

THE FAITHFUL BELL

St. Francis Episcopal Church

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*
Sarah Owens, *Lay Readers*
Bob Fullwood, *Men's Group*
Ken Clarke, *Ushers*

What Happened to the Lenten Program?

It's a common question amongst clergy this time of year - what are you doing for your Lenten Program? People will usually share one program or another as everyone else nods politely. Of course, this year when people turn to me I have to answer that we're not having one this year - so why not?

In the early Church, Lent was a time when new converts to the faith were prepared for their baptism. They would spend the forty days in intense instruction, and then be baptized on The Great Vigil of Easter. As the West became more Christianized there was less of a need for this kind of program, since most people were brought up in the faith. But the tradition remained, and people began to see Lent as a time for spiritual formation. Then Easter would come and life would go on as usual.

A few years ago I read a book by an Anglican Bishop named N.T. Wright. He noted how as Christians the defining point of our faith is the Resurrection - we are an Easter people. And yet, we would put all this energy into Lenten programs, deny ourselves a vice, and then be ready for it to be over, come Easter Sunday. He suggested rather that we should do a big Easter Program, and celebrate the new life that Jesus brings us.

It was with that sentiment in mind that I decided this year to let Lent be Lent and make a big deal out of Easter, and not just Easter Sunday, but the whole fifty days leading up to Pentecost. So instead of a Lenten Program, we're going to have an Easter Program. For those fifty days we're going to take a remarkable journey together, examining and developing our Way of Life. This will be a time to examine your priorities and set up practices to live in a distinctively Christian way. It will be a time to embrace the new life that comes from Jesus' resurrection, all the while addressing many of the priorities in our strategic plan. So please mark your calendars for the whole Easter Season, and plan on taking part in our Rule of Life Campaign.

The Rev. Fr. Conor M. Alexander
Pastor

From Our Senior Warden

Dear Friends in Christ,

Everyone welcomes the opportunity to gather together to break bread (or pancakes) together, but unfortunately snow made us cancel the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – again this year. But it is not events such as these that bind us together. It is our willingness to work, play and worship together which make us a community of faith.

The Strategic Planning Team has been planning a church-wide activity that they hope will encourage people to live out the theme “Disciples Making Disciples.” The church staff, vestry and ministry leaders will be our guides. Wait for it... begins Easter Sunday.

I encourage you to keep a Holy Lent by attending worship on Sunday mornings. Use your *Invitation Card* to start a conversation and invite a friend or neighbor to come to church. Offer them transportation if needed. Pick up a Lenten calendar in the Commons. It outlines all the activities happening at St. Francis during Lent. Fr. Conor’s sermon series presents opportunities for thought and careful consideration within ourselves. I myself am curious about “truthiness.” By the time you read this newsletter, I will know what it means. Ask me if you are curious, too.

Please attend church on Easter Sunday to celebrate our Lord’s Resurrection! Again, bring someone with you. There will be a processional (weather permitting) from the lower entrance around the parking lot into the sanctuary. The First Communion Class will celebrate their communion together. Don’t forget to bring fresh flowers to decorate the Easter Cross. This is a perfect photo opportunity! And last but not least, Sunday School will be available between services.

Oops, almost forgot... our annual community-wide Easter Egg Hunt will be March 28, 1-3 pm. Please volunteer to help set up, clean up, register guests, and provide treats and refreshments. Watch for the sign-up sheet in Sunday’s bulletins. Your help and participation is appreciated.

I consider my appointment as Senior Warden of St. Francis’ Vestry to be a great honor and privilege. I am up to the task and will try to make myself available to you should you have questions about the church. If I don’t have the answer, I will find out or point you in the right direction.

Thanking God for you,

Susan Moore

Dear Parish Family:

Lent, a time to fast from indifference, a big part of one of my recent Children's Homilies, continues to weigh heavily on me. Indifference is defined as a lack of interest or concern about something. Pope Francis was quoted on Facebook as calling his flock to a Lenten discipline of fasting from indifference towards others! I want to suggest that one could take this towards other areas in one's life such as your spiritual relationship with God. How often do we let the busyness of life come between us and our relationship with God? Lent offers each of us a time to focus on the spiritual issues which we often put aside or choose to ignore. As we have no formal Lenten program scheduled in our church, I would like to encourage each of you to come to Sunday School and make that one of your Lenten disciplines! Interact and share with the rest of your church family, remove the indifference, and replace it with the teachings of Jesus. Each Sunday our classes focus on scripture and our very personal relationship with God. And once we have arrived at the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, we can continue on with our parish focus on "Disciples Making Disciples." So my call to you would be to rid ourselves of spiritual indifference during Lent, fill that void with the love of God, and let this carry us through the 40 Days of Easter as our Church focuses on Disciples Making Disciples! See you this Sunday!

Faithfully,

Bennett

In addition to my regular Sunday Hours, I am now at the church on Wednesdays, 8am – 3pm.

The 123rd Annual Council of the Diocese of South Virginia

“Awaking and the Work of Transformation”

The Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia held its 123rd Annual Council at the Williamsburg Lodge and Convention Center in Williamsburg, Virginia, in February. The delegates for St. Francis were Barbara Taylor, past president of the ECW for the Diocese of Southern Virginia, and me (Myrna Simmons). Since it was my first time, I was very impressed with how Council was conducted in such an organized and efficient way. With all the Council documents online, the delegates were required to download all pertinent material for the sessions and review information on every candidate nominated for positions on the voting ballots.

The Rt. Rev. Herman Hollerith IV, Bishop, led the Annual Council in Friday and Saturday worship and each service provided great spiritual uplifting to all Clergy, delegates and visitors in attendance. As delegates, our goal was to vote on relevant issues, network and gather information that would further enhance our mission at St. Francis.

The keynote presenter was Diana Butler Bass, author of Christianity after Religion, who provided a model for implementing change in Christian Churches. The outline of the model was comprised of the five stages of Awakening – the Crisis of Legitimacy (What has been), Institutional Failure (Letting go), New Vision (Letting be), Communal Attraction (Letting come), and Transformation (What will be).

Stewardship Reflections were presented by delegates during Council describing effective stewardship strategies and year-round campaigns to support the 1% Diocesan Pledge. As one delegate stated, “Stewardship is an act of worship.”

There were wonderful videos that showed how the love of Jesus deeply inspired the ministries of churches in the Diocese and throughout the United States. The video “Laundry of Love” was an amazing example of Christian discipleship. A church in Venice Beach, California, invites homeless individuals to come to a neighborhood laundry one evening a month to clean their clothes for free, share a meal and worship with members of the church. The Father of the Church compared these experiences to “modern day foot-washing.” A beautiful song accompanying the video, “They will know we are Christians by our Love,” accentuated their mission of spreading God’s love.

The proposed Diocesan budget was presented, accepted and approved by vote of the Council. Currently, there are 86 Parishes, 20 Missions, one Ecumenical Community, 5 Chapels and 8 Shrines in the Diocese of Southern Virginia.

Respectfully submitted,

LEM SCHEDULE

March 1

8 am - Cheryl Blyden

10:30 am - Lynn Kennedy

(Prayers)

Terrance Cumberland

(Readings)



March 8

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Terrence Cumberland

(Prayers)

Carol McCarthy

(Readings)

March 15

8 am - Cheryl Blyden

10:30 am - John Ickes

(Prayers)

Terrence Cumberland

(Readings)

March 22

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Barbara Taylor (Prayers)

John Ickes (Readings)

March 29

8am - Cheryl Blyden

10:30 - Carol McCarthy (Prayers)

Lynn Kennedy (Readings)

ACOLYTES

March 1

- Andre- Crucifer

- Stephanie- Gospel Bearer

- Spencer- Torch Bearer

- Anna- Torch Bearer



March 8

- Emerson- Crucifer

- Rylan- Gospel Bearer

- Andre- Torch Bearer

- Trevor- Torch Bearer

March 15

- Brooklyn- Crucifer

- Andre- Gospel Bearer

- Isaiah- Torch Bearer

- Azaria- Torch Bearer

March 22

- Emerson- Crucifer

- Spencer- Gospel Bearer

- Brooklyn- Torch Bearer

- Anna- Torch Bearer

March 29

- Emerson- Crucifer

- Rylan- Gospel Bearer

- Stephanie- Torch Bearer

- Selena- Torch Bearer

Altar Guild

March 1- March 13

Jean Rudy

March 14 - March 22

Jacqueline Clarke

March 23-April 10

Ed McCarthy

~ Bible Study ~
Footsteps in Faith
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 basket in rear of Nave.

Thank you in advance, Doris Naugle & Elinor Ruth

Upcoming Schedule

March 2-5 Social Service
March 23 Open Door

Upcoming Events

St. Francis Episcopal Church
509 S. Rosemont Rd., Virginia Beach 23452



Community Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 28 • 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Refreshments
for Children
and Adults

FREE and OPEN
to ALL children
ages 1 to 10 years

Children must be
accompanied by a parent,
grandparent or guardian.
Registration required at the
event for participation in
the Egg Hunt and activities.

Call the church office
for more details, 757-340-6884

For your special someone!



Easter Corsages

All corsages designed with
baby's breath, greenery, bow and pin.
Carnation color choices:
all white, all pink or all lavender.
Your choice of 4 styles.
Look for order forms in the Commons.
Last day to order, Sunday, March 8.
Corsages will be available Easter Sunday
morning at 8 & 10 am.
All proceeds benefit ECW outreach.



The 6th Annual Acolyte Festival
April 24-25, 2015
St. Andrew's By the Sea, Nags
Head

Attention all Acolytes: St. Andrew's by the Sea is hosting an Acolyte Festival in April down in the Outer Banks. The **cost** is \$20. If you are interested in going, please sign up in the Commons!

Scholarship Committee

Bake sale on Sunday March 8! Please bring your money because there will be a lot of homemade goodies. The sale will start after

ECW

Ladies- Mark your calendars for the next ECW meeting on March 14. We are planning to play bingo after the meeting.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Volunteers needed! The 2nd week of each month.



Let's
totally
fill our
cross
with
flowers
this
Easter!
We can
do this!

The Easter Cross

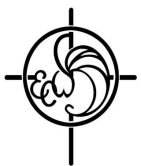
Please help St. Francis revive a beautiful tradition - the Easter Cross!

Bring flowers Easter Sunday morning to the

10:30 am worship service.

Sunday school children and willing adults will process into the Sanctuary at 10:30 am with their flowers.

This is a perfect photo opportunity! Don't forget your camera!!



Vestry Meeting Summary of Action

Vestry Meeting—January 21, 2015

Summary of Action

2014 Financial Review—Dosh Jackson

For 2014, we took in \$152,616, for a budget of \$149,500. Taking into account total income and total actual expenses, we ended the year in the black by \$1,166.

2015 Budget—Dosh Jackson

Projected expenses are \$164,502; this is \$38 over budget, which makes it a break-even budget. We count on pledges and building fund pledges. The Vestry previously agreed to a 5 percent increase for Fr. Conor (his first increase) as well as increases for clerical and music staff. We will also have increased electrical expenses and an increase for our Christian Formation consultant, Bennett, who will spend one day a week at church, but there is not much increase in other expenditures.

Strategic Plan Update—Dosh Jackson

Lei Dunn will be the new member of the Strategic Planning Team. All the ministry heads gathered to put all events for the year on one calendar. This is a living document, since it will change and grow. Fr. Conor will add Feast Days; he would like ultimately to put the calendar on the website, perhaps a month at a time.

Positions and Officers for 2015—Fr. Conor

The strategic plan work will require a lot from the wardens, so we will have two Junior Wardens—the first for strategic planning and maintenance, the second primarily maintenance. The following slate of officers was accepted:

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

New Business

Diocesan Council: Myrna Simmons and Barbara Taylor are delegates; Lynn Kennedy, alternate.
Meals on Wheels: We need a new coordinator and new volunteers for a couple of hours once a month.

Lent: Susan Moore made a Lenten calendar, to be distributed and to be posted on Facebook and the website. There will be no Lenten series this year. Easter Egg Hunt tentative date is March 28.

Ministry Area Reports

Christian Formation—Susan Moore/Bennett Card

First Communion class will receive their First Communion together at the 10:30 service on Easter Sunday. Vacation Bible School 2015 will be July 20-24.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Kennedy, Registrar

Vestry Meeting Summary of Action

Vestry Meeting—February 25, 2015

Summary of Action

January Finance Report—Dosh Jackson: The report is typical for January, when the bank account is up due to holiday collections, but the month's income versus expenses result in a bit of a deficit. Pledge income was \$1,000 below budget.

Strategic Plan Update—Dosh Jackson: The Strategic Planning Team is working to implement this year's steps toward accomplishment of St. Francis' five-year plan for "Disciples Making Disciples." They have created a projected timetable of events through July beginning with the Rule of Life Campaign for the Easter Season (see below).

New Business

Rule of Life Campaign for Easter Season—Dosh Jackson: The Vestry discussed and approved the Strategic Planning Team's plan for the Rule of Life Campaign to begin on Easter Sunday. The Parish Ministry Leaders will gather soon to learn about the campaign. Then on Easter will come the explanation of the Rule of Life, the St. Francis Church Rule of Life will be presented, and guides for individuals will be introduced. In succeeding weeks, sermons will address areas of the Rule of Life, the Vestry will host question-and-answer sessions, group meetings in neighbourhoods, and a bulletin board for sharing, leading up to celebrations at Pentecost and at the end of the Christian Formation year.

Establishment of Missionary Fund—Fr. Conor: Fr. David and Deborah Hamilton, missionaries who have presented at St. Francis, have asked for our help to return to Madagascar. Fr. Conor proposed and the Vestry approved the establishment of a restricted fund for missionary support, with funds coming from fundraisers and special collections. In the future other missions might be supported.

Ministry Area Reports

Sr. Warden—Susan Moore: The Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 28. Susan will distribute flyers asking for support (time, talent, and treasure). She reminded the Vestry that ECW is selling corsages and boutonnieres for Easter.

Jr. Wardens—Ron Simmons: Ron will be handling the scheduling of use of the building for the time being.

Ed Silva: Some maintenance projects are on hold due to the weather.

Social—Karen Palmerone: Karen is investigating an update of the Parish Directory By LifeTouch, creation of welcome packets for newcomers, sign-ups for coffee hour, and holding a potluck dinner.

Outreach—Flavel Blyden: Meals on Wheels still needs additional volunteers.

Christian Formation—Susan Moore via Bennett Card: There are four children in the First Communion class. Robert Savage and Chris Palmerone are substituting in the youth Christian Formation class. Bennett is adding Wednesdays, 8 am – 3 pm, to his schedule at the church.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Kennedy, Registrar

COMING
IN
EASTER

A Disciple's Rule of Life

A Disciple's Rule of Life - Your Agenda with God

The purpose of a Rule of Life is not to add one more list of chores into your already busy life - but to add time to refresh yourself from the weariness of the world and make time for God.

If you don't set your own agenda, life will overtake you and leave no time for God. You are encouraged to create a personal Rule of Life (goals and priorities) for 2015. We anticipate that your ROL will be revisited often and modified as needed.

Once you have created your ROL devise a plan to carry it out. Here are areas for you to consider.
Do not say, "I will try." Say instead, "I will..."

1 - Worship 2 - Offering 3 - Scripture 4 - Other Spiritual Reading 5 - Ministry 6 - Sharing
Faith 7 - Confession 8 - Prayer 9 - Retreats

St. Francis Episcopal Church Financial Update

Year End, 2014

	Actual	Budget YTD	Difference
Total Contributions	161,187.54	155,500.00	5,687.54
Total Operating Expenses	160,020.77	156,214.00	3,806.77
Net Income	1,166.77	(714.00)	

Grass Cutters

Will resume in April.



Vestry Lock-Up

March 1

Karen Palmerone

March 8

Susan Moore

March 15

Ron Simmons

March 22

Ken Clarke

March 29

Dosh Jackson

Altar Flowers

March 1

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in remembrance of Jim Leavitt by Pete & Twila Leavitt.

March 8

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in honor of Ken Clarke's Birthday.

March 15

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in celebration of Matilda Beckles, Kieon Walker's and Shirley Taylor's Birthdays.

March 22

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God by Robert & Reta Savage in remembrance of Reta's mom, Hattie Maury.

March 29

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God in thanks.