar: the nerves and anticipation were overwhelming but so was the acceptance, and the profound sense of safety and joy that soon washed over me. It was a religious experience, and the only feelings that have ever come close have been my best memories growing up at Holy Comforter. It's hard to convey to those that don't already know what the closet is like: the paranoia, the sense of vulnerability, the shame/guilt/fear miasma that seems to cloud your very existence; it's debilitating but becomes faded into the background baseline of life, like water to a fish. When it suddenly, impossibly, miraculously is lifted and you feel raw and free, loved and human for the first time in the midst of other people that accept and understand the most secret and sacred part of you... and are probably judging your shoes, but not you, not the essence of you, not the bits that you always thought even those closest and most dear to you wouldn't love you for, that is transcendent and indescribable.

"This is not a bar; it's a gay bar"

Those words are on the front door of our bar. The superficial similarities could make it hard to tell the difference between a bar and a gay bar: a bunch of young singles looking around the room, older men reminiscing, the drinking, occasional dancing, and seeing old friends while hoping to meet new ones; it seems like any bar. However the soul of these two places is tangibly divergent. It's not just that you'll find other gay or trans

people more regularly in one; it's safety, acceptance, belonging; it's a community. For many people it's how home should feel, family should feel, but for so many members of the LGBTQ+ community, that, sadly, hasn't been how home and family has felt. New people who walk through the door are not customers; they are unmet family, people who share similar hurts, harms, and burdens.

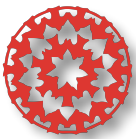
I'm not so naive that I don't know that not all gay bars are healthy places of community and togetherness, and that they are the first stop in some people's journey to self harm, addiction, or loneliness. If you asked me to run a bar, I wouldn't. I don't like drinking, I flounder at small talk, and I'm a terrible dancer. I never really enjoyed being at a bar, but a gay bar... the chance to be the first safe place for a young person, the chance to become part of a community, the welcoming that we can provide to someone



THIRSTY'S QUEER BAR IN SOUTH SIDE RICHMOND

tired of walking in the straight world, the stories told and stories constantly retold (by some of the older gentlemen), the jokes that you just wouldn't get if you weren't somehow queer... I could go on and on. It is in the birthdays, the breakups, and even the wakes that I know our bar is not just a place that sells alcohol... the closest thing I can call it is, gay church.

I grew up at Holy Comforter and, with my husband Keyan Herron, have owned Thirsty's Queer Bar on south side since 2019.



HOCO BIRTHDAYS
FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS

JUNE: Martha Richardson, 9th; Cindi Hanayik, 12th; Merida Hayman, 13th; Flannan Hayman, 13th; Eric Watterson, 14th; Sue Taylor, 14th; Tommy Bowles, 17th; Denise Carl, 20th; Lee Jones-Hubert, 21st.

JULY: Darlene Klenzmann 2nd; Evan Herr, 2nd; Allen Hurdle, 4th; Rob Hanayik, 5th; Mary Davis, 5th; Judith O'Brien, 6th; Kathleen Rose, 7th; Joani Hayman, 10th; Marie McGranahan-Turner, 13th; Julie Edwards, 18th; Joan Vaughan, 19th; Richard Rose, 23rd, Garnett Christoph, 25th; Henry Dyer, 26; Dorcas Douthit, 27; Joan Prest, 27th; Benjamin Raymond, 27th; Casey Falterman, 28th; Angie Palmer, 30th.

AUGUST: Anne Snyder, 6th; Cameron Hunt, 6th; Nancy Deane, 8th; Charles Wolfe, 9th; Gayle Turner, 11th; Mary Thorpe, 12th; Kyan Doran, 12th; Jamey Hooks, 24th; Briana Vineyard, 25th; Helen Reese; 26th.

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

The Messenger is edited by Bruce MacAlister & Dale Davis, the layout is by Keyan Herron.

