

November 2013

THE FAITHFUL BELL

St. Francis Episcopal Church



STAFF

The Rev. Conor Alexander, *Rector*
Janice Black, *Secretary*
Bennett Card, *Christian Formation*
John Ickes, *Music Director*
Roland Nave, *Accompanist*
Brett Iwejor, *Nursery Attendant*

Vestry

Orlando Smith, *Senior Warden*
Chris Anderson, *Junior Warden*
Lynn Kennedy, *Registrar*
Roxanne Taylor, *Treasurer*
Dosh Jackson, *Finance*
Ken Clarke, *Stewardship*
Susan Clever, *Social*
Robert Savage, *Communications*
Ron Simmons, *Christian Formation*
Barbera Radford, *Outreach*
Suzanne Yatsko, *Evangelism*

Parish Ministry Leaders

Tsu Fullwood, *Altar Guild*
Jackie Clarke, *Acolytes*
Maureen Fuster, *ECW*
Erika Grasse, *EYC*
Sarah Owens, *Lay Readers*
Bob Fullwood, *Men's Group*
Ken Clarke, *Ushers*

Dear Friends in Christ,

So much has happened over the past month it's tough to know where to start. We're in the midst of our Stewardship drive and at the same time, giving has picked up and is helping us bring our deficit back under control. Perhaps this would be a good time to reflect on Christian giving and why it's important beyond simply paying the bills to cover the things we like in Church.

All of us are made in the image of God. We know this from the very first chapter in Genesis. If you were to read just this chapter you would see a God who creates, and then gives away. God says to the humans He created that He has given them dominion over the earth, and the He gave them all the plants of the earth, and all the trees and their fruits for food. (My vegetarian wife likes to point out that God never said anything about meat for food – just fruits and vegetables.) From just these observations – that we are made in the image of God and that God is a giver, it stands to reason that our natural state is to give – not to consume, not to hoard, but to give. Over the centuries many Christians have discovered this natural state, and for them giving was always a joyous occasion. According to our culture you obtain happiness by consuming, or having the best stuff, but our Christian faith tells us that you achieve happiness by giving, and seeing a positive impact on the world around you.

In my own life, I discovered this joy several years ago. During a retreat weekend, the preacher challenged us to sponsor a child through Compassion International. All we had to do was put our name in the offering plate and he would make all the arrangements for us. A few weeks later I received a picture in the mail of a little girl in India named Lydia. I have been sponsoring her ever since, which has allowed her to go to school, have some extra food at home, and put some money away for college. It cost me very little, but it has made such an impact on her life. At the same time we have exchanged letters, and I have watched her grow up. It's as if I have a child in this other part of the world. And it has been a joy for me. She's become such a part of my life that I couldn't imagine things without her. Funny how that's been.

But that joy came from giving. A small regular amount to a worthwhile organization has made such a difference. Today I enjoy giving to different places because I love seeing what they do. Making a difference is actually quite fun. And I imagine that it's fun because it's the way God created us.

God's Peace,
Fr. Conor+

509 S. Rosemont Road * Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Office Phone: 757-340-6884* E-mail: stfrancisoffice@verizon.net* Web: <http://www.saintfrancisvb.net>

From Our Senior Warden

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I reflect on Veterans Day, I am proud to be a part of a holiday that recognizes our nation's men and women who fought for our country's freedom. For many centuries many servicemen and servicewomen have sacrificed their lives for our United States of America. When I left my family back in Aug 1990, it was very apparent that I was not coming back home until the job was done. Our mission was to stop Iraq from invading Kuwait. I was assigned to a helicopter squadron on board the USS John F Kennedy. My son Andre was just five and a half months old, and my daughter Jasmin was four years old. I was still recovering from a severe back injury that had occurred a month earlier. This turned out not to be the best decision that the doctor made for me, and needless to say my back did get worse. I had a long trip ahead of me with a major back injury going to war, but God was with me every step of the way. After eight and a half months later, I finally came back home with a back that healed on its own and many stories to tell. One thing that I found amusing during the Gulf war was how many people came to Jesus during this conflict. What I mean is that unless our lives are threatened, we tend not to worry about something bad happening to us or family members. The fear of danger affects many of us in different ways. So many sailors on board my ship stopped coming to praise and worship services after the coast was clear, and the war was over as quickly as it started.

In the bible Moses brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and helped lead them with God's guidance to the Promised Land. Moses was faced with challenges many times by the people of Israel, and demonstrated God's power to everyone. But soon afterward some people would lose faith in God, and made statues of other Gods which made God very angry. But because of the love that God had for all of us, he did not destroy the world like he did before.

In retrospect if I had to do it all over again, I would go in a heartbeat. I love the United States and all it means to be a citizen. And even though we have so many problems with our congress, our right live in freedom, our civil rights, and the right to vote, means so much to me. I can only hope that it means the same to many of my brothers and sisters all around the world.

So to the veterans that has served in the armed forces, and to the veterans that have fought in any conflicts in our history who are living or have moved on to a larger life. Thank you for your service, because without our service members defeating our enemies, life could have been very different.

May the glory of the Lord stay with us always,

Senior Warden

Orlando M Smith

Christian Formation

Dear Parish Family,

I was blessed recently with some wonderful news that I am going to be a grandfather and not to just one child but twin daughters. My son Ben also informed me in the course of our conversation, that he and his wife Tandi had found an Episcopal Church and was now in a more regular attendance than they had been in the past. To quote my son, "Dad it is time for us to settle down and stop being heathens, we have 2 daughters on the way and they will be raised in the church as I was when I was growing up! These were indeed wonderful words for a Dad and a Church educator to hear and I was so proud of my son for his realization of how important the church was to him growing up and what it would mean to his daughters growing up as well. With my granddaughters baptism they will be initiated into Christ's one Holy and Catholic Church but it will be their parents and sponsors responsibility to make sure that they are brought to Church and most important Sunday School so that they can learn and share in the great Formation stories that abound in the Bible! Through the fellowship and nurturing from their church family my granddaughters will always see and feel the love of Christ!

Here at St Francis we are blessed with others who share their stories of Formation and love Sunday after Sunday! This comes from our Rector, our capable Sunday School teachers, our beautiful Choir, Lay ministers throughout our church and all those who come and give of themselves Sunday after Sunday! Their story becomes our story and their love shared radiates throughout all who attend. Join with us this Sunday consider attending a Sunday School class, singing in the Choir, working in one of the volunteer ministries or just be with us and experience for yourself what Christ is doing for all who come to this very holy place.

The holiday season is fast approaching and all upcoming Christian Formation events will be listed in the Sunday bulletin. Mark the dates and make your involvement a priority this holiday season!

Faithfully,

Bennett

Evangelism

Please pray for our visitors:

Marinel Frau

Rafael Ruiz

Bianca Small



~ Bible Study ~

Footsteps Faith:

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm



Outreach: Parish Food Closet

Yes, we still operate our food closet. We are maintained by referrals from Virginia Beach Social Services every five weeks, Monday through Thursday.

We are in need of food supplies:

Canned meats

Boxed potatoes

Pasta

Spaghetti sauce

Dry beans

Boxed cornbread mix

Boxed biscuit mix

Canned fruits

Peanut butter

Jelly

Cereal

Dry milk (small pkgs)

Boxed muffin mix

Pancake mix (complete)

Soups

Rice

Canned vegetables

We do not have facilities for anything but non-perishable items.

**Bring items with you to church and place in basket in rear of Nave.



Thank you in advance, Doris Naugle & Elinor Ruth

Capital Campaign News

Capital Fund: As of 9-10-2013 we will have \$17,983 in our Capital Fund after paying for the parking lot.

LEM SCHEDULE



November 3

8 am - Bridget Borton

10:30 am - Barbara Taylor (Prayers)

David Whitted (Readings)

November 10

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Terrence Cumberland
(Prayers)

John Ickes (Readings)

November 17

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - Barbara Taylor (Prayers)

Sarah Owens (Readings)

November 24

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - John Ickes (Prayers)

Carol McCarthy (Readings)



Acolytes



November 3

- Trevor- Crucifer
- Jason- Gospel Bearer
- Alexis- Torch Bearer
- Alyssa- Torch Bearer

November 10

- Taylor- Crucifer
- Trevor- Gospel Bearer
- Andre- Torch Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer

November 17

- Andre- Crucifer
- Mia- Gospel Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer
- Brooklyn- Torch Bearer

November 24

- Spencer - Crucifer
- Emerson- Gospel Bearer
- Brooklyn- Torch Bearer
- Anna- Torch Bearer



Altar Guild

November 9 - November 22

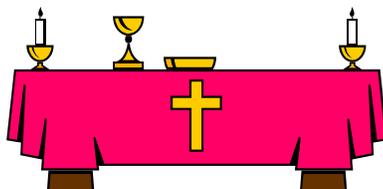
Eileen Anderson

November 23 - December 6

Tsu Fullwood

December 7 - December 20

Sara Grinnell



Building Usage

Need to reserve a room?
Contact our Junior Warden,
Chris Anderson, by email at
grillmaster4u@yahoo.com or by
phone at (757)453-4020.



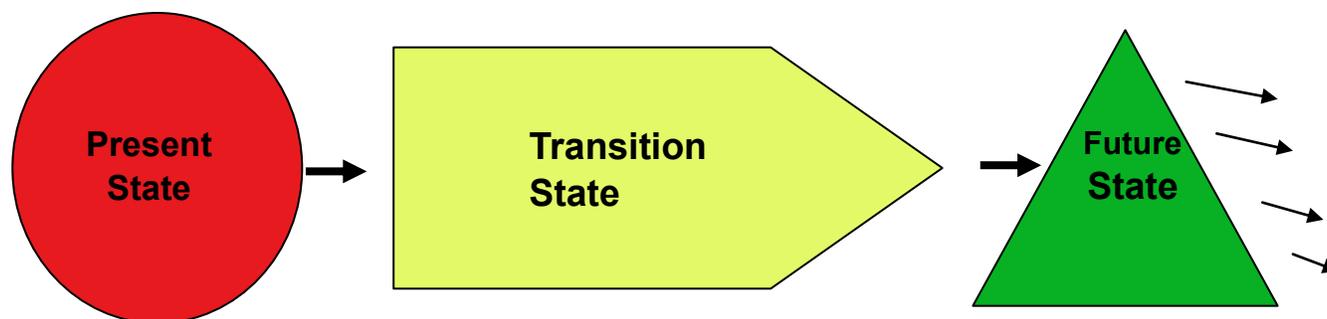
St. Francis Episcopal Church Strategic Planning

All Episcopal churches should have a vision of where they think God wants them to take the church in the future. **“Where there is no vision, the people will perish”** Proverbs 29:18 (KJV). Churches year after year establish initiatives that may make sense for the short term but may be counterproductive to where they need to go for the long term. Therefore all church organizations need to have targets to move to with a road map/strategic plan of how to get there.

The 2013 St. Francis Vestry authorized the establishment of a long range strategic plan. It appointed a Strategic Planning Team to recommend what the future should look like for St. Francis Episcopal Church. The Team is made up of Father Conor Alexander, Susan Golden, Brad Hawkins, and Dosh Jackson, serving as team lead.

The Strategic Planning Team is using a well-recognized process to draft a strategic plan that will be presented to the current Vestry for deliberation and approval. The Vestry will then present the Plan to the Congregation for approval. The **2014 Annual Meeting** is the target date for approval by the Congregation.

The Strategic Planning and Change Management Process



Preparing for Change

Managing Change

Reinforcing Change

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) is using a three-step process to develop a Strategic Plan. It is looking at where St. Francis is now and key elements in the past. This is step one and is called the Present State. Step two is to determine the vision for the future. What is it that God wants St. Francis to be in the next five years and beyond? This step is called the Future State. Once it is determined where the church is going, then a strategic plan/road map is developed. We call this the Transition State and it is step three in the process. The SPT has analyzed St. Francis’ present state and past milestones to determine a baseline for what is needed to move to St. Francis’ vision for the future.

As a result of St. Francis’ financial issues it is critical that the Church have a plan to move to a different way of conducting the Church’s business. Developing this strategic plan is very timely in helping solve our financial problems.

We will be reporting on progress of the SPT in future issues of the “The Faithful Bell”.

Dosh Jackson, Vestry Finance

Vestry Meeting—October 16, 2013

Summary of Action

Capital Improvements: The Vestry voted to proceed with fixing the floors after updated quotes are obtained.

Strategic Plan: A draft of a new Mission Statement for St. Francis was presented by the Strategic Planning Team of Dosh Jackson, Susan Golden, Brad Hawkins, and Fr. Conor. The following revised Mission Statement was approved unanimously:

The mission of St. Francis Episcopal Church is to provide a welcoming, comfortable, supportive community of faith for its parishioners and the world, to bear witness and to promote and enhance the worship and love of Jesus Christ in the richness of the Anglican tradition.

Finance—Dosh Jackson: The Vestry approved pursuing refinancing of the church mortgage, seeking a 15-year mortgage at 5 percent from Old Pointe Bank, which was recommended by the comptroller of the diocese.

Invitation Cards: Susan Clever proposed creating invitation cards (in the form of a business card) that parishioners can take to give to friends and start conversations about St. Francis. Susan offered to pay for 500 cards. The Vestry approved Susan's producing the cards and bringing a plan for implementation back to the Vestry.

Junior Warden—Chris Anderson:

Wilderness Martial Arts, a new company, has requested use of the Parish Hall two evenings a week and possibly Saturday. Chris is working out the details.

Chris wants to get quotes on service contracts for the aging HVAC system. He is seeking suggestions of companies to contact.

Stewardship—Ken Clarke: A Good Steward packet has been produced, covering time, talent, and treasure; it includes devotions, a CD with an Excel spreadsheet for budgeting, a pamphlet of 10 Biblical Reasons to Tithe, and a pledge card.

Communications—Robert Savage (absent): Fr. Conor reported that the new church website is live.

Outreach—Barbera Radford: We will collect cans of food for Thanksgiving.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Kennedy, Registrar

From the Choir

Advent - Prepare to be Amazed

Any carnival barker worth their salt had this phrase included into their spiel: "Ladies and gentlemen, children of all ages! Prepare to be amazed!". This usually introduced some strange oddity or curious exhibit. Of course, many (if not most) of them were artificial, including shrunken heads, monkey men, and the like. Still, people would plunk down their hard-earned money in eager anticipation.

Advent beckons us to prepare for something miraculous. In our secular world we begin the Christmas onslaught as early as the market surveys suggest people will respond to it. By the time December arrives, we've been inundated with advertisements, sales, baking, buying, wrapping, mailing ... pant, pant, pant. We're so exhausted it's almost a relief when December 25th arrives.

So for just a moment, consider this: If you were alive in 0 B.C., and lived in the vicinity of Bethlehem, and believed in God, what would be your level of anticipation? After all, it shouldn't be a complete surprise, should it? The Old Testament is full of prophesy regarding the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God. We "modern, enlightened" humans are spoiled - we know how the story ends. We've spiritually flipped to the end of the book and know that this infant, born to very ordinary parents and placed, of all things, in a stable (one with animals, no less) would be the Salvation of the world. But really, if you were a shopkeeper or carpenter or shepherd (maybe one who didn't see the star), would you have this same degree of excitement? Be honest, now. I think for all of us it would have been just one more day. It would be a long time before we began to put together the pieces and realize what had been given to us.

As we enter this Advent, the choir will be offering up anthems and music that (we sincerely hope) will help prepare us. Prepare us not to be amazed, necessarily, but to have our minds and our hearts and our souls open to gather in the wonder that is given, and to not only make a space for it in our lives, but to make it our lives. We'll be offering a regular introit during Advent, "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord." Any time is a good time to be doing that, but never more so than during this quietly exciting season of preparation and anticipation.

St. Francis Episcopal Church Financial Update

As of October 31, 2013



	Actual	Budget YTD	Difference
Total Contributions	131,472.22	125,695.40	5,778.82
Total Operating Expenses	141,714.97	146,416.55	(4,701.58)
Net Income	(10,242.75)	(20,723.15)	



Notes: 1 Giving has been picking up and we have made progress on our deficit.

2 Please stay current on your pledging, and give an extra \$8/week to help balance the budget.

Grass Cutters

November 2

Terry Branch & Leo O'Boyle

November 9

Brad Hawkins & Chris Anderson

November 16

Terry Branch & Paul Radford

November 23

Peter Ming & Chris Palmerone

November 30

Joe Ruth & Kenrick Clark



Vestry Lock-Up

November 3

Kenrick Clark

November 10

Orlando Smith

November 17

Susan Clever

November 24

Dosh Jackson

Altar Flowers

November 3

Barbara Radford in Honor of Gloria Radford's Birthday

Vonia & John Ickes in loving memory of Dean & Winnie Keith & Donald & Adele Ickes

November 10

Blanche Mouzon to the glory of God birthday blessings

November 17

The flowers on the Altar are given in honor of Amelia & Ashley Hupp and by Vonia & John Ickes in honor of Rebecca's birthday and to the Glory of God.

November 24

Barbara Radford to the glory of God birthday blessings

