

October 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,

As I sit down to write this month's article Sunday's conversation on our Church's finances still weighs heavily on my mind. It can be a very difficult thing when a parish experiences the kind of financial issues that we've had lately. Reflecting back on the past three years since I've been at St. Francis, we've had more than our fair share of challenges. At one point the roof was literally caving in while the floor was sinking. Sometimes it has felt like we're experiencing our own personal apocalypse to put things dramatically. However the Christian faith never ends with tragedy. Good Friday is always followed by Easter, death is always followed by resurrection, and every prediction of an apocalypse leads into God creating a new Heaven and a new Earth. We will approach this challenge with the same faith and zeal that we have approached the others, and pray for God to provide.

The trick is to maintain balance between the seriousness of the situation and hope for the future. Too much seriousness might make people discouraged, but not enough will keep us complacent. Already I've been seeing signs of hope. Some people have been putting together resources to help us invite our friends and family to our Church. The Diocese has come through and helped us find a bank that's willing to refinance our existing mortgage at a lower interest rate. Others are recognizing the need that for a parish our size we need more people giving, and people giving more. We need all of these things to happen to help secure our future. Just like many factors contributed to our current situation, it will take many factors to create a new future.

Yes our financial situation is serious, but we also have a big sense of hope. I don't believe God would put us here at St. Francis in order for it to fold, but I do believe he wants us to work together to secure an even stronger future.

God's Peace,
Fr. Conor+

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From Our Senior Warden

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What a joy it is to be a member of St. Francis. I look forward to the prayer and worship every Sunday. And as long as I have attended our church I have shared my gift of singing with the members of my church for the most part. My views on life and society have changed over the years, but my love for the lord has not changed. I believe that without my lord and savior, I might be in a different predicament in my life. I have mentioned this reality in a previous letter, how my life was in the balance because of the environment I lived in at the time. I thank the Lord and my parents for helping to keep me alive despite all the health problems bestowed upon me. What a friend we have in Jesus is a line I love to use. And I thank the Lord all the time.

October is now upon us and not without more challenges we are faced with. The pledging members and non-pledging members of St. Francis have a major task on our plates. This obstacle in my opinion is making our budget by the end of the year. There is not an easy answer to solve this problem. Only with God's help can we raise our sinking ship. On Sunday October 6th 2013, Dosh Jackson our Vestry financial specialist presented the congregation with the hard facts. If our present offering situation does not change drastically, we will run out of money in our general fund by the end of the year. This will affect the treasurer's ability to pay our staff positions, much less our monthly bills. I have faith in St. Francis. This church recently celebrated 50 years of existence. That is a special milestone for any church to accomplish. And I am proud to be a part of something as precious and special as this achievement. Many have come and gone, but St. Francis is still here and I can honestly say that I am honored, to be a part of our special multicultural church. I have met some awesome and inspirational parishioners over the years. A good portion of those individuals have moved on to a larger life. I expect a financial miracle to get us through these next few weeks.

With God, anything is possible.

May we all keep one another encouraged?

Orlando M. Smith

Senior Warden

Christian Formation

Dear Parish Family:

Is Christian Formation (IE Sunday School) important to you and should it be?

Churches all over are struggling with low attendance in their Sunday morning programs. There are many reasons for this and just a few of them are:

- Changes in our culture and with the aging of the baby boomer generation, the new generation of 18 -30 year olds are even less in-tune with the church.
- Churches are facing competition from the huge amount of media in our internet world, huge family demands (IE- sports , social activities, even on a Sunday)
- The Biblical stories and moral teachings are much less a part of our culture than they were 50 years ago. Consequently fewer and fewer people see the need for regular Sunday School.
- The Church continues with the same programming styles and timeslots and indeed even its outreach to the community as it has for the last 100 years.
- The un-churched in our world finds a valid acceptance in the overall world for skipping out on church commitments.

As an educator I of course feel that Christian formation is and should be important to each of us. As Christians in this complex broken world we need to share and receive the love of Christ as reflected in the scriptures. The stores told there not only educate us in important moral lessons they show us just how much God has done for his people throughout history and will do for the future generations as well! In every age the church has faced the same basic challenge, to step out of the comfortable safe rooms and reach out into the crowds to share the Gospel in a way that makes sense to THEM not to us. This is the true story to our beloved Pentecost story. Come join us on Sundays to open new doors and new opportunities for Formation. By joining us, you can help us expand our vision in new directions that work for you and perhaps others. Be a part so we can grow and change together. We are using an exciting new curriculum this year which is leading us in new directions with the scriptures. Our mid week Bible Study offers yet another opportunity to share and learn with others! Come to me or anyone involved with our CF program and share some of your visions for St Francis in our future. Most importantly please remember one thing, each and every Sunday, week after week, we will be waiting for you to join us, a hug waiting as you enter the room and most important God's scripture, a lesson for this age and all ages to come. So like the Motel 6 commercial we all know so well, Christian Formation will keep a light on for you, the light of Christ!!

Faithfully:

Bennett

Evangelism

Please pray for our visitors:

Pamela Gardner
Alex Cota & Jopa
Werner
Kaligya Mamudu



~ 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	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 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



October 6

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Lynn Kennedy (Prayers)

Clay Wise (Readings)

October 13

8 am - Bridget Borton

10:30 am - Sarah Owens (Prayers)

David Whitted (Readings)

October 20

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Terrence Cumberland
(Prayers)

John Ickes (Readings)

October 27

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - Sarah Owens (Prayers)

Barbara Taylor (Readings)



Acolytes



October 6

- Brady- Crucifer
- Mia- Gospel Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer
- Spencer- Torch Bearer

October 13

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

October 20

- Taylor- Crucifer
- Trevor- Gospel Bearer
- Brooklyn- Torch Bearer
- Alyssa- Torch Bearer

October 27

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

Altar Guild

September 28 - October 11

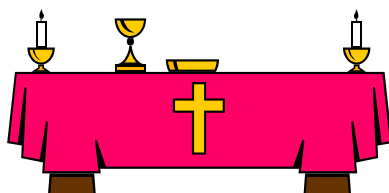
Eileen Anderson

October 12 - October 25

Tsu Fullwood

October 26 - November 8

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' Financial Situation

- You have been informed in the past about the deficit we are creating every month. By mid-summer we thought we were making progress. Unfortunately in August we saw a big jump in the deficit.
- As of Aug. 2013 we have accumulated a deficit of \$13,600 for the year. This means we have spent \$13,600 more than we have received in contributions.
- It is projected that we will have at least a \$20,000+ deficit at year end.
- The results of this problem will be severe. Our cash in the bank used to pay bills will be substantially reduced.
- To remedy the problem for this year we need for
 1. 60 giving units (families) to give \$333 or \$26 a week in the next 12 weeks in addition to what they are presently giving or,
 2. 10 giving units (families) to give \$800 or \$67 a week in the next 12 weeks in addition to what they are presently giving, and 20 units to give \$400 or \$34 a week, and 30 units to give \$133 or \$11 a week
- You can make your donations by using the regular green contribution envelope with a note on the front stating this is your additional contribution.
- We know we have to approach our budget differently for 2014 by not creating a deficit budget. The Vestry will put together a budget that reflects the projected giving which may mean tough decisions on our present spending level. We hope that for 2014 St. Francis will get pledging to match at least the spending level for 2013. If we don't achieve that we will have to consider reducing or eliminating the few staff positions we have now. At worst we may have to go to having a part-time Rector.
- We can invite your friends or family to attend St. Francis. New members are needed to help solve our financial issues.
- Continue to pray for us to overcome this problem so we can continue to worship God in our incredible amazing environment.

Vestry Meeting—September 18, 2013

Summary of Action

Strategic Plan: The work to date of the Strategic Planning Team (Brad Hawkins, Susan Golden, Dosh Jackson, and Fr. Conor) was presented, summarizing St. Francis' "Present State" based on its history, "Past Actions that Still Impact Negatively on the Operation of the Church," and the results of the Neighborhood Group Sessions and the Dreamcatchers process. The mission statement, principles, and core values were reviewed, along with the financial status and facilities situation.

"Strategic Planning Team's Summary of the Present State of St. Francis"

"This document is a summary of the St. Francis Present State analysis by the Strategic Planning Team. It is the first step in the Strategic Planning Process. The SPT now has a good understanding of what is going well, what is not going well and what we should do differently in the future.

"Parishioners feel the spiritual aspect of St. Francis is going well. They are pleased with Father Alexander's spiritual and administrative leadership. Volunteers are doing a very good job of performing key functions, e.g., cleaning the church, maintaining the Altar, organizing events, etc.

"The main areas that need immediate attention are:

- Attracting new members to the church

- Resolving the church's financial challenges (deficit spending)

- Increasing the number of volunteers

"The next steps in the process are to determine what God wants St. Francis to look like in the next five years, followed by a transition plan/road map to implement the approved changes to get us to the Future State."

Finance Update—Dosh Jackson: Contributions in August were low even for summer; expenses for the month were up due to repair of the air conditioning system, the City's increase in utility fees, and some annual payments. These factors increased the budget deficit to over \$13,000, so difficult decisions will need to be made by the end of 2013 to reduce it.

Alarm System—Chris Anderson: The Vestry approved changing security companies and contracting with ADT.

Automatic Fund Transfer for Stewardship—Fr. Conor: The Vestry approved a plan to set up the Simply Giving program through which donors can set up recurring automatic fund transfers to fulfill their pledges to the church. There is no fee to set up the service; the transaction fees the church will pay will be covered by the increased consistency in donations.

New Carpet in Sunday School Room 4—Fr. Conor: The Vestry approved installing desperately needed new carpet in Room 4, funded by Christian Formation donations.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Kennedy, Registrar

St. Francis Episcopal Church Financial Update

As of August 31, 2013



	Actual	Budget YTD	Difference
Total Contributions	100,153.22	100,304.72	(151.50)
Total Operating Expenses	113,753.51	117,581.41	(13,827.90)
Net Income	(13,600.29)	(17,226.69)	

*Notes: 1 Giving continues to be down,
2 Please stay current on your pledging, and give an extra \$8/week to help balance the budget.*



Grass Cutters

October 5

Joe Ruth & Chris Palmerone

October 12

Brad Hawkins & Ken Clarke

October 19 & 26

Chris Palmerone & Terry Branch

Joe Ruth & Peter Ming



Vestry Lock-Up

October 6

Suzanne Yatsko

October 13

Suzanne Yatsko

October 20

Barbera Radford

October 27

Dosh Jackson



Altar Flowers

October 6

Barbara Willis for Billy's birthday

October 13

Blanche Mouzon in loving memory of husband and son

October 20

Nancy Dula happy birthday in honor of mother and Arline Henderson

October 27

Doris Naugle in memory of my husband