



# ***THE ASCENSION***

## ***HERALD***

Volume 1

Winter 2019

### **From the Rector**

**Stewart Tabb**

As I was walking out of Diocesan Council, I had a brief conversation with a young man who had represented Emmanuel in Virginia Beach. We spoke about the presentation on new ways of being Church in the world. Because it had been one of the questions in the presentation, I asked him what he dreams of. Without hesitation he replied "Community."

"Community": isn't that what we all dream of? I told him that I, too, had that dream, although I usually qualify "community" with the word "Christian." I do so because it is important that whatever community we form as church be shaped by who Jesus is – how he lived and died, and what he taught and showed us about God and God's will for God's creation.

The other day in our Women's Bible study, the video had Beth Moore talk about the need for depth in community. She lamented that largely we have become superficial people. People who process things in texts and tweets, and social media posts, rather than having deep conversations about what is on our hearts and minds, rather than getting to know people and being known. She encouraged us to go deeper in our relationships. I wonder if that is not part of the depth that Jesus himself calls us to when he invites us to let down our nets in the deep waters.

Yesterday, I was participating in a webinar on ministries of racial reconciliation – a topic which has been on my heart and mind for some time but has come to the forefront with the events swirling around Governor Northam. James McKim, one of the presenters, mentioned that he no longer used the word's creating "a safe space" for people. Talking about race is, he maintains, inherently risky. Rather, he follows the lead of Eric Lau, an Episcopal priest with Kaleidoscope Ministries, saying it is a "gracious space" we strive to create. The difference lies is this; a gracious space allows people to learn and grow; it allows for mercy but does not countenance willful contempt of how others feel. A gracious space is a considerate one in which we commit to be accountable to each other. It should never feel safe for a Klansman because he does not acknowledge the inherent value of all people; but people need to be able to ask why some people find blackface and minstrel shows hurtful.

In Lent on Thursday evenings we will be trying to create such a space through Story sharing which is part of Bishop Curry's efforts around the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. If that movement is to grow, if we are to be better followers and disciples of Jesus, we need to be serious about this work, not just around race, but around politics and faith. Not just here at Ascension, but also in the larger community. I hope you will join us.

# Church of the Ascension Staff

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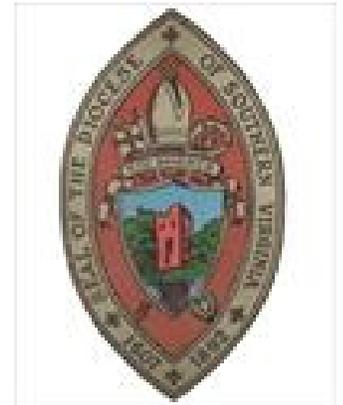
Tracey Trimyer

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## Diocesan Updates

Prayer for the search for the new Bishop:

Almighty and most gracious God, source of all wisdom and guidance, send your Holy Spirit to guide us as we seek and discern a shepherd for the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Inspire us with hope, hearts to love you, and a desire to serve one another. Grant us grace to entrust you with the future of your Church and all things. We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.



The Diocesan Profile is now online at <http://svabishopsearch.org>

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**Disaster Preparedness:** The church is embarking on a Disaster Preparedness Program to allow us to survive a man-made or natural disaster. We are hosting a guided training session that will take place **Saturday, March 2** to develop action plans for possible disasters. Olga Nichols is leading the effort, and if you might be interested, please contact her, Anji Harris, or Chuck Beers.

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### Pastoral Care

**Donna Killmon**

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Christmas and Valentine's Day gifts to our precious Homebound. The response has been a huge success. We are so grateful for your help with these projects. We continue to look for ways to improve and reach out to those who need more help.

At our January meeting many new ideas were discussed. Be sure to let this commission know if you have concerns or ideas for improvement. If you are interested in joining this dedicated group of people, please let Stewart or Donna Killmon know. There is a spot for everyone.

**From the Senior Warden**

**Susan Motley**

When my high school senior yearbook came out and the signing began, the most popular message went something like this: a series of generic compliments followed by stay just as you are.

Leave it to my dry-witted friend Pat to find the humor. She wrote, "Stay as you are, and you will never change." I smile every time I think of it. Pat knew that the only constant in our lives is change; that in fact, not changing means not growing.

Much change is thrust upon us by our rapidly transforming world, but as we journey through the forty days of Lent, we have opportunities to slow down and to look into our hearts to discover ways we may need to change ourselves in order to live, to love, to give, and to forgive as Jesus showed us.

I relish this journey, challenging as it is, and I look forward to growing in your good company at Lenten programs and services and at our community-building supper clubs.

**TEN MOST WANTED!!!**

**Lana Butler, Food Pantry**

I am frequently asked what our Food Pantry needs the most. Here are the ten most wanted items for our Blue Barrel.

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|----------------------|---------------------|
| Peanut Butter        | Chunky Soups        |
| Tuna                 | Canned Vegetables   |
| Canned Fruits        | Cereal              |
| Crackers             | Pasta               |
| Pasta Sauce (Canned) | Macaroni and Cheese |

Thank you to all who continuously give food to our Pantry. This has a direct impact on the needy in our community. Every week when you are shopping for groceries, think of the hungry and pick up some canned or non-perishable foods to bring to church as a part of your Sunday offering. Most of our clients live in our neighborhood and have expressed their gratitude that we are open again. Many are seniors trying to stretch their dollars to cover basic expenses and medications.

I would also like to thank all of the volunteers who make this outreach mission possible. We have 45 volunteer spots to fill each month. If you are interested in becoming a Food Pantry volunteer on either Tuesday or Thursday mornings from 9:50 - 11:30 please call me. You don't have to work every week; many folks come in one or two times per month. We especially need baggers and greeters right now. Thank you.

**Ash Wednesday Services will be on Wednesday, March 6, at noon and 7:00 PM.**

**Lenten programs**

Building on the success of Advent with programming for families, we will meet on Thursdays at 5:30 beginning on March 7. Children with families will meet in the chapel and adults will meet in the lounge, and everyone will meet in Rose Hall afterwards for dinner.

*"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14*

I could not be more excited about how graciously the children of Ascension have been welcomed into the sanctuary! I often hear people say that the children are the future of the church, but the reality is that they are here now and very much a part of who we are as a congregation. The Pray Ground at the right front seems to be well received by all. I appreciate everyone's patience and optimism as we have made this dramatic change to our worship space.

To update you on Family Formation I must begin with what is happening in the Children's Chapel. Thanks to the love and dedication of Courtney Wheeler and Cindy Jones and the recent addition of Dennis Glowatsky, the children's Sunday school hour is thriving! I anticipate the need for a second classroom by 2020, so if you are interested in teaching our little ones, please reach out to me. We have a consistent group of kids each week learning the stories of their faith through the format of the Godly Play program. For any of you who are unfamiliar with this program, I encourage you to visit their website to learn more: <https://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/>

The EYC have an exciting schedule planned for the spring beginning with a trip to the roller-skating rink followed by serving dinner for NEST. They will also be making Easter Baskets for a local nursing home and collecting food from our neighbors to support the food pantry. Movie night will be held in Rose Hall this year thanks to our new 75" TV gifted to us by the Day School. We have a vibrant and fun-loving group of youth here at Ascension and their willingness to serve the community is admirable.

Mission Trip through Appalachia Service Project will be July 28 – August 3 this year. The group will be heading to West Virginia to make home improvements possible for impoverished families. We already have registrations coming in and I anticipate a good turnout for this trip. If you are interested in more information on the Mission Trip reach out to me. The deadline to register is February 22.

We will be offering a Children and Families Lenten series on Thursday evenings beginning March 7 from 5:30-6:15pm in the Children's Chapel with potluck to follow in Rose Hall. This will coincide with an Adult Lenten series held in the lounge.

Please make note that the nursery hours have changed. To accommodate both our families and the nursery staff in a more efficient way, the nursery will no longer be available for the 8am service. It will be staffed from 9:15am-12:30pm during Sunday School/Adult Formation hour and the 11am service.

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**Finance and Stewardship news****Chuck Beers**

Good news is that with the close out of the books for last year we are in the wonderful position of having a \$15,000 balance to the good!!!! We had some one-time gifts, and some pledges were fully paid up that put us over the top. We are off to the typical February financial position with pledges behind by \$7500 resulting in our overall position of \$8200 in the red. Please remember that the church's expenses are year round, and keeping your pledge up to date will really help us make our commitments.

If you have any questions or want any more information, please call or email Chuck Beers.

Lent is the season when we take an extra-close look at ourselves and ask what we need to change to be closer to God and the people God intends us to be. One of the many enjoyable parts of my job as church musician is being able to sit and read (and re-read, and re-re-read) the words of the songs we sing. There have been several moments lately when a hymn's words, which seemed perfectly acceptable the last time we sang them, suddenly clashed with the context in which we were singing them. Here are a few examples:

In February we were blessed to hear one of the Norfolk 17 speak at adult Sunday School in the lounge, where Dr. Patricia Turner gave a moving account of her experience as a child integrating Norfolk public schools in the 1950s. Her stories of being spat on and pushed down were still in my head when we sang our opening hymn at worship: "Christ is the world's true light," with words by George W. Briggs (1875-1959).

***...In Christ all races meet, their ancient feuds forgetting...***

I thought to myself, how easy it is for us, a predominantly white worshipping group, to proclaim that we can let go of the past when we were not the ones who were pushed down and spat upon. Dr. Turner wasn't present in worship, but I wonder how the hymn would have struck her?

In January, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., day, I taught the Day School and church children the song "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round," a favorite of Dr. King and his friends during the freedom marches of the 1950s and 60s. It's a rousing song that I love to crank up and sing at the top of my lungs when I'm feeling depressed by the headlines of the day. Ain't gonna let no hatred turn me 'round! No lying! Singing it at Day School music class for the first time, though, I was struck by how different it feels to sing it with a group of children. "**Ms. Ginny, what is hatred?**" It's hard to say, since they're so young, but what does a song about hatred and lying mean to a child?

Sometimes a song and a new context surprises me in a negative way, but there are positive surprises, too. For Ash Wednesday this year the choir is preparing an anthem called "Dust and Ashes," with words by Brian Wren (1989).

**Dust and ashes soil our hands--greed of market, pride of nation. Holy Spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow as we pray and struggle through the meshes of oppression.**

This will be the second time we've sung this anthem together and we have to laugh every time because it's so difficult to spit out all the words. Try saying "meshes of oppression" ten times fast! It's difficult to sing at first because you don't expect words like that in a piece of music for church. When is the last time you heard the phrase "greed of market" in a song? It jumps out at you all the more because it's sung. The music gives the phrase more power; it allows it to pierce the heart in a way that isn't possible when it's just spoken. When our hearts are moved, hopefully we will then be moved to repentance and action. That's exactly what we need to be doing in Lent. Thank goodness for words, music, and surprises: the good and the bad!

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**The Church Calendar is online:  
Ctrl+ click for [Event Calendar](#)**



Ascensionites at Diocesan Council  
February 8 and 9: Richard Jones, Anne  
Doyle, Sam Webster, Stewart Tabb,  
Patti Glowatsky, and Nancy Long

Dear Ascension Families,

As I promised in early September, it is time to step back and evaluate the Pray Ground for small children that we have implemented at the front of the sanctuary. With the help of a most thoughtful donation from Fred Poorman in memory of his wife Kathryn, I was able to purchase a professional grade table, more art supplies and some super cool foam blocks! Play Doh seems to be the hot ticket item at the moment but I will rotate the options periodically in order to keep little minds engaged.

The children's response to this space has been overwhelmingly positive. I have heard from several families that their kids are rushing out the door to get to church now. At first I was worried that they would be so engaged by the space that they would miss the worship service going on around them. I have been pleasantly proven wrong on as I witnessed children having meaningful responses to the sermon, readings, hymns and Eucharistic prayer. This is good stuff!

There have been several occasions when the children have been consumed by the moment of play and have needed to be quietly reminded that they are still in a church. I do not necessarily see this as a bad thing. The interactions remain positive if maybe a little too rambunctious. While providing a place for children to be children, we also need to help them engage in the worship service where they can in order to help them develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to follow along more and more until they have "graduated" to the pews with their families. If you would like more information and resources, please feel free to reach out to me.

The pray ground is available for the duration of the service with the announcements being a great time to begin cleaning up so that older children can be encouraged by their parents/guardians to participate in the remainder of the service from the pews. This will help them to follow along with the Eucharist and pray the Lord's Prayer as well as take communion and learn the post communion prayer. Younger children may remain or take a small toy, puzzle or coloring page back to the pew with them being sure to return it after the dismissal.

I am eager to hear your thoughts, suggestions, criticisms and praises! This special space for the youngest members of our congregation would not be possible without all of the help and support you have given to it. Thank you to each of you for all that you do to help our little ones experience a community that dearly loves them and values their presence as we all worship together.

Most gratefully, Patti Glowatsky, Director of Family Formation