

A FAREWELL TO DEACON JOE



CONGREGATION, "WE RELEASE YOU WITH OUR BLESSING, CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL HOLD YOUR LOVE FOR US IN YOUR HEART, AS WE WILL HOLD OUR LOVE FOR YOU IN OURS."

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

Dear Friends and Companions in Ministry,

Now that our newsletters are seasonal rather than monthly, we are covering a lot in this edition. For updates and news that comes between newsletters please see our weekly email newsletter, the eMessenger. If you are not getting that and would like to receive it, please let us know by emailing office@hoco.org. You will see from the articles in this newsletter that you, our members and friends, make all that we do possible. Thank you. I hope that you can attend some of our special events this Fall, including our Parish Retreat, our Yard Sale, our Halloween Trunk or Treat, Gold Chicken concert, and other concerts including one by the Chamber Music of Virginia on September 15, 4:00 pm. The CMSCVA opens its 20th anniversary season at HoCo with “The House of Handel.”

Churches need to be active, and we are. Including all the publicized classes and events this Fall, much also happens behind the scenes. If you have ever led a ministry or been involved, you know what it takes to plan, discern, communicate, and do all that we do. At the same time, as people of prayer and faith, what we do is made possible by times of contemplation and reflection. The Franciscan priest Richard Rohr, whom many of us know from his writings, founded a community called, The Center for Action and Contemplation because he knows that the two go hand in hand.

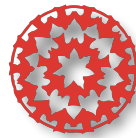
Do you feel too busy, even overwhelmed from time to time? As the Fall begins, school

starts, and work gears up, many are busier than they want to be. There are many good reasons to attend services at church, the most important of which is to worship God. Why is that important? And why is that important to do in a Christian community? In the Episcopal Church, we don't tell you what to do, but we do invite you to experience the sustaining and transforming love of God that comes from worshiping in a community. We find a grounding and sense of peace that helps us with all the demands of life. We also help others by being in church; God is known in diversity, and when we are together we enable God's divinity to be known in ways that are not possible without us. Let's celebrate together!

Blessing for this time in your life,

HILARY+

P.S. If you are not able to join us in person, you are part of us, and we remember you in prayer. Clergy and laypersons are available to visit or to speak on the phone. If you would like to receive Holy Communion where you live, I or another clergy-person or layperson would be very pleased to bring it to you. Let me know.



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

Queridos amigos y compañeros en el ministerio,

Ahora que nuestros boletines son estacionales en lugar de mensuales, vamos a cubrir mucho en esta edición. Para obtener actualizaciones y noticias entre boletines,

consulte nuestro boletín semanal por correo electrónico, El eMessenger, si no lo recibe y le gustaría recibirlo, háganoslo saber enviando un correo electrónico a office@hoco.org. En los artículos de este boletín verá que ustedes, nuestros miembros y amigos, hacen posible todo lo que hacemos. Gracias por su ayuda. Espero que puedan asistir a algunos de nuestros eventos especiales este otoño, incluyendo nuestro retiro parroquial, nuestra venta de garaje, nuestro “Baúl o Regalo en Halloween”, el concierto Gold Chicken y otros conciertos, incluyendo uno de Música de Cámara de Virginia el 15 de septiembre, 4: 00 pm. El CMSCVA abre su temporada del 20 aniversario en HoCo con La Casa de Handel.

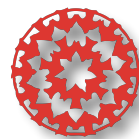
Las iglesias necesitan estar activas, y nosotros lo estamos. Incluyendo todas las clases y eventos publicitados de este otoño, también suceden muchas cosas detrás de escena. Si alguna vez ha dirigido un ministerio o ha estado involucrado, sabe lo que se necesita para planificar, discernir, comunicar y hacer todo lo que hacemos. Al mismo tiempo, como personas de oración y fe, lo que hacemos es posible gracias a tiempos de contemplación y reflexión. El sacerdote franciscano Richard Rohr, a quien muchos de nosotros conocemos por sus escritos, fundó una comunidad llamada Centro para la Acción y la Contemplación porque sabe que ambas cosas van de la mano.

¿Se siente demasiado ocupado, incluso abrumado de vez en cuando? A medida que comienza el otoño, comienzan las clases y se prepara el trabajo, muchos están más ocupados de lo que quisieran. Hay muchas buenas razones para asistir a los servicios de la iglesia, la más importante de las cuales es

adorar a Dios. ¿Por qué es eso importante? ¿Y por qué es importante hacer eso en una comunidad cristiana? En la Iglesia Episcopal, no le decimos qué hacer, pero sí lo invitamos a experimentar el amor sustentador y transformador de Dios que proviene de la adoración en comunidad. Encontramos una base y una sensación de paz que nos ayuda con todas las exigencias de la vida. También ayudamos a otros estando en la iglesia; Dios es conocido en la diversidad, y cuando estamos juntos permitimos que la divinidad de Dios sea conocida de maneras que no son posibles sin nosotros. ¡Celebremos juntos!

Bendiciones para este momento de tu vida,
HILARY+

PS Si no puedes unirse a nosotros en persona, eres parte de nosotros y te recordamos en oración. El clero y los laicos están disponibles para visitar o hablar por teléfono. Si desea recibir la Sagrada Comunión donde vive, yo u otro clérigo o laico estaremos encantados de llevársela. Déjelo saber.



100 PERCENT
VOTING
CONGREGATIONS



FROM
VIRGINIAINTERFAITHCENTER.ORG

VICPP [Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy] is equipping congregations to ensure that 100 percent of members vote in November. Faith communities commit to boosting registration, encouraging voting, and sharing educational resources. Congregations

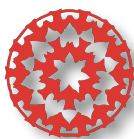
will receive a toolkit, resources for bulletins and websites, a "100 Percent Voting" banner for hanging outside, and possibly a financial incentive.

Important Dates

- September 20: First day of early voting
- October 15: Last day to register to vote, or update voter registration
- October 25: Last day to request absentee ballot
- November 2: Last day of early voting
- November 5: Election day

Note: Virginia has same-day voter registration through election day, but registering early allows you to vote on a regular ballot, rather than a provisional ballot

Make sure you're registered and track your ballot, see elections.virginia.gov/voterinformation

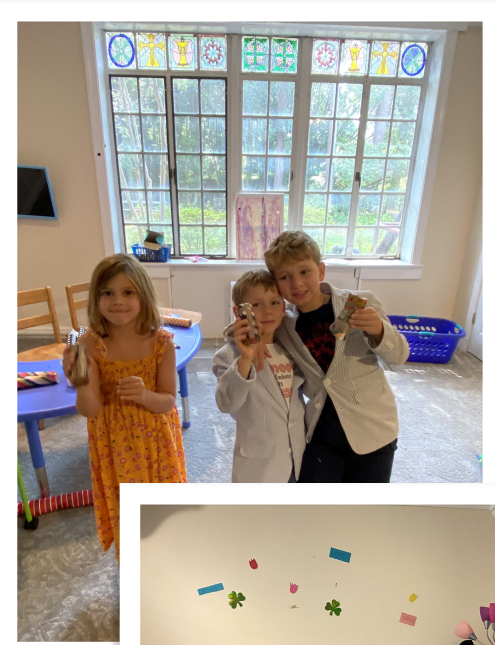


I CAN CHANGE THE WORLD
WITH MY OWN 2 HANDS...

BY ELLEN HALL

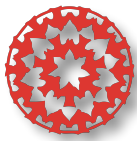
This summer, our chapel kids have been working on a project based on the Ben

Harper/Jack Johnson song "My Own 2 Hands." We have learned about all kinds of ways we can do God's work with our own 2 hands. Everyone has something to give and we had many parishioners offer their own gifts to teach the kids. We made art, built with wood, we made music, planted in the garden, and even learned about being on the radio! There's so much we all can do with our own 2 hands and we have photos from all of you showing



things that **you** do! Thank you so much for participating.

Our HoCo kids are blessed to have all of you as a church family. We are bringing our project to a close with the song and a slide show presentation of all of your pictures. It has been a very rewarding summer for sure!



ROWAN ACADEMY IS BUZZING...
 BY MARY ROSE WOO, ROWAN ACADEMY

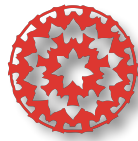
Rowan Academy is buzzing with excitement in anticipation of the first day of preschool on September 4th! Our student enrollment has doubled this year and we are looking forward to a year of further growth and community building.



Over the summer, we hosted two weeks of summer camp which gave us the opportunity to meet our incoming students and their families. With the formation of our Parent Association and through their fundraising efforts, we were able to enhance our classrooms with some wonderful new equipment and supplies. Rowan Academy also reinforced several playground safety measures and added some much needed storage. We are ready for our busy students!

Rowan Academy is grateful for the support of our families and would also like to thank those members of Holy Comforter who have so generously made donations and contributions to our nonprofit preschool.

Please contact us if you would like to learn more about our approach to early childhood education or if you have a potential student referral. Thank you!



FALL-FEST IS COMING! SEPTEMBER 27 & 28

BY KIPLEY HERR

Fall-Fest kicks off this year on Friday night, September 27, 6:00–8:00 pm. Count on a good time at our **Gala** that includes a silent auction, refreshments, music and fun – plus a sneak peek at the yard sale! Admission is \$20 for adults 21 and over.

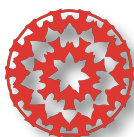
Our **Yard Sale** is on Saturday, September 28, starting at 8:00 am. Here are three ways you can participate: (1) **Volunteer**, (2) **Donate**, and (3) **Shop!**

Donations are being accepted now. You can leave donations on Sundays while at church or call the office at 355-3251 to donate during office hours, Monday–Thursday, 10 am–1 pm. (Contact Angie Palmer or Kipley Herr to donate at other times.)

Please note that the following items cannot be accepted:

- No large appliances (washers, dryers, etc.)
- No air conditioners, refrigerators or freezers of any size
- No clothing except accessories and “like-new” shoes
- No bedding – mattresses or box springs. Linens are fine!
- No television or computers

Join us to help make this a successful event and have fun!



GOLD CHICKEN RETURNS

TO HOLY COMFORTER

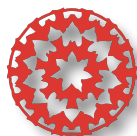
BY ELLEN HALL

The 2024 Gold Chicken Players show Spread a Little Happiness is just around the corner and we couldn't be more excited! Gold Chicken Players is a performance group that is a labor of love between adults with intellectual disabilities, members of the performance community in Richmond, and traveling members of People International. We have



been gathering each year (COVID allowing) since a People International show in Richmond in 2015 when the head of the charity and I decided this was too good to not do each year. We perform a musical production involving people from all walks of life that is truly the best thing I've ever done. This year we are both rehearsing and performing here at Holy Comforter with many of your favorite HoCo members participating. There is still time to be involved! You know you want to be a Gold Chicken! We are rehearsing the second and fourth Sunday afternoons of September and October with our final performance on

November 2nd. Tickets will be available soon. You won't want to miss it! Come out and Spread a little Happiness!



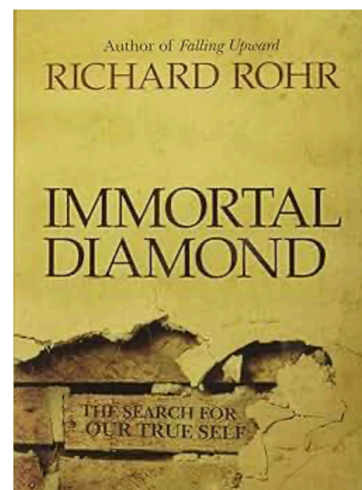
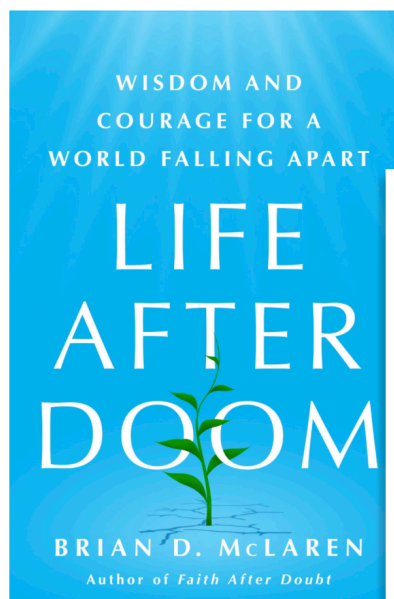
TUESDAY MORNING BOOK GROUP

BY HILARY SMITH

Our Tuesday Morning Book Group continues to meet at 11:00 a.m. in the parlor. Join us anytime. We are reading Immortal Diamond by Richard Rohr for the next few weeks. We will let you know when we start a new book. We are planning to read Life After Doom, Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart by Brian McLaren. Good Reads states about Life After Doom..., "A highly readable, deeply insightful exploration of how to live with wisdom, resilience and love in our turbulent times

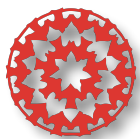
"For the last quarter-century, author and activist Brian D. McLaren has been writing at the intersection of religious faith and contemporary culture. In Life After Doom..., he engages with the catastrophic failure of both

our religious and secular leaders to address the dominant realities of



our time. McLaren defines doom as the ‘un-peaceful, uneasy, unwanted feeling’ that ‘we humans have made a mess of our civilization and our planet, and not enough of us seem to care enough to change deeply enough or quickly enough to save ourselves.’

“Blending insights from philosophers, poets, scientists, and theologians, *Life After Doom...* explores the complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging. If you want to help yourself, your family, and your community, small and greater, to find courage and resilience for the deeply challenging times that are upon us — this is the book you need right now.” See www.goodreads.com/book/show/194534247-life-after-doom.



HOLIDAY GRIEF GATHERING

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

BY JULIE EDWARDS, LCSW

Join us for the 2024 HoCo Holiday Grief Gathering on Sunday, November 10th at 11:30 in the parish house Parlor.

- “Who’s going to carve the turkey this year? It was always my husband with his crazy turkey jokes.”
- “I don’t have the energy for Christmas. Too many memories.”

Holidays present interesting challenges for those of us who have lost loved ones. Celebrations and traditions that seemed normal one year become anything but normal. Your grief may be fresh and raw from a recent loss. Sometimes years pass and we unexpectedly feel the intensity of a loss all

over again. Each of us has our unique response to loss, often misunderstood by others. Friends and family may not understand a change in mood, quietness, or withdrawing from normal holiday activities. All of these reactions are normal.

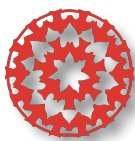
You’re invited to this year’s Holiday Grief Gathering on Sunday, November 10th following worship to honor and remember your loved one. It will be a time to listen, to share, to sit quietly, according to your particular need. How long ago you experienced the loss does not matter as remembering and honoring never grow old.

“You grieve differently from other people—not so differently that you cannot find fellowship in suffering with them, yet so differently that no one else’s grief is exactly like your own. The loss you have sustained is your loss, and your grief is your particular grief.”

Quote from “Your Particular Grief,” Wayne E. Oates



FROM “HOW TO GET THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WHILE GRIEVING,” HUFFINGTON POST, 2016



GIRL SCOUT TROOP #221

BY DEBI TALIAFERRO, TROOP LEADER

Girl Scout Troop #221, sponsored by HoCo, will start our 2024/2025 season on September 1. We're starting off the year with eleven Girl Scouts: 1-Daisy, 6-Brownies, 1-Junior, 2-Cadettes, 1-Senior, and 1-Ambassador.

Like many organizations, businesses, churches it's been difficult trying to recover from COVID. Seems like enough time should have passed. However, I can still see and feel the damage. The commitment and enthusiasm of the leaders, parents, and even girls is not the same. And this is not just an issue in our troop.

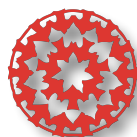
It always hard to obtain leaders. We've never had enough.

Unfortunately, we now only have 1 leader and an assistant, that includes myself. The leaders are sad they can't be with us any longer, but things happen and we appreciate the time we had them. And we are going to continue strong! We're going to do something new for our troop this year. Parents will now take turns attending the meetings! The girls plan their year at the first meeting and the parents can choose which meeting they'd like to assist the girls. I'll provide the badge instructions and materials. They'll just have to commit to one or two meetings. I think some will enjoy it and may become full leaders.

September 7 starts our Fall Product sale. Yes! We sell Girl Scout goodies in the fall, also. Our fall product is various candies and

magazines. We'll have more information when the sale gets started.

I have a feeling, even with our challenges, we're going to have an amazing year!



SEASON OF CREATION

BY LAURA HUNT

The Season of Creation is an annual ecumenical celebration that calls all Christians to renew our relationship with our Creator and to care for the Earth. It begins September 1st with a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Season continues with special liturgies through the Feast of St. Francis on October 4. HoCo's own celebration will come to an end on October 13, with our annual Blessing of the Animals.

The symbol and slogan for 2024 is "The First fruits of Hope," drawn from Romans 8:19-24:

19 "For the creation waits with eager longing...in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free. 22 The whole creation has been groaning as it suffers like the pains of childbirth. 23 Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption to sonship. 24 For in this hope we are saved."

Paul portrays the Earth as a mother groaning as if giving birth. St. Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his Canticle of the Creatures.

As followers of Christ from around the



Girl Scouts®

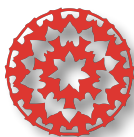


TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)

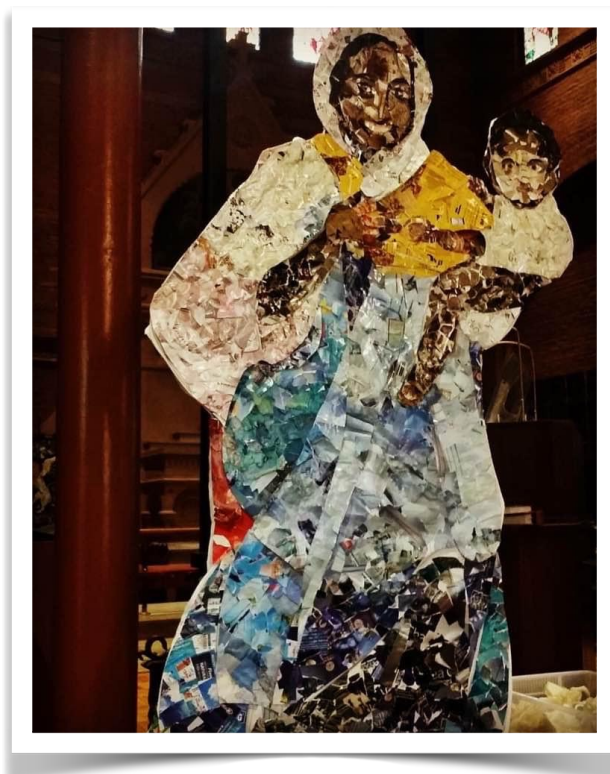
globe, we share a common call. We are part of all that God has made. Our well-being is interwoven with the well-being of the Earth. We are nature, nature is us; we are God's hands for global and cosmic justice. Throughout the month-long celebration, the world's 2.2 billion Christians come together to work with Creation so that the first fruits of hope can spring forth. (Adapted from the website <https://seasonofcreation.org>).



A PARISH ART PROJECT
FOR ADVENT
BY CAROL GIBBS

Any minute now the manic shopping season will envelop us. Advertisements of all sorts and sizes decorated with Christmas trees and holly branches, ribbons and wrapped boxes will come at us from every direction: TV, radio, emails, texts, social media and catalogs... dozens and dozens of catalogs filling the mailbox day after day, all of them screaming at us to Buy! Buy! Buy!

The HoCo Liturgical Art group has a dream of finding a way to put all that pressure to buy into something more in line with Advent and Christmas. We plan to create an unusual nativity scene from printed advertising materials and, just as we did for



Easter, we need your participation to pull it off.

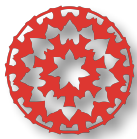
Details are still a bit cloudy, but we hope you will help us to create very large sheets of decoupaged colored paper using colored pieces torn from shiny print advertising like catalogs and magazines. We will, in turn, cut shapes from those papers to construct a nativity scene on the high table under the gold cross that we hope will be visible from the very last pew. So yes, this is a

big undertaking, and it can't happen without you.

So please start looking now for colorful holiday items shown in magazines and catalogues, rip them out and collect them to bring to church when we start this project in September or early October.

Collect by colors... reds, purples, blues, greens, yellows, oranges, browns, and tans. All varieties of color are needed.

And remember, this won't happen without you. So please join in. And let's see what we can do. Thank you and Blessings!



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

View <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5GF0dXJTLU> and see several priests and bishops you know talk about how it felt and feels to be a woman in the role.

The Episcopal News Service (ENS) provides a timeline at <https://episcopalnewsservice.org/2014/07/28/ordination-timeline/>. Unless you are well-versed in the history, you may be surprised by what happened when and where.

"On July 29, 1974, in Philadelphia, 11 women broke rank and were ordained as the first female priests in the Episcopal Church. They became known as the Philadelphia 11.

"While there was no law explicitly prohibiting the ordination of women, there also was no law allowing it. After the Philadelphia action at the Church of the

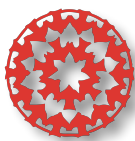
Advocate, the 11 women were deemed 'irregularly' ordained, and Episcopal bishops warned the church not to recognize the women as priests.

"Two years later, the Episcopal Church's General Convention affirmed and authorized the ordination of women to the priesthood," from Heather Adams in the August 20, 2014 issue of *The Christian Century*.

One of the wonderful ironies came during a time when Anglican bishops in Africa began to move on the US Episcopal church for money and power and objected to women in ordained roles. The answer of the Episcopal church was to elect the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori as the first female Presiding Bishop of the U.S. Episcopal Church and also the first female primate (aka, Archbishop) in the Anglican Communion in 2006.



Sources: Websites cited in the article and the Wikipedia article on "Ordination of Women" that covers the subject widely. The image of Bp Jefferts Schori is from Wikipedia Commons and is used under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License.

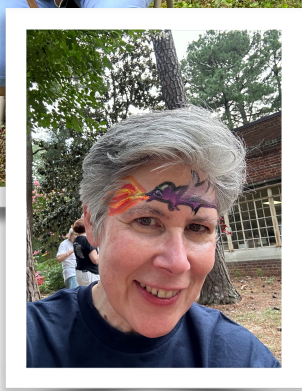


HOCO HOSTS NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

BY BILL DENNIS

The Parish Life and Social Justice and Outreach Ministries hosted a National Night Out celebration in the church’s back garden on Tuesday evening August 6th. National Night Out <https://natw.org/> is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie.

In addition, it enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. It also provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.



Offering watermelon and ice cream to our neighbors and Food Pantry families, HoCo welcomed City of Richmond Police and Fire personnel to interact with our parishioners

and our community. Attending from the police department were Third Precinct Captain Angela Smith and Lt. William Phibbs of Sector 311 along with other officers. A Richmond Fire Department ladder truck and crew also joined in the festivities.

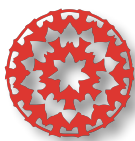
Besides the free watermelon slices, HoCo parishioners also offered various activities such as face painting by Tracy Council; coloring opportunities supplied by Caroline Smith and June Dennis; and beautiful music by Julie Edwards and Nan Ottenritter.

Thank you to those who contributed the watermelons and a shout out to our great HoCo chefs who sliced the watermelons!

It was a team effort with Susan Boze, June Dennis, and me as co-chairs. Carol Gibbs created our National Night Out flyer, Tracy Council had the flyers printed and also distributed them, Kipley Herr developed a Facebook page that advertised our event, and Maria Scott gave tours of the church. A thank you to all those who helped with the set up and take down.

Hosting National Night Out is a HoCo tradition that is another successful outreach program and we look forward to National Night Out 2025 and “Trunk or Treat” in October.





UNITED METHODIST CHURCH LIFTS 40-YEAR BAN ON LGBTQ CLERGY

BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

That’s the headline of a CNN story on this long and difficult journey for the United Methodist Church. The Methodist news service states “By now, you have likely heard that The United Methodist Church’s General Conference meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina (April 23–May 3, 2024) took action to remove from the Book of Discipline all language that restricts or singles out non-heterosexual people for disparate treatment. That is true. As proponents of the removal of this language would say, this returns the Book of Discipline to its pre-1972 ‘neutral’ stance on homosexuality. This article, substantially updated just after the 2020/2024 General Conference, seeks to clarify where the denomination stands during this ‘in-between time’ between now and January 1, 2025, when most General Conference legislation goes into effect.”

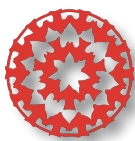
As happened when the Episcopal church (1) changed the Prayer Book from the 1928 to 1979 version, (2) decided to ordain women, (3) allowed openly gay clergy, and (4) allowed

the celebration of gay marriage, there were some who wanted to leave. And take their church buildings, endowment funds, etc. with them. Some us remember the court battles of property since the national church has official ownership of church property. The Episcopal church won the court battles. With that independent “Anglican” churches popped up often supported by African Anglican bishops. It was and is a messy scene.

The United Methodist church has similar property rules. One of their solutions has been “disaffiliation” that allows congregations to leave and take or buy the properties. Usually members of the clergy are part of the “disaffiliation” with all kinds of pension and insurance issues. It is a pretty complicated process and can take months.

With all that, the United Methodist Church in the United States joins the Episcopal and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.





PRIDE EUCHARIST AND PRIDEFEST
BY BRUCE MACALISTER, EDITOR

On Thursday, September 12 @ 6 PM the Episcopal Churches of Central Richmond will gather at St. Mark's Episcopal Church (520 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd) to host a **Pride Eucharist** that celebrates our embrace and affirmation of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our rector, the Rev. Dr. Hilary Borbón Smith will be the preacher. We also hope you will help represent the Episcopal churches in the Central Richmond Region as we come together at the Pride Festival.

Richmond's annual September **PrideFest** Saturday, Sept. 14, from noon to 8 p.m., at the Bon Secours Training Center in Richmond. (It's behind the Science Museum of Virginia) This is a family-friendly event that will include a day of performances and over 130 vendors will be present.

"Crystal Waters, Robin S., and Tank and the Bangas are among the talented performers hitting the stage at what's known as the largest LGBTQ festivals in the Richmond region, according to Virginia Pride.

"We can't wait to see the community singing, dancing and celebrating Pride alongside this year's incredible lineup of entertainment," said Marquis Mapp, Virginia Pride chair. "We've got something for everyone this year. Pride is so powerful and it will be radiating from Richmond this September."

"House Music legend, Crystal Waters, is most known for her 1990s chart-topping singles "100% Pure Love" and "Gypsy Woman," as well as the 2007 hit single "Destination Calabria" with Alex Gaudino.

"Additionally, the lineup of national and local talent set to perform will include:

- "RuPaul's Drag Race" alumni, Mistress Isabelle Brooks and Kennedy Davenport
- Mr., Miss, and Mx. VA Pride and several Richmond-based drag entertainers
- Singer-songwriter and guitarist, Landon Elliott
- Dance-pop artist, Bryce Bowen"

- From WRIC News8 TV

Sign up and to see who will be at our Central Richmond Table on Saturday, September 14. Even if all the spots are filled, feel free to be at our table/booth anytime during the day. Once again this year the churches of the Central Richmond Region are joining together to have a booth rather than each church having its own booth.

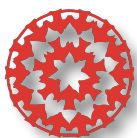
THURS
SEPTEMBER
12
6:00 PM

HOSTED BY
EPISCOPAL CHURCHES
OF CENTRAL RICHMOND

EUCCHARIST

ST. MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

520 N Arthur Ashe Blvd,
Richmond, VA 23220



THE HOUSE OF HANDEL ON SEPTEMBER 15

BY JIM BENNETT, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

The Chamber Music Society of Central Virginia presents "The House of Handel."

The Chamber Music Society of Central Virginia (CMSCVA) launches its 20th anniversary season on September 15, 2024 with "The House of Handel," a curated showcase of Baroque music performed in the beautiful English Gothic setting of Holy Comforter Episcopal Church. Specifically created for the season by CMSCVA's Artistic Director James Wilson, the program features 11 noted classical artists from around the USA.

Inspired by the drama of Handel's "Messiah" and the dynamism of a runway show, "House of Handel" will take the listener through an emotional and thrilling musical playlist, that includes a special commission from Richmond native Zachary Wadsworth.

The House of Handel starts on Sunday, September 15 at 4:00pm, at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 4819 Monument Ave. in Richmond. Tickets are \$5 to \$30. Tickets and further information can be found on CMSCVA's website, www.cmscva.org.

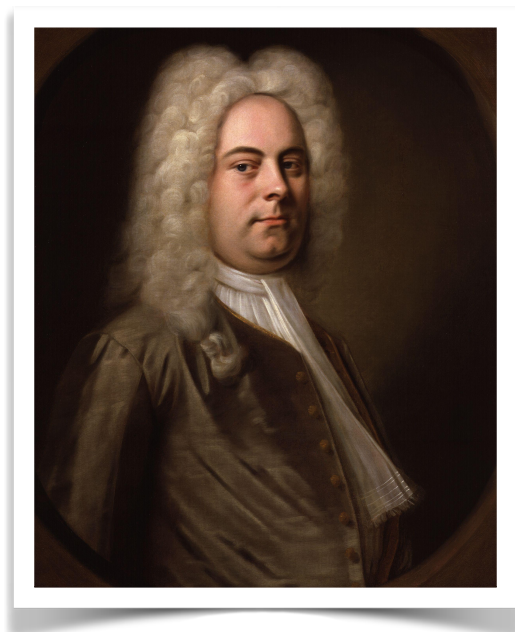
This year the Chamber Music Society of Central Virginia will be celebrating its two decades of innovation and excellence with its most ambitious season yet. From September 2024 to May 2025, CMSCVA will present concerts and events that feature the number 20, highlight the music of Virginian composers, and center the uniqueness of Richmond in venues and programming.

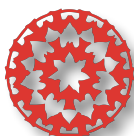
Celebrating 20 years of creativity, innovation and cultural leadership in Richmond, the Chamber Music Society of Central Virginia is a non-for-profit arts organization devoted to presenting classical music in unique ways. Flexible in personnel and repertoire, CMSCVA is dedicated to inspiring, entertaining, and moving our communities through a combination of unique venues, world-class musicians, thought-provoking content and eclectic classical music. Engaging with contemporary culture and honoring the classical tradition, it strives to promote interest and diversity in the musical life of Richmond and beyond.

Date: Sunday September 15, 4:00pm

Discounted tickets are available to the Holy Comforter community – \$10 adults, and free for students. To access this discount:

1. Visit our event page (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-house-of-handel-tickets-865853490097>)
2. Click "Get Tickets," enter the promo code "HOCO" and click apply. Your discount should now be applied.





**GENDER-AFFIRMING
WORSHIP SERVICE**
BY LAURA AND CAMERON HUNT

On June 8th, 2024, HoCo once again opened its doors to support the LGBTQ+ community. We held our first annual Gender-Affirming Worship Service, an opportunity for everyone to “celebrate their authentic self.” The service was unlike any other because, instead of Holy Communion, over fifty people received a candle-lit blessing, along with personal prayer time with clergy.

In addition to our HoCo clergy—the Rev. Hilary, the Rev. Heather, Deacon Joe, and Bishop Susan—four other clergy members from the area participated (pictured from left to right in front of the altar): the Rev. Karla Westfall Hunt, Deacon, St. Peter’s Richmond; the Rev Dawn McNamara, Deacon, St. James—the-Less Ashland; the Rev. Frederico Garza, Deacon, Food for the Poor Minister; and the Rev. J.D. Dickinson, Deacon, St. John’s Richmond. Also pictured is Charles Wolfe, who organized the service and gave the Reflection.

Old Testament readings consisted of Genesis (“I will make my covenant between you and me”) and Isaiah (“Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”). New Testament selections included



Galatians (“There is no longer...male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”)

and Revelation (“ a new heaven and a new earth”). The Gospel was the Beatitudes from Matthew.

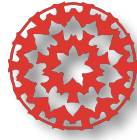
Jim Bennett (our Director of Music), Art Raymond, Don Ellison, and Ellen Hall provided the music. Joyous songs included “Dazzling Bouquet” (“Mine is the Church where Everybody’s Welcome”); “God of Many Faces”; “Sing a New World into Being”; and “Quirky, Queer, and Wonderful,” set to the melody of “All Things Wise and Wonderful” and including the powerful line, “All of our humanity reveals the face of God.”



A festive reception followed the service with snacks and decorations (including rainbow key rings, flags, and streamers) provided by parishioner Anne Snyder, cupcakes by Chris Rose (Charles’s cousin), and a special funfetti cake baked by Tracy Councill, with the Episcopal Church’s official Pride shield in fondant on top. Helen Reese and Carleen Penny were in charge of set up and cleanup.

More than ever—as other churches seek to exclude and limit our trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming friends from the body of Christ—being able to share and show God’s Love for the full spectrum of his unique

and varied creations, unlimited by small human thinking, was truly a gift of Grace for all who attended.



A TEMPORARY GUN VIOLENCE MEMORIAL ON THE HOCO CORNER

BY PATTY GALDUN

Last Fall, Carol Gibbs attended a Social Justice and Outreach Ministry meeting and suggested that we think of something to do on the corner to call attention to the gun violence in our city and nation. After having several discussions, the SJ & O Ministry would like to move forward with a temporary memorial and a prayer service.

Actual names of victim are hard to find if you do a web search, but there are several websites that do give statistics.

According to www.cdc.gov:

“In 2022, there were 48,000 firearm-related deaths in the United States according to provisional mortality data. ... More than half ... were suicides and more than 4 out of every 10 were firearm homicides. More people suffer non-fatal firearm related injuries than die. More than 7 out of 10 medically treated firearm injuries are from firearm-related assaults. Nearly 2 out of every 10 are from unintentional firearm injuries....”

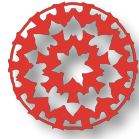
“Firearm injuries affect people in all stages of life. In 2022, firearm injuries (all types) were among the five leading causes of death for people ages 1 – 44 in the U. S. Firearm injuries were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1 – 19.”

According to www.thetrace.org, the year 2023 saw:

“6,192 children and teenagers (under 18) were shot...more than 1,600 died...656 mass shootings (at least 4 people shot) killed 712 people and injured at least 2,692 others”

Given the nature of these statistics, it is something that needs attention. I am going to suggest that we set up a table on the corner once or twice a month and talk to people about whether or not they or any of their family members have been victims of gun violence. Ask if they are willing to share names and take them down. Sharing some of these statistics may be a way to bring back the signs on the corner in collection of these names. My vision right now is that we get some white colored utility marker flags, write the names of victims on them and display them during a selected week. If we have a service where the public is invited we could include some votive candles with the flags. If you have input or would like to share in the planning, please let me know. I would like to get 2 or 3 people to help with this project. My information is in the directory and email is your best bet to reach me.

[The Trace is an American non-profit journalism outlet devoted to gun-related news, editor.]



HOLY COMFORTER ADULT FORMATION PLANS FOR 2024-25

BY MARIA SCOTT

As many of you know, our fearless Adult Formation Leader, Peggy Hombs, stepped down at the end of the 2023–24 program year. We owe her immense gratitude for helping our educational ship for as long as I can remember. Nevertheless, we look forward to the 2024–25 program year with anticipation as we begin to chart a new course. Our plans are not all finalized, but here is a preview of coming attractions:

Adult Forums: We already have scheduled, by popular demand, a presentation by David and Bonnie Lehman about their adventure on the Camino de Santiago, a medieval pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. Come hear their personal account of this once-in-a-lifetime experience after church on **September 15!**

If you have an experience/insight you would like to share at an Adult Forum, please contact Maria Scott at ntrvrt1958@gmail.com

Sunday morning class: Did you know that Holy Comforter was right out in front of celebrating the Season of Creation (September 1–October 4) back in 2006? This fall, we are going to take a break from the “Great Course” format of previous years and avail ourselves of a new program offering from the Episcopal Church, Love God, Love God’s World. The format is like that of the Sacred Ground racial justice program in which many of us have already participated. The plan is to adapt it for the hour-long Sunday morning class, with the

option of doing the full-blown program in the future.

Monday evening class: We have not yet finalized plans for this class, so this is where you come in! Please offer your suggestions: Do you want another “Great Course” type of experience (perhaps led by one of our fan-favorites like Bart Ehrman or Amy-Jill Levine)? Do you want a relatively “academic” experience or a more organic one, in which group members take turns leading activities? What themes would you like to see? We will probably continue to hold this class on Zoom to maximize participation.

Tuesday book group led by Hilary: Join Hilary for a discussion of Brian McLaren’s provocative book, *Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*. Don’t let the title put you off; McLaren leads us from the tough realities of our world as we face growing overreach and unsustainability, to the “complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging in turbulent times.”
<https://brianmclaren.net/lad/>

Shrine Mont Parish Retreat: We will join members of St. Mark’s RVA the weekend of October 18–20 as we Pray, Rest, Play at the Diocesan Retreat Center at Orkney Springs. Workshops include “How to Pray the Daily Office,” “Art and Prayer,” and “Praying with (and making) Beads,” plus worship at the Shrine, hiking to the Cross, and a Community Gathering/Bonfire on Saturday night.

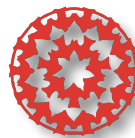
Lenten program: This is yet to be determined. We’ll be doing some canvassing in the new year as to interests.

In addition...

Safe Church: Safe Church is a training program designed by the Diocese of Virginia which requires all persons engaged in active ministry (which, in a parish like ours, means just about everybody!) to be current in best practices and ethical standards for those ministries. Even those of us who have been doing this work (leading Children’s Chapel, working the Food Pantry, singing in the choir) for decades must receive certification in this program to bring us into compliance with Diocesan guidelines. We are working on a plan to make this as easy and painless as possible, so stay tuned.

Finally...

All suggestions are welcome. Even more welcome would be prayerful and generous offers to help facilitate one or more of these programs. Once again, Peggy used to do all of this for us. Let me know at ntrvrt1958@gmail.com if you are interested in this ministry.



ONE SUNDAY RETURNS

BY PHOEBE C. WINTER

Holy Comforter has long been an active supporter of the United Nations’ Millennial Development Goals and their successor, Sustainable Development Goals. The Last Sunday of Pentecost, November 24, Christ the King Sunday will be our **ONE Sunday** when we will focus on the United Nations Sustainability Goals and have an offering that will go to an organization that supports one of those goals.

We will be asking the congregation to select one of the four goals that complement our Creation Care Ministry:

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

In September, we'll ask you to make your selections. The Social Justice and Outreach Ministry will work with the Creation Care Ministry to identify a few non-governmental organizations that address the winning goal. We'll ask you to select one of these NGOs for HoCo to support. Loose plate and designated offerings on November 24 will go to the selected organization.



LIAM POWELL DAVIS-VOJTA HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN HOCO MOST OF HIS LIFE. ON AUGUST 4TH WE SAID GOODBYE AS HE HEADED OFF TO COLLEGE. IN HOLY COMFORTER TRADITION WE GATHERED TO LAY HANDS ON HIM AND PRAYED HIM OFF TO COLLEGE.

FALL BIRTHDAYS AT HOCO

For the month of **September**

Gary Steffey, 2nd; Sara Shelton, 5th; Brian Davis, 9th; Lou Oatts, 9th; Christa Marshall, 10th; Sheila Wilson, 10th; Ellen Hall, 14th; Emily Herr, 15th; Amy Sthreshley, 21st; Susan Carvell, 23rd; Liz Scholder, 23rd; Steve Keller, 24th; Liam Davis-Vojta, 25th; Lian-Marie Holmes Munro, 26th; Christine Garcia, 28th.

For the month of **October**

Peggy Hombs, 2nd; Cheryl Groce-Wright, 3rd; Phoebe Winter, 10th; Kipley Herr, 13th; Thomas Munro, 19th; Lit Maxwell, 24th;

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; Judy Harris, 23rd; Kim McCarthy, 26th; Siyano Prach, 29th, Dale Davis, 27th

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.

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THE ADVENT-CHRISTMAS ISSUE WILL
APPEAR DECEMBER 1ST, THE FIRST
SUNDAY IN ADVENT. ARTICLES ARE
DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH.

