

The Rainbow



March, 2023

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER *by David M. Kersey*

The Episcopal Men's Group sponsored the traditional Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 21. This was our first pancake supper since 2020, as the 2021 and 2022 suppers were cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. We had a great turnout, feeding 110 people. Although those numbers were down from the 132 people we served in 2020, we are very happy with this year's results.



The supper is a unique opportunity for the men of the church to share fellowship while preparing and serving the meal. The supper provides a chance for our church members to break bread with one another and, better yet, attracts to the church many from the community who may not otherwise visit.

Many thanks to the men who worked the dinner. The ECM expresses a special appreciation for the ECW, who kindly helped set up for and worked during the meal. As of this writing, the ECM has raised over \$1,700.00 from the ticket sales and contributions. Any men who have not turned in their money for ticket sales are encouraged to do so as soon as possible.



A Letter from Pastor Paul

Welcome to March, and spring! I always look forward to spring and this year, even more so. I'm excited to see what new life buds around the yard of my new house: what flowers pop up, what tree blossoms come out. And, yes, I'm even looking forward to cutting the grass for the first time. This is indeed a beautiful and wondrous season!



We are into our season of Lent, and I hope it is going well for everyone and that your experiences have been meaningful. Many of us are involved in practices of prayer, meditation, study, self-reflection, and sacrifice. While much of these practices are done in private, in quiet times and places, there is an opportunity to come together as a faith community each week in Lent. All are welcome to join us for chapel and devotional study. We gather in St. Margaret's Chapel at Christ Church every Wednesday in Lent, at 11 a.m. for a short service of Noonday Prayer. Afterwards, we move into the library for a reflection and study on our devotional, "Living the Way of Love." This book has short daily stories and reflections. On Wednesdays, we share what we find memorable and what makes us take pause, either from the book or the chapel service. You do not need to be following in the book to join us for reflection and study. I hope to see many of you there!

Spring is also a time of year when folks feel a little more active. We can get out and do more things. This includes going to church! Members return from winter stays away and even some Sundays we'll see new faces. I love how this community reaches out to friends and newcomers in the same way, warm and welcoming. Please, join me in welcoming all as we approach our most dear and important season of renewed life at Easter. I pray for all to have a safe and healthy, and warm, season.

Peace Always,

Pastor Paul

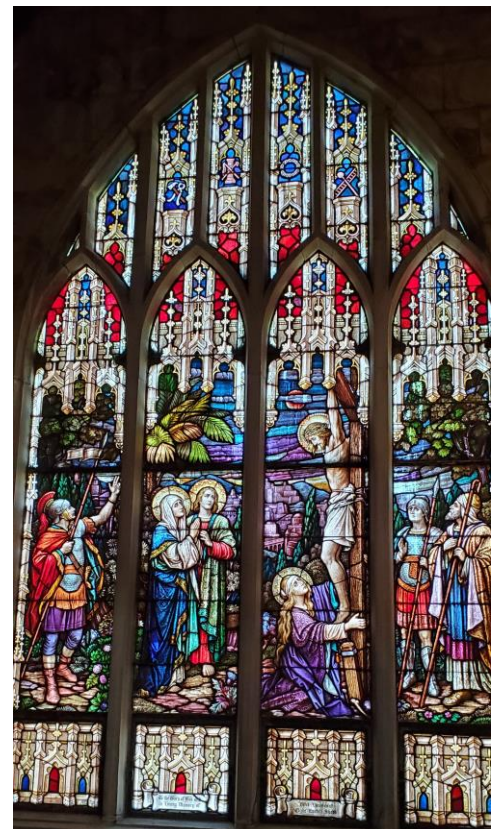
Sculpture You Can Walk Around In *by Rob Merritt*

I am teaching a Humanities class at Bluefield State University in which we study music, art, sculpture, literature, theater, dance, and ARCHITECTURE. As many students at this university live in a converted hospital, I thought it would be aesthetically meaningful and spiritually uplifting to feel what it is like to be in an architectural space such as Christ Episcopal Church.

So on February 16, I brought six students to visit our church, to feel the place and the pull of the upward thrust of the building, the ceiling like the ark of God sailing toward heaven. We heard much insightful information from Pastor Paul. As some of these students are studying engineering, they were particularly interested in looking closely at how the stones were put together. And how the stones were transported there.

We looked at the stories that the windows tell. Paul talked about the history of this church in Bluefield and church architecture in general—how we learn Biblical information by "reading" the stained-glass narratives.

In our college classroom, we had discussed the "form follows function" intention of modern architecture, and Paul nicely compared the newer



constructions of the church to the older. We got to see modern and “Gothic” architecture side-by-side.

We saw the architectural drawings of the columbarium before we visited it, so that we could understand the precise planning an architect must create before any building begins.

One student emailed me:

“Hey Dr. Merritt, just emailing in regard to the architectural trip we took today. It was awesome and the priest was very welcoming. It was beautiful how the stone was cut for the building and the glass. Super cool to look at the building in a different way.”

This kind of communication is rare.

And the student said he would like to come some day and just sit in that quiet space of the church for a while. If I do this again I would like to, after we have discussed the art and history in this sacred space, just have students sit quietly and notice the sun filtering through the stained glass, maybe listen to music, and contemplate the beauty created by humans and God.

Thank you to Pastor Paul for impressing upon these students how the form of a church building functions as a shelter for our bodies and for our souls.

Mr. Meade, Ms. Williams and Ms. Bennett,

I just wanted to let you know that I received your final report for the grant that was awarded in 2022 and the check for \$213.03 for the remainder of the grant that wasn't used. Thank you so much for being so thorough in your reporting and for the acknowledgement in your newsletter. I just wish everyone that sent me their final report was as detailed as yours! The pictures were also very helpful and let the Foundation see the benefit of your grant.

The 2023 Grant Cycle deadline is June 30, 2023 and applications are being submitted now. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Becky

Rebekah Ritter
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BIRTHDAYS:

Gladys Fortune	3/2	Peter Taylor	3/14
Debbie Hatfield	3/4	Frankie Wilkinson	3/17
Ted Lewis	3/7	John Kersey	3/25
Diane Sudduth	3/10	Liam Cole	3/28
Jessica Cole	3/12	Elizabeth Sudduth	3/29

Food Pantry by *Betty Nash*

The Food Pantry will be collecting cleaning supplies for March and April. Requested items include dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, cleaning liquids, etc.

Thanks for helping our friends at the Food Pantry!

MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2023

FOOD PANTRY FEBRUARY 16

46 bags of groceries distributed
28 kerosene vouchers handed out
Volunteers: Betty Nash, Liam Cole
Patricia and Peter Taylor

UNION MISSION REPORT

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023

77 meals prepared and served

Menu: Stauffer's Lasagna, salad, Oreos, and beverage.

Wednesday Volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa, and Patty Richardson of Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV; Betty Watson of Bluefield, VA.

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023

116 meals prepared, packaged, and served by volunteers on Wednesday

39 additional meals were distributed by Mission staff on Thursday.

Menu: BBQ on a bun, coleslaw, dessert, beverage, and baked beans with Shirley Ofsa's secret ingredients.

Volunteers: Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa, and Patty Richardson of Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV.

Charlie Helmandollar, Senior Warden of Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA; Marjorie Justice and Betty Watson of Bluefield, VA.

FELLOWSHIP HOME

A meal of pork roast and carrots, hash brown casserole, salad with pecan topping, bread, and brownies was delivered to the men at the Fellowship on Thursday, February 16.

Food Pantry Needs Volunteers! by *Mimi Merritt*

The Christ Church Food Pantry is a hardworking ministry, stocking food shelves, bagging groceries for distribution, and opening the doors of Rowley Hall every third Thursday of the month to greet those who come in need.

Vestry Outreach leader, Peter Taylor, and Evangelism leader, Betty Nash, are tireless volunteers for the Christ Church Food Pantry, and they could use some help. They would be grateful if anyone can volunteer at Food Pantry

this March 16, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., and even one hour would be appreciated. Volunteers are also needed to help pack grocery bags following Coffee Hour on March 12.

As part of our Outreach program, Food Pantry provides food assistance to those in need in the communities of Bluefield, W.Va., Bluefield, Va., and the surrounding area. Food pantry volunteers distribute a large grocery bag to people who are mostly over 60, with limited incomes. The bags include cans of meat, tuna fish, corn, and beans; boxes of pasta, cereal, and instant macaroni and cheese; and toilet paper delivered to the church from a local grocery store and then sorted and bagged by church volunteers. The food pantry distributes 40 to 60 bags of groceries a month, but in winter months this number can exceed 100.

Vestry Gathers at HEP for Retreat *by Mimi Merritt*

Christ Church Vestry members journeyed past the once booming town of Welch to the Highlands Education Project (HEP) facility in Premier on Saturday, March 4, for a retreat led by Pastor Paul.

Pastor Paul, who works each Monday at HEP as part of his employment agreement as Christ Church's pastor, was eager to meet with Vestry members to get to know us all better. He was also clearly enthusiastic to showcase the HEP facility and the program with which he's been engaged in bringing mission groups to for several years. HEP has been an outreach ministry of the Diocese of West Virginia for more than 70 years, serving McDowell County, which has made national headlines for drug-related deaths and for the reality that more than 30 percent of its 18,000 residents live at or below the national poverty level, making it the third poorest county in the U.S. In the 1950s, the county had more than 100,000 residents and a thriving economy built on thousands of coal mining jobs.

Almost all of us were able to attend – Senior Warden Becky Beckett, Junior Warden Peter Richardson, Treasurer Don Kersey, Outreach leader Peter Taylor, Evangelism leader Betty Nash, Parish Life leader Mary Catherine Williams, Communications leader Susanne Pulse, and me. I'll continue working with Susanne on Communications.

Pastor Paul led us in prayer and discussions designed to help us build our goals for the coming year, and we revisited the list of our Core Values and the list of our Hopes and Dreams developed for our church profile during our search for a new rector.

We left the Premier Park compound where the HEP facility sits among several trailer homes, owned by families including a total of 39 children, for a mid-day lunch break in Welch at the legendary Sterling Drive-In. Nearly 80 years old, the Sterling's walls are lined with framed photographs of athletes who have made the McDowell County Sports Hall of Fame. Mud-caked ATVs filled the parking lot, a sign of change that has come to a part of West Virginia once dominated by the coal industry.

Minutes of Vestry Meeting February 15, 2023

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Vestry was held in the Library, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mary Catherine Williams, Peter Taylor, Peter Richardson, Susanne Pulse, Don Kersey, and Mimi Merritt
Absent: Betty Nash, Vic Bowman, and Becky Beckett; Also present was Pastor Paul Barker.

Pastor Paul called the meeting to order and declared the presence of a quorum. Pastor Paul opened the meeting with a devotional from the intro to Living the Way of Love by Mary Sullivan. Pastor Paul is using this book for the Lenten study.

The minutes of the January 18, 2023, meeting were reviewed and upon motion of Mary Catherine Williams and second of Peter Taylor were unanimously approved.

Don Kersey presented the treasurer's report for the period ending January 31, 2023. Non-pledged income (gifts) was significantly over budget by more than \$3000. Pledged income exceeded budget by \$8000 due to church members paying for their entire pledge up front. We received a quarterly distribution from the St. Lucy fund of approximately \$13,000. Total income for the month exceeded budget by \$18,000. Total operating expenses for the month were approximately \$17,000 and was on target with the budget. Special project income was \$24,000, which is to be used to repair the flat portion of the roof. Sabbatical expense was \$6,460, which is the amount paid back to the Lily fund for unused funds from Chad's sabbatical. The operating account was approximately \$15,000 greater this month than last month for a total of \$52,000. The balance in the food pantry account exceeds \$20,000, which will enable purchase of toiletry items in addition to the normal food purchases if so desired. Endowment funds increased by more than \$90,000 due to improvements in the stock market. Peter Taylor made a motion to give a 10% cost of living raise to Emma Bennett, Terry Whittington, and Vanessa Hall. Mary Catherine Williams seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Becky Beckett is excited and happy to be Senior Warden.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden report. We have two (2) functioning telephones in the Church. Interim Rector Lou Hays and Emma Bennett entered into a two (2) year contract with Comcast for two (2) lines and two (2) phones. Other telephones can be purchased for \$200.00 each if the Vestry decides more telephones are needed. Emma's computer crashed in late autumn 2022 and a new computer was purchased. Cyber insurance is available. There was a discussion regarding technology protocol. Pastor Paul is going to call the Diocesan office to see if the Diocese has a protocol in place. Mary Catherine Williams made a motion to have the old computer wiped by Swiftnet for approximately \$30.00. The light over the driveway door is blinking.

Susanne Pulse gave the Communications report. The Rainbow continues to be published on a monthly basis and the weekly emails are continuing to be distributed. A new Parish Directory is being prepared by Don Williams. Pastor Paul suggested we look into putting the directory online by using a service such as Breeze.

Peter Taylor gave the Outreach report. Food Pantry will be held tomorrow, February 16, from 9:00 to 11:00. The shelves have been installed. The men from the Fellowship Home help stock the shelves. The Church continues to pick up the food at Grants because Grants does not deliver. It was suggested that the men from the Fellowship Home could come once a month to put groceries up at a low cost to the Church.

Paul gave the Pastor's report. The Bishop has called a diocesan staff meeting for February 27 and 28 and March 1, in Frederick, Maryland, so he will be gone those days. That affects the Wednesday Chapel service. It will be moved to Thursday, March 2. There will be two (2) Ash Wednesday services – Noon and 7:00 p.m. Russ Hatfield will perform the Noon service. Pastor Paul will invite a speaker to come to Christ Episcopal from the HopeWords seminar. Rob Merritt will bring his Humanities class to tour Christ Episcopal Church.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned and closed with a prayer by Paul.

Please Keep the Following in Your Prayers: Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Bob and Peggy Walk, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Jay Kephart, Buck Sowers, Donna Fortune, Ed and Gladys Fortune, Ivy and the Gaines Family, John Beckett, Brian, Lane, Sherry, Scot, Max, Brad, Sandi, Joan, Mike Boosier, Pam Spracher, and Barry Dinger

March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 11:00 Noonday Prayer and Lent Study	2	3	4
5 The Second Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	6	7	8 11:00 Noonday Prayer and Lent Study 4:00 Union Mission	9	10	11
12 The Third Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	13	14	15 11:00 Noonday Prayer and Lent Study 6:00 ECM Dinner 7:00 Vestry	16 9:00 Food Pantry	17	18
19 The Fourth Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	20 SAINT JOSEPH	21	22 11:00 Noonday Prayer and Lent Study 3:30 Union Mission	23	24	25 The Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin Mary
26 The Fifth Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	27	28	29 11:00 Noonday Prayer and Lent Study	30	31	

Altar Guild for March:

Elizabeth Clement and Betty Nash

Lectors and Acolyte Schedule for March:

March 5	David Kersey, Lector	Rob Merritt, Acolyte
March 12	Don Williams, Lector	Becky Kersey, Acolyte
March 19	Cameron Clement, Lector	Becky Beckett, Acolyte
March 26	Becky Beckett, Lector	Mike Lilly, Acolyte

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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To our friends and family:



March 2023

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