

SUMMER 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

- A Message from the Interim Rector
- The Transition Process
- A Season of Discernment
- Creation Garden Update
- What is the Foundation?
- HoCo Immigration Policy
- Farewell to Hilary
- Easter at HoCo
- Men at The Movies
- D+80: Virginians in the Normandy Invasion
- Shout Out to HoCo Food Pantry Volunteers
- 50th Anniversary of EFM
- Veterans Village Plan
- What Resistance Looks Like
- Parishioner Spotlight: Tracy's Kids
- Summer Birthdays at HoCo





A MESSAGE FROM THE
INTERIM RECTOR
SUSAN GOFF

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to
everyone. The Lord is near. Philippians 4:4-5*

Dear Friends at the Church of the Holy
Comforter,

I rejoice in the faithful ministry that we will
share together over the next year. I thank the
Vestry for calling me as Interim Rector and
entrusting me with this work. We will have
some adventures together as we wonder and
pay attention to what the Holy Spirit is up to
among us.

I have so much to say to you, as you have
much to say to me. We will have ample time
for the conversations in the months ahead. For
now, I share with you a few specifics about
this interim time that we soon enter together.

The interim period provides a time for
reflecting on HoCo's past, solidifying our
strengths in the present, and planning for the
future. It is a time for grieving what has been
lost and celebrating what yet may be. In
particular, the focus will be on preparing for
your next clergy leader. We'll work together in
the coming year to articulate with complete
honesty who you are as a congregation and to
imagine in concrete ways the kind of clergy
leader who will strengthen you to be the body
of Christ in a world that is so in need of
Christ-like love.

I will engage mission and ministry with you on
a half time basis. Exactly what does that mean
and how does it work? First, be assured that I
will be on call 24/7 for pastoral emergencies.
Don't hesitate to call when in real need. I will
be on "active duty" five or six blocks per week,
a block being a morning, afternoon or



Bishop Susan Goff

evening. At least at the beginning, I anticipate
being physically present at HoCo on Sundays
and most Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I'll also
be present for many meetings and most
events that happen on other days, shifting my
schedule to honor this commitment to HoCo
and to myself.

Because I will serve half time, there will be
some things that you are used to your priest
doing that I will not be able to do. The Vestry
and other leaders and I will work to clarify and
articulate ministries that lay leaders must do
and ministries that might not continue at all
during the interim period.

While I will serve half time, I want to be clear
that I do not believe that the next rector of
HoCo should be half time. There is too much
work that needs to be done in revitalizing the
congregation and the next rector will be a
leader of that work. What's more, I believe that
balancing the budget on the back of the
already small staff would not be wise. (There
is, after all, no such thing as part time
ministry, only part time pay.) I'll have much
more to say about that in coming weeks.



THE TRANSITION PROCESS REV. WILL DICKINSON, TRANSITION MINISTER

Transition is hard, no matter the context. We've all experienced a leadership change, whether in business, leisure, or in our family lives. Church is no different, as we all know. Transition is a season to take a step back and examine who we understand ourselves to be, as a church, and wonder together whether God may have something different in mind for the next era.

Every member of the Holy Comforter community has a role to play in this season, be it participating in surveys, focus groups, intentional prayer time, or just keeping the energy going by continuing to faithfully worship with everyone on Sunday mornings.

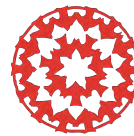
The process of discerning your next priest is intentionally deliberate, beginning with identifying a discernment committee who will hold the trust of the parish as they gather expertise and share it with you and those who may be called. At the same time, this season of introspection and wonder will involve hearing from the whole of the parish through surveys, interviews, focused conversations, and more. Finally, as the discernment committee takes their time to develop an articulation of who you are, where God is calling you, to whom you hope to minister, and the leader you seek to do so, they will need your fervent and explicit prayer.

Over the course of this transition, you will be aided by the ministry of a talented community of friends, both onsite at Holy Comforter and from your diocesan staff, including your

Transition Minister and Minister for Congregational Vitality, Shirley Smith Graham. The next months of your parish life will be different, yes, but the transition of a priest is ultimately a reminder that the ministry of a church is rooted in the Spirit of God moving in the midst of God's people: you. That is a truth so profound that your forebears named the very parish for it: God's Spirit, the Holy Comforter. May you be comforted still.



Rev. Will Dickinson



A SEASON OF DISCERNMENT DON ELLISON AND ANGIE PALMER

We are entering an important time in the life of our parish: one that will ultimately lead to the calling of a new rector. As part of this process, we will form a Discernment Committee — a dedicated group of parishioners who will help us articulate who we are as a faith community and guide the process of identifying rector candidates, one of whom will be called to serve as our next spiritual leader. Their work will include

developing a parish profile, formally posting the position, conducting interviews, and ultimately recommending a final candidate to the Vestry. We seek five to seven parishioners (not currently Vestry members; ideally, not family members of Vestry members) who feel called to serve on the Discernment Committee.

We must reflect together on who we are today — our mission, our gifts, and our needs — to engage authentically with potential candidates. The more accurate we are about our identity and vision, the more likely we are to attract candidates who are a strong and faithful match for our community. Click here https://hoco.org/pdf/angie_letter_20250411.pdf to read more about **Qualifications and How to Apply.**



CREATION GARDEN UPDATE

TRACY COUNCIL

In 2024, using designs developed by Arnaldo Cardona, a small group of parishioners put in a garden of native, pollinator-friendly plants along the Monument Avenue side of the building. The Creation Garden is intended to enhance the appearance of the church and offer opportunities for learning about the importance of gardening with native plants. It was made possible with funds contributed by parishioners and acknowledged in a watercolor plaque displayed in the foyer of the parish hall.

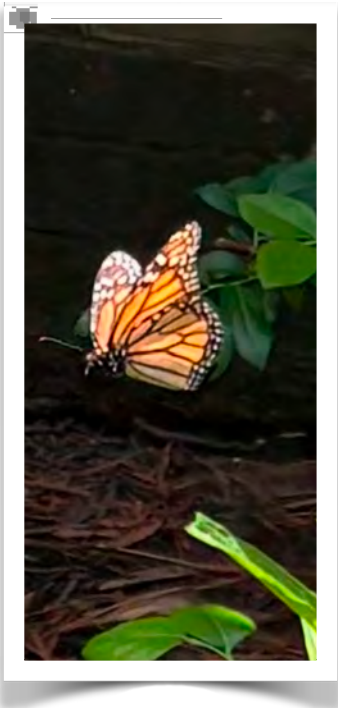
In Arnaldo's design, mountain laurel and blueberry shrubs form a backdrop for ephemerals such as asclepias (milkweeds),

blue flag iris, bee balm, echinacea, black-eyed Susans, columbine, blue-eyed grass, ferns, coreopsis and creeping phlox. Most of the plants survived the winter and are flourishing this spring. We will continue to experiment with a palette of native perennials to find a good balance and create a cohesive garden. Our goal is to support pollinators by providing specific host plants, and by having something in bloom all the time, from early spring through fall.

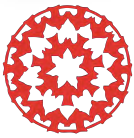


The Creation Garden is adjacent to and works in partnership with the rain garden that was created previously. As we develop both gardens, we hope to create a rich habitat for helpful insects and birds and a beautiful

outdoor space for humans to enjoy. The next phase, tentatively scheduled for June, 2025, is to build a gravel path that will make it easy and inviting to explore the gardens.



Eventually, we hope to add composting, a rain barrel, and signage to educate visitors about the importance of native habitat restoration.



WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER FOUNDATION?

ART RAYMOND

Established on December 2, 1982, the Foundation is a separate not-for-profit (IRS 501c3) corporation devoted to managing gifted funds and using those funds for the “support and maintenance of the worship activities of the Church of the Holy Comforter.” Its activities are directed by five Trustees.

Why do we need a Foundation? The separate funds also allow our church to maintain a “rainy day” fund for unforeseen, costly expenses.

What are some of the things that Foundation funds have supported? Funds have been used to make repairs to the bell tower; assist with the replacement of the HVAC system in the sanctuary; upgrade the electrical infrastructure of the Parish Hall; improve the exterior lighting, landscaping and brickwork on the grounds; provide funding for 25% of Holy Comforter’s annual insurance premium; and pay for the annual Congregational Meeting meal.

Who can serve on the Foundation?

Foundation members must have served on the Vestry and be willing to serve a term of three years. Members can be reelected three times for a maximum of nine years of service.

Who currently serves on the Foundation?

Art Raymond, chairman; Bill Smith, treasurer; Brian Davis; Kathy Hayfield; and Peggy Hombs.

How often does the Foundation meet? The Foundation meets periodically throughout the year, and a Foundation representative is also present at each monthly meeting of the Vestry.

If you have further questions, please contact Art Raymond (artraymond3@aol.com) or Bill Smith (wbx2@aol.com).



HOCO IMMIGRATION POLICY

Earlier this year, the Immigration Committee formulated an Immigration Policy for Holy Comforter, which was approved by the Vestry. Following this, a comprehensive Training Guide was developed, leading to a presentation designed to educate the congregation and volunteers on the policy. The training will focus on the proper response if Immigration authorities (such as ICE) come onto Holy Comforter property. Bishop Susan Goff and The Rev. Frank Castellon, the architects of the Training Guide, will lead the presentations. The next session will take place on Sunday, June 22nd, from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Click on this [link](#) to access the full PowerPoint on our website.



FAREWELL TO HILARY





EASTER AT HOCO



MEN AT THE MOVIES

WITH JESUS

STEVEN C. VAN VOORHEES

Here at Holy Comforter, we have been doing this ministry for well over a decade. Its part of the Vestry's Christian Education/Adult Formation program. We even have a M@M prayer.



The origins of the Adult Formation program came from my amateur status as a film buff. Thanks to my Aunt Pauline (Van Voorhees Bentley), I was taken to movies at an early age. I saw Bambi, Snow White, and Miracle on 34th Street at a very early age. Then, later, in grade school, there were the Saturday matinees

dominated by historical fiction and cowboy sagas. An annual event was The Greatest Story Ever Told (silent version) and, at another showing, The Ten Commandments. I was hooked for life!

So, my idea was to give our male membership an opportunity to see movies from a Biblical and Christian perspective. An example of this is Bugs Bunny as a Holy Fool. Think about it! About two months ago, we watched a Hollywood classic Sullivan's Travels, that contains several references to following Jesus Christ in living out your life. This film is considered one of the best comedies ever created. The men who see these films and talk about them are learning new angles and meanings all the time about biblical teaching and their lives, while they take in the comedy and the tragedy on the screen. Many nights we come away with residual wisdom on living good and faithful lives.

Now, as Monty Python says, for something completely different! June's movie is The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1974). This is a Canadian film centered in Montreal in the Jewish part of town and promises to be a rollicking good time. Its lead character in the title is played by a young Richard Dreyfuss. Here's an introduction to the film:

"In five minutes he'll triple your investments, swindle you out of them, marry your daughter, and make you love every minute of it. That's our Duddy."

This will show Tuesday night, June 17th (again a change to the 3rd Tuesday!). We'll gather for fellowship in the HoCo Parlor at 6:00pm; the film and discussion will commence at 6:30. Men at the Movies will then take summer break for July and August and resume in September.

"Au fond," movies, cinema, kino, film as an art form provides us an experience of God's universe, just as a piano sonata, a sculpture, a landscape, a park or a seaside does.

Two of my mentors of film and Bible connections Adele Reinhartz (Scripture on the Silver Screen) and Robert Jewett (Saint Paul at the Movies) inspired me to launch this ministry. Once a person who is a theologian (all of us are, trained or not) sees a biblical truth in a movie, they are doubly blessed with both the experience and the changed life that follows.

"May you be a blessing to others. And, may your heart, mind and soul be enriched by the experience of film art."



D+80: VIRGINIANS IN

THE NORMANDY INVASION

NAN OTTENRITTER


Early morning on June 6, 1944 my father landed on Omaha Beach, Normandy, France. Do you remember seeing the beginning of the movie Saving Private Ryan in which U.S. soldiers are transported across the English Channel, the back of the landing craft opens and drops into the water, and soldiers tumble, leap into the waves, hoping to eventually plant their feet on the beach? That was my father. Except he carried medical supplies instead of a gun. And when he made it to shore, he set upon the tasks of a surgical technician in war: splinting broken limbs, bandaging wounds, administering plasma, and assisting with amputations.



Dad was with Company B, 104th Medical Regiment, 29th Division of the Maryland National Guard. Marylanders and Virginians comprised this division called "the Blue and Gray" that lead the first wave assault on Omaha Beach. They suffered some of the heaviest losses on D-Day.

Last year, on the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the Virginia War Memorial opened their exhibit **D+80: Virginians in the Normandy Invasion**. It will remain open until the end of this July. The exhibit features the experiences of

News of The Church Of The Holy Comforter



"Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, June 6, 1944"
by Nan Ottenritter


The day my father passed,
I fed him broth late morning.
Turning to my mother and me,
he asked, "Did I do good?"
None of us were very good at languages.

On Omaha Beach,
Dad half-washed, half-waded ashore
as comrades drowned, waist-banded
life preservers pinning them
under the surf.

Farther into France, he hid in a foxhole among dead G.I.s,
German soldiers walking above, peering
down the Mauser's barrel.

My father remembers speaking to the wounded,
"Je suis blessé? I am wounded."
High school French firmly under my belt, I smiled—
He really meant "Êtes-vous blessé? Are you wounded?"

And yes, Dad, you were great.
You done good.

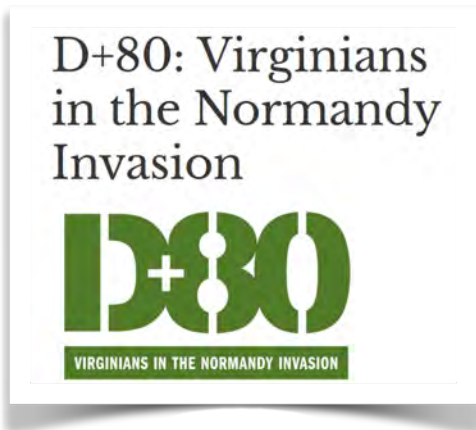


Virginians who answered the call in World War II, were shipped overseas, and conducted the largest amphibious warfare campaign in history. Photographs, artifacts, uniforms, and weaponry are also on display.

Some of my father's artifacts (Eisenhower jacket, German Mauser) are on display as well. The last panel of the exhibit features a poem I wrote entitled Omaha Beach, Normandy France, June 6, 1944 – a daughter's tribute to a beloved Dad as well as to the men and women who served that day, that campaign,

and that war. Come see, honor, and learn about some of the “greatest generation.”

For more information, check out: <https://vawarmemorial.org/dplus80/>.



SHOUT OUT TO HOCO FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS

KIPLEY HERR

You all have heard about the numbers of people we serve each week. You all have heard about Good Samaritan Sunday, where the congregation is encouraged to bring donations. You may have heard that the bulk of our food comes from Feed More – our local food bank. We also get donations from a variety of other organizations (remember the potato Tsunami?)

Do you know HOW we get the food into the hands of our guests? It's a stunning accomplishment involving planning, many emails, spreadsheets, charts, and graphs with circles and arrows: and **VOLUNTEERS!**

An amazing number of people step up each month to make it all happen. There are 45 volunteers, and about 20 of them are not members of Holy Comforter. We currently, and in the past, have volunteers who are also guests of our food pantry. The food pantry



generates more participants in its operation than any other ministry at Hoco.

The duties involved to get the donations and purchases into the hands of the folks that need food include: Food distribution; picking up dairy; picking up and bagging Panera donations; picking up and unloading our Feed More order; taking inventory; and putting all of the food on the shelves (in an attractive manner).

Needless to say the Food Pantry team is incredibly thankful for many contributions of

time and effort from all the volunteers, and we are delighted to include those from the wider community into this important work.

Join us! Email chanayik@gmail.com to get the bi-monthly sign up survey.



Efm AT 50

BRUCE MACALISTER

In the 1970s, sick of all the religious arguing, I wanted to learn enough to judge for myself. Along came a new program from the (Episcopal) School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. It was to be 33 evening meetings a year for 4 years using textbooks of the lectures by the professors at the school. We would get the core curriculum of the seminary students studying to become ordained clergy. It was called “Theological Education by Extension.” It sounded good to me; where do I sign up? It turns out the editor of the diocesan news magazine, The Rev Ben Campbell, was interested in leading it. In 1976 we started, the first or second class in the Diocese of Virginia.

It was everything I hoped for. We got a year and a third of the Hebrew (Old) Testament, two-thirds of a year of the Christian (New) Testament, a year of church history, and a year of systematic theology. At least monthly we did exercises in the practical application for ministry, especially pastoral ministry. It was everything I was looking for. (For some Episcopal priests who like to tell mere laypeople what to believe, it was their worst nightmare.)

News of The Church Of The Holy Comforter

The name was later changed to “Education for Ministry; Theological Education by Extension.” (That gave some comfort to some clergy.) It also made clear that this was not to be just head-knowledge, but understanding how to apply what we learned to whatever ministry we found, accidentally encountered, or wished to practice. In the largely unchurched technical world I worked in, I accidentally became a pastor to those I worked with. It was so rewarding and I still miss that opportunity.

In June 2025 EfM (Education for Ministry) celebrates 50 years. At the insistence of parishioner Stephanie Turner, my wife Kathy and I started an EfM program at HoCo. (Kathy had graduated from the Word program which was the Catholic copy of EfM because some of her Catholic friends wanted to study.) Kathy and I led the EfM program for 8 years. Then John Vandervelde led it for another 4 years. Most of the students were not from HoCo but we do have lots of HoCo graduates.

Currently there are EfM groups at St John’s and St Paul’s. New groups are forming so check out <https://episcopalvirginia.org/ministries/formation/adults/>.

Think about it. To paraphrase Acts 9:18, scales will fall from your eyes and you will

learn new ways to minister in a world that really needs for you to do that.





VETERANS VILLAGE

BRUCE MACALISTER

Since 2013 HoCo Outreach volunteers have met in the parish kitchen the fourth Thursday of each month to prepare a meal for the veterans' shelter on Hull Street. We deliver it, serve them, and then sit down to eat with them. The good news is there is lots of turnover in residents from month to month as shelter counselors and the vets sort out their needs and the vets find independent housing.

Liberation Veterans Services (LVS) was started by Liberation Church (<https://liberationrva.org/>) and is an IRS-501(c)(3) non-sectarian, non-profit service organization. Its mission is "...to simply Love People, Show Kindness and Serve Change. We desire to build God's church and present it as a safe haven for the city of Richmond and beyond."

LVS took over the shelter on Hull Street, formerly run by Freedom House, where HoCo served meals for decades. The vets are referred to LVS from the Veterans Administration that also helps with support. The facility on Hull Street would be familiar to any veteran, especially

an enlisted veteran, as it looks a lot like a barracks. LVS wants to change that. From its press release:

"The new complex will replace the current LVS facility on Hull Street. The development will feature 50 micro-apartments for Veterans in the program, and a community building, equipped with a kitchen, dining hall, gathering spaces, laundry facilities, administrative offices, and a courtyard. In its second phase, the project will add 20 permanent housing apartments, helping to further LVS's mission of empowering Veterans to achieve long-term housing stability. Construction partners include Hourigan, Baskervill, STRUCTR, and Timmons Group."

They aim to open the complex, dubbed "Veterans' Village," in November.

At the January groundbreaking Mark Hourigan, Founder and CEO of Hourigan Construction

said, "No one who has worn the uniform of this great



LIBERATION
VETERAN SERVICES



nation should ever face homelessness or the absence of support.”

Holy Comforter joins many other Richmond faith communities supporting this ministry to veterans.



RESISTANCE AT THIRSTY'S

CAMERON HUNT

As this second presidency looks increasingly authoritarian, what does resistance look like? How does a potentially threatened community prepare to stand its ground?

I have often said that I run a Queer Community Center that sells alcohol to keep the lights on. At Thirsty's Bar we hold Resistance meetings every Sunday afternoon, where we discuss what's going under the radar and share our own findings and skills.

One goal is to educate ourselves. Our political guest speakers have included mayoral candidate Andreas Addison, Virginia general assembly candidates, city councilmen and women, park events director, the head of the Health Brigade. The LGBT Richmond Police Liaison Officer talked about efforts to inform other officers about the LGBT community and responded to critiques.

Another thing we can do is share our practical knowledge and advice. We've had yoga, self-defence and boxing lessons, advice on how to talk to ICE officials, even sewing lessons.



On Facebook we post 🏳️‍🌈🏆 2-Gay in History 🏆🏳️‍🌈, stories of important figures in Gay History, relating them to today's political and human rights challenges.

Of course, dollars are votes. To that end, Thirsty's has stopped carrying brands like Grey Goose, Bacardi, Bombay Sapphire, and Kraken because they supported Project 2025 and this administration. They won't be getting our pink dollars to turn around and support (wittingly or callously) things like anti-DEI and Trans-bans. We recommend checking political donations with apps like "Goods Unite Us" and publicsquare.com —a

MAGA website where local businesses can register as right wing, and we can use it to avoid them against their intention.

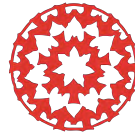
Economic blackouts days have also been useful for garnering headlines and notice in boardrooms. Keep an eye on the The People's Union USA and the 50501 Movement on Facebook for future economic inactions.



Now more than ever, we need to support good causes in our community.

Thirsty's also does Charity fundraisers.

Every Saturday we donate 20% of our tips and drink sales to Health Brigade (formerly Fan Free Clinic) or Side by Side (formerly ROSMY), or Virginia Pride.



LET'S CELEBRATE

OUR LOCAL HEROES

LAURA HUNT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Where there is darkness, let me bring light."
-St. Francis

As a way for everyone to get to know each other better, we are starting a new series called **Parishioner's Spotlight**, which will highlight some of the good works done by people in our parish. By celebrating acts of kindness in every issue, we can encourage each other in these difficult times. Do you know of a HoCo parishioner with a story the congregation would enjoy reading about? Perhaps yourself? If so, please send word to me at editor@hoco.org



PARISHIONER'S SPOTLIGHT:

TRACY COUNCILL AND TRACY'S KIDS

Tracy's Kids (www.tracyskids.org) supports art therapy programs that help pediatric cancer and blood disorder patients cope with the emotional stress and trauma of illness and treatment. In 1991, Tracy Councill started an art therapy program at Georgetown University Hospital's Lombardi Cancer Center. Building the program from scratch, she was able to adapt art therapy practice to meet the needs of young patients and their families. Working creatively, young people release traumatic experiences, raise questions, and learn new coping strategies with the support of peers and the guidance of skilled, Master's-trained art therapists.

Tracy's work at Georgetown evolved into Tracy's Kids, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports art therapy programs in five treatment centers: Children's National Medical Center, Walter Reed Military Medical Center, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio, TX, and Sinai Hospital in Baltimore.

After 31 years at Georgetown, Tracy retired from clinical work and moved to Richmond at the end of 2022. She still serves as Program Director for Tracy's Kids, advising the eight art therapists who implement the program, writing grants and reports, purchasing art supplies, and acting as liaison between the art therapists, the hospital communities and the Tracy's Kids Board. Tracy has written about her work in art therapy textbooks and professional journals and taught in graduate art therapy programs at The George Washington University, Florida State University, Emporia State University, EVMS in Norfolk, and professional conferences.



HOCO BIRTHDAYS

FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS

JUNE

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

JULY

Evan Herr, 2nd; Allen Hurdle, 4th; Mary Davis, 5th;
Rob Hanayik, 5th; Judith O'Brien, 6th; Joani
Hayman, 10th;
Marie McGranahan-Turner, 13th; Julie Edwards,
18th;
Joan Vaughan, 19th; Susan Goff, 24th;

Garnett Christoph, 25th; Don Ellison, 26th; Henry
Dyer, 26th;
Dorcas Douthit, 27th; Joan Prest, 27th; Benjamin
Raymond, 27th;
Casey Falterman, 28th; Angie Palmer, 30th; Jimmy
Ogle, 31st

AUGUST

Cameron Hunt, 6th; Nancy Deane, 8th; Charles
Wolfe, 9th;
Jenni Brockman 9th; Gayle Turner, 11th; Kyan
Doran, 12th;
Mary Thorpe, 12th; Carleen Penny, 19th; 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 Editor-in-Chief is Laura Hunt, Copy Editors are Bruce MacAlister & Dale Davis, the Layout Editor is Keyan Herron, and Digital Editor/Website Manager is Chris Hall.

The Fall Issue of the Messenger will be available Sept 7. The deadline for that edition is Friday, August 29. Earlier submission would really help the volunteers who put it together. If you feel that you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Laura Hunt at editor@hoco.org.

