

# THE FAITHFUL BELL



## STAFF

The Rev. Conor Alexander, *Rector*  
Tina Lassiter, *Administrative Assistant*  
Bennett Card, *Christian Formation*  
John Ickes, *Music Director*  
Roland Nave, *Accompanist*  
Brett Iwejor, *Nursery Attendant*

## Vestry

Susan Moore, *Senior Warden*  
Ron Simmons, *Junior Warden (1)*  
Ed Silva, *Junior Warden (2)*  
Lynn Kennedy, *Registrar*  
Roxanne Taylor, *Treasurer*  
Dosh Jackson, *Finance*  
Ken Clarke, *Stewardship*  
Karen Palmerone, *Social*  
Robert Savage, *Communications*  
Susan Moore, *Christian Formation*  
Flavel Blyden, *Outreach*  
Susan Golden, *Evangelism*

## Parish Ministry Leaders

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I sit here writing this article, I'm reflecting back on the six weeks several of us spent studying the book of Romans in our "What Does God Have to Say About Gays and Lesbians?" forum hour. If one thing was clear from the experience, it is that our Church is far from settling this issue—as a matter of fact this was just the beginning of a much larger discussion. At the same time I thoroughly appreciated the insights and positions that were shared amongst those who attended.

One thing that we all did agree on was that its not our place to hate or exclude gays and lesbians from Church. We should welcome them and help them to engage and grow in a life of faith. This is actually a wonderful foundation to build off of. The questions then come up as to what this means. Some people feel that we should pray for gays and lesbians, hoping that they will change. Others feel that this is an immutable part of who they are, and we should find ways to incorporate them into the totality of Church life. On one side we have a strong ethic of compassion and welcoming, and on the other we have an equally strong ethic of holiness and self-control. For some, the issue at stake is, if we go along with the rest of the world, how can we lead others to Christ? For others, it's by being welcoming and accepting that we do lead people to Christ. All of these are very valid questions that need to be worked out.

I knew going into this that there weren't going to be any easy answers, but I am so grateful that we've been able to sit down together and discuss it in a spirit of love, fellowship, and Christian charity. We will keep you informed as we continue on in this process, and please keep us in your prayers.

God's Peace,  
Fr. Conor

509 S. Rosemont Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452  
(757) 340-6884  
stfrancisoffice@verizon.net

# Senior Warden

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## Let me say for the record: I LOVE CHRISTMAS!

I love the hustle and bustle; the beautiful colors of tree lights and decorations; the warmth and love emanating from family and friends; carols, carolers and cards; food and festivities. I even love Christmas shopping. I could go on and on but, you catch my drift... I just absolutely love Christmas!

Jeff says Christmas is too commercialized. He's right, but he's also somewhat of a Grinch at Christmas. He points out that every TV commercial is aimed at getting people to buy gifts and spend money they don't have to buy gifts for people who toss, regift or don't want what they get. Have you ever received a gift from someone you gave it to years ago? Don't laugh – it happens. By the way, my Christmas gift from Jeff has already been bought. Picked it out myself. His comment, “Thank goodness that's done.” I'm still going to wear it.

A lot of people, including a certain young person who shall remain nameless, anxiously look forward to Christmas for only one reason – GIFTS! I pointed out the other day that if it weren't for Jesus there would be no Christmas. They quickly retorted that he wasn't even born in December. I'll give them that one, knowing that it was an atheist talking. So Christmas just means an opportunity to get presents! Yes, I've tried to reason and debate the issue but to no avail. It's sad really - taking Christ out of Christmas.

Have you noticed, the older you get, the less you need, whether it's at Christmas or any other time of year? Family becomes more important than things. My mom, dad and sister are gone now and I can count on one hand the people who receive gifts from me at Christmas. Boy, this Christmas I would give almost anything to have them back. Throw in the grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles – celebrating the holidays with family would be the best gift I could ever have. Memories of past Christmases will have to do. That and I know that I am so blessed by God to celebrate Christmas with Jeff, Amber, Jillian and Evan.



Dr. Seuss said it best: *And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.*

What is your little bit more? For me it's the knowledge that a baby boy was born over 2000 years ago in a manger to a lowly woman and man. He is the Christ in Christmas - the Messiah, the Holy One, the Prince of Peace. May you have Peace this Christmas.

*I'm counting my blessings this Christmas. I count you all as one of them.*

Susan Moore, Sr. Warden

# ***Christian Formation***

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Dear Parish Family:

As I write this article, we are in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent and I have to wonder how we are doing with our Advent emphasis. I feel that Advent is so important to us in our faith experience that I am going to repeat part of my article from the previous month on Advent. So once again, why do we need Advent?

- First and foremost, we need the season of Advent as a time of personal spiritual discipline. The Advent scripture readings, hymns and spiritual messages give each of us an alternative to the commercialized madness of the approaching Christmas season
- We need Advent because it is a season of waiting and watching for something, the coming of the Messiah—past, present and future. It helps to keep December from becoming a commercialized blur and enables us to come to Christmas spiritually refreshed.
- We need Advent because of its emphasis on darkness and light. Advent falls in the darkest time of the year and our Church fathers planned it that way, as they looked at not only replacing pagan festivals celebrating the winter solstice, but also a celebration of the birth of the light of the world, Jesus Christ!
- And last, we need Advent because it is a season of Hope. The first candle lit on the Advent wreath is the candle of hope. Hope is the predominant theme for the season, and each of us is called to reach out to others with compassion, love and understanding in the hope that it will take root and flourish and grow throughout the world.

So may each of us continue with our emphasis on Advent as it leads each of us to a spiritual recharge as we await the coming of our Messiah.

Rehearsals are currently underway for our CF Pageant, “What is it about Christmas?” All of our Sunday School children are involved in this year’s production, and all rehearsals are held during the Sunday School hour, so please bring your children so they can be a part of this special event.

There is a spot for everyone, even you!

A blessed Advent to each of you!

Bennett



## ***LEM SCHEDULE***

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### **December 6**

8:00 am - Susan Golden  
10:30 am - Laura Silva  
(Prayers)  
Barbara Taylor  
(Readings)



### **December 13**

8:00 am - Cheryl Blyden  
10:30 am - Terrence Cumberland  
(Prayers)  
Lynn Kennedy  
(Readings)

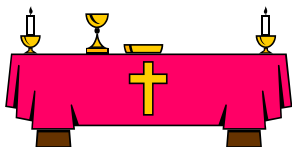
### **December 20**

8:00am - Cheryl Blyden  
10:30 am - Carol McCarthy  
(Prayers)  
Laura Silva  
(Readings)



### **December 27**

8:00 am - Cheryl Blyden  
10:30 am - Clay Wise  
(Prayers)  
John Ickes  
(Readings)



## ***ACOLYTES***

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### **December 6**

- Emerson- Crucifer
- Rylan- Gospel Bearer
- Isaiah- Torch Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer

### **December 13**

- Emerson- Crucifer
- Andre- Gospel Bearer
- Isaiah- Torch Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer

### **December 20**

- Emerson- Crucifer
- Rylan- Gospel Bearer
- Caerdwean- Torch Bearer
- Devon- Torch Bearer

### **December 27**

- Spencer- Crucifer
- Brady- Gospel Bearer
- Anna- Torch Bearer
- Selena- Torch Bearer

### **Altar Guild**

**November 21 - December 4**

Roxanne Taylor

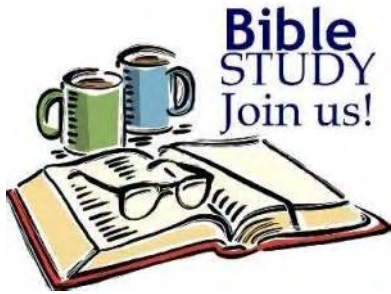
**December 5 - December 18**

Rachel Walker

**December 19 - January 1**

Jackie Clarke

# Footsteps in Faith



Please join us on Tuesdays at  
7 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	Canned fruits	Pancake mix (complete)
Boxed potatoes	Peanut butter	Soups
Pasta	Jelly	Rice
Spaghetti sauce	Cereal	Canned vegetables
Dry beans	Dry milk (small pkgs)	
Boxed cornbread mix	Boxed muffin mix	
Boxed biscuit mix		

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

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

Thank you in advance, Doris Naugle & Elinor Ruth



## ***Food Pantry News***

Thanks to the generosity of your donations, we were able to feed 71 people (40 adults, 31 children) in the month of October! Please continue to donate so we can continue to help feed our community.



## December Events

### Santa Needs Helpers!!!



There are boxes with wish lists attached in the Commons to put your donations for Jackson Feild Homes and Boys Home.

Boys - **blue box**

Girls - **pink box**

Monetary donations are also accepted. Please help Santa put smiles on boys and girls this Christmas. Deadline Dec. 6



### ECW Meeting

We will meet on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 10 am for our annual tree trimming and cookie exchange. Please make at least 3 dozen cookies and bring the recipe. Coffee and eggnog will be served.



### UTO

Thanks to you, we were able to raise \$269.91 for the United Thank Offering. Great Work!

### *Christmas Schedule:*

Christmas Eve - December 24 - 4 pm

*Children's Pageant*

Christmas Eve - December 24 - 10:30 pm

*Midnight Mass*

Christmas Day - December 25 - 9 am

*Christmas Service*



## Greening of the Church

You are invited to a “Greening” (decorating) of the church on Sunday, Dec. 20, following the 10:30 service. We will have pine wreaths and pine roping available to decorate, but we will still need other items such as small evergreen, red bows, and red ribbon, and we would like 4 red pillar candles for the 4 candle holders on either side of the church. The Chrismon tree will be up and our children are invited to decorate the tree. Once we have decorated the church, we will order pizza and have lunch. There is a sign-up sheet in the Commons for items you can bring. As always, monetary donations are welcome to offset the cost of the larger items that we are going to purchase. So mark the date and bring your evergreen, etc., and your creativity as we decorate our church for Christmas!



# ***Vestry Meeting Summary of Action***

Vestry Meeting—November 18, 2015

## Summary of Action

**Finance Report**—Dosh Jackson: We have made progress since last summer on the deficit, which is down to \$2,514. Appreciation was expressed to donors to the 20-40-60 Campaign, which has raised \$3,927. Income of \$11,821 for October was lower than normal; expenditures for the month were \$572 more than income. The cash flow continues to be a concern, since we operate on a month-to-month basis (nearly two-thirds of the amount in the checking account consists of restricted funds); this is an ongoing, systemic issue. Discussion focused on celebrating the good things St. Francis does, largely due to the work of volunteers, and on sharing the life of Christ as Disciples Making Disciples. Successful outreach efforts, such as Trunk-or-Treat, and fundraisers, such as the Faux Fashion Show, which raised \$870 for ECW outreach, were cited.

The proposed 2016 budget will be presented at the December Vestry meeting.

Those who have made in-kind contributions to the church should fill out the tax forms by the end of the year.

**LGBT Discussion Task Force**—Fr. Conor: The six-week Sunday morning Bible Study on Romans will wrap up this coming week; healthy, encouraging conversations with a variety of opinions have occurred. This is a beginning for the broader conversation and eventual decision by the parish; the LGBT Discussion Task Force will reconvene to follow up.

**Episcopal Church Policy on Alcohol**—The Vestry reviewed and adopted the new policy presented by the Task Force to Review and Revise Policy on Substance Abuse, Addiction and Recovery and passed at the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, 2015. The Bishop has asked all churches in the diocese to follow the policy, which can be found at (<http://images.acswebnetworks.com/1/2279/AlcoholPolicy.pdf>). The relevant passages were added to the Rental Agreement for the Parish Hall.

## Ministry Area Reports

- **Senior Warden**—Susan Moore: On Sunday, December 6, at 6 pm, our church family will host “God Bless Us Every One,” a dinner with activities for children and a cookie exchange, to reach out to newcomers and people helped by the Food Pantry. Peace and Pie with Emmanuel Lutheran Church will be held at St. Francis at 7 pm on November 22, the Sunday before Thanksgiving.
- **Junior Wardens**—Ron Simmons: The HVAC system work will be scheduled in the next two weeks. Fall Leaf Clean-up will be Saturday morning, November 28.
- **Communications**—Robert Savage: A link to the Presiding Bishop’s November 1 installation will be put on the website. A new router extension for wifi has been installed.
- **Stewardship**—Ken Clarke: Pledge cards are to be turned in by December 6. The ECW plans to hold a rummage sale and bake sale in January.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Kennedy, Registrar





# ***St. Francis Episcopal Church Financial Update***

**As of September 30, 2015**

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget YTD</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Total Contributions</b>	119,267.25	123,348.00	(4,080.75)
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	121,208.39	123,936.00	(2,727.61)
<b>Net Income</b>	(1,941.14)	(588.00)	

## **Grass Cutters**

**Lawn service will resume in the spring.**



## **Altar Flowers**

### **December 6**

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in memory of Bob Charlton by Pete & Twila Leavitt.

### **December 13**

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God by Bennett Card in memory of his mother, Mae J. Card.

### **December 20**

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in celebration of Keira's birthday by John & Vonja Ickes.

### **December 27**

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in memory of Debra Wingfield by Pete & Twila Leavitt.



## **Vestry Lock-Up**

December 6

**Dosh Jackson**

December 13

**Ron Simmons**

December 20

**Ed Silva**

December 27

**Robert Savage**



## **Building Usage**

Need to reserve a room?  
Contact Junior Warden  
Ron Simmons at (917)847-6604.