

The Rainbow



February, 2021

Christ Church welcomes three new members to the Vestry this year: Victor Bowman, Betty Nash, and Peter Taylor. They were gracious enough not only to agree to serve as Vestry members, but also to supply *The Rainbow* with the following information about themselves.

Victor Bowman grew up in Bluefield, before attending undergraduate and graduate school at Wake Forest University and law school at Cumberland in Birmingham, Alabama. He practiced law in North Carolina and Alabama before returning to Bluefield in 2002. Since returning to Bluefield he has been involved in disaster relief, first with the American Red Cross and now as a reservist with FEMA.



Vic has a daughter and son-in law in Colorado and a son, daughter-in law, and 9-month-old grandson in Illinois. In 2017, Lynn King and he were united in a Service of Commitment at Christ Church and he now has a stepson and daughter-in law in Ohio.

Vic belonged to Christ Church from his earliest days until leaving Bluefield after college. He was an acolyte and EYC member, and he attended Peterkin for six years during junior and senior high school. Since leaving Bluefield, he has been a member of Episcopal parishes in Winston-Salem and Greensboro, NC, and in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery, Alabama. When he returned to Bluefield, he attended St. Mary's with his mother for a period before transferring formally to Christ Church.

Vic is glad to be back at Christ Church where his Christian formation began. He is honored to be asked to serve on the vestry.

Betty Nash has always lived in the area, with the exception of four years at the University of Tennessee. She is a registered nurse and worked 43 years as a bedside nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Bluefield Regional Hospital. She teaches in the RN-to-BSN program at Bluefield State College. She has two grown children, Jessica and Jason, and a grandson, Liam. She really loves that Christ Episcopal Church has a passionate focus on helping others. The monthly Food Pantry, she says, is her favorite day!



Peter Brookins Taylor has lived in Bluefield since his early childhood. He attended Washington and Lee University where he graduated with a degree in geology. From 1981 until 2016, he worked for Marshall Miller and Associates as a professional geologist. He is a registered geologist with the state of Kentucky and is a member of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration (SME). While at Marshall Miller and Associates, Peter was Vice President of Geology, managing projects related to coal resource, reserve, and mineability evaluations for public filing documents, regional coal studies, and property management programs. These projects included collection and interpretation of geophysical data, computer mapping applications, market valuation of coal resources, and project reporting and presentation. The projects took place primarily in the central Appalachian region but also included projects in the western United States and South America.



Peter is married to Patricia Hale Taylor, who also grew up in Bluefield. Peter and Patricia have two daughters, Ashby and Virginia, and six grandchildren. They have attended church services at both Trinity Methodist and Christ Episcopal churches.

Currently, Peter is an active board member of the Community Foundation of the Virginias, an advisor to the president of Bluefield College, a board member and active volunteer at the Bluefield Union Mission, and a member of the Mercer County Bee Association. He is also Vice President of Bear Spring, LLC, and a member of the Bluefield City Board of Directors.



This Lenten season will represent a milestone in our world history, as well as our personal history. Reflecting over the past year, for me, one thought has become front and center in my mind. How did Hitler manage to dismantle the spirit of an entire nation that came close to destroying the entire world? He began with dismantling the religious systems and their leaders. Anyone the least bit familiar with Dietrich Bonhoeffer knows the story.

It is at this 1-year mark that I realize more profoundly how this spiritual demise begins within the souls of each and every one of us. And, it is at this time that I am moved to ask each of you to reflect upon your personal Covid story and the impact your journey has had in your lives.

As I review my spiritual journey over the last year, I am constantly reminded of how our need for fellowship with one another is integral for our continued walk in our secular lives, and perhaps more importantly, in our sacred lives. It has been in my fellowship with all of you that I have felt the Holy Spirit moving and directing me, until this last year. The absence of this vital source of inspiration has weighed heavily on my heart, and I hear this sentiment echoed among many fellow Christians.

It is at this time I would like to ask each of you to reflect and write about your experiences over the past year and how those experiences have impacted your lives. You can write anonymously or sign your story. The important thing here is to begin reconnecting with one another in hopes and anticipation for renewed in-person fellowship among our congregation. But even if that experience continues to be postponed, we can still have our stories to bring us closer at a time when it is entirely too easy to separate ourselves from the needs of others and fall short of the glory of God.

The guidelines for this writing are simple. Reflect and Journal your Covid year experience over the next weeks and conclude your writing with how this experience has impacted your faith. How has your faith been affected? Have you lost faith, gained faith, or both. Have you experienced a renewed purpose you may not have seen without the Covid struggle? The length of your manuscript is not important. Write as much or as little as you like. Sign your name or remain anonymous.

We will put together a desktop publication for distribution among our congregation. Please submit your writing by March 1 so that we can distribute by mid-March and have you reconnecting for Easter, April 4, 2021. Your writings can be typed out on the computer and submitted via email to arfbowling@gmail.com or handwritten/typed and submitted to Christ Episcopal Church, 200 Duhring, Bluefield, WV 24701.

Please contact me with any questions or comments you may have. I would love to hear from you...all of you. I can be reached at 540 818 2154 or the above email.

Blessings to you all,
Alyson Bowling, Chair
Worship & Spirituality Committee



Reflections by *Father Chad Slater*

Where would we be without light? Light gives us warmth, light gives us joy, light gives us hope. The month of February sees the commemoration of the Feast of the Presentation—February 2. Forty days prior was the Feast of the Nativity, or Christmas. On February 2 we celebrate the Presentation of Christ at the Temple in Jerusalem—something every good Jewish parent would have done 40 days following birth, as was the Law.

While Mary and Joseph are there to dedicate their new child to God, they have two important meetings.

The first person they run in to is Simeon. A man who had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would live to see the Messiah. Simeon lays eyes on Jesus and, as is typical in the way that Luke recounts the Gospel stories, bursts into song-- *The Song of Simeon*, or the *Nunc Dimittis*. Most of us know it from its use in Evening Prayer in its traditional translation:

Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

What our modern ears fail to hear is how radical that song actually is. Most Israelites at the time were looking for a Messiah who would trash the Gentiles, throw the Romans out, and establish Israel as the greatest nation on earth. The rescue plan for Israel would be at the expense of the rest of the earth. But that is not what Simeon foretells. God's rescue plan is for everyone "a light to enlighten the nations."

Simeon leaves them with an ominous prediction: "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed," and he says to Mary, "and a sword will pierce your own soul too." Words that surely haunted the Blessed Virgin on Calvary's hill.

And then there's Anna. There are only 10 women called prophets in the entire Bible—five in the Old Testament, and five in the New. Of the five in the New Testament, Anna is the only one called by name. Anna was an 84-year-old widow. Scripture says she prayed and fasted in the Temple night and day.

Anna doesn't launch into song like Simeon. She does something even more remarkable—she spreads the Good News. Scripture tells us that Anna "began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

Because these two figures "see" Jesus for who he is, and because of the imagery used by Simeon in his hymn, this day is often called Candlemass, or the Mass for Candles. Candles, for centuries the only real source for light outside of the sun, would be blessed on this day for use in the church or in homes.

Candles are often used as a sign of festivity and solemnity in Christian worship. Acts, Chapter 20 records that there were “many lights” at the service at Troas when Paul and other Christians gathered to break bread. Lamps and candles were in normal use in Christian worship by the 4th century, but for many years it was not customary to place candles on the altar. There was considerable controversy in the Episcopal Church during the latter part of the nineteenth century concerning the use of church ornaments, like candles. Today, well...it’s hard to find an Episcopal, or any other major mainline denomination, that doesn’t place candles on the altar.

We put them there to symbolize Christ as the “light of the world.” We use two candles to symbolize the dual nature of Christ—both fully human and fully God. We use a Paschal Candle to symbolize Christ’s unique presence during certain Feasts or events in the life of the church, such as Easter, at baptisms, and at funerals. We have a Sanctuary Lamp that symbolizes the presence of Christ in the Bread and the Wine stored in the Tabernacle next to it.

The name candle comes from the Latin *candere* meaning “to shine.” I think more than anything that is the message we are meant to take away from this festival occasion. We are supposed to shine for Christ. Like Simeon, we should shine as we praise God for the “light to enlighten the nations.” Like Anna, we have to show that light to those in this hurting world who need it most.

We are called to be the Body of Christ in this world. We are called to serve those who are less fortunate, less cared for, those most vulnerable, those for whom society has all but thrown away. We are called to love the unlovable, care for the careless, and shine as an example of the love of God in this troubled world. We are called to be walking proof of a loving God.

Brothers and Sisters, I pray that you let your light shine. I pray that you can be a beacon for hope in this lost world, filled with sin and shame. I pray that you can make your love be known through the works you do. I pray that the light that Simeon prophesied about is made manifest in you and that the zeal of Anna is always on your lips.

Amen.



As with most organizations and entities, the Church Periodical Club has faced, and will continue to face, new challenges. There were very few CPC Sunday efforts. Donations have been minimal, so we’re trying some new things. It’s time to think outside the usual box!

All donations received go toward spreading the word of Our Lord through grants. All grant information and applications can be found at www.churchperiodical.com. You can also contact me at any time.

The attached information is an online quilt raffle. Please consider buying a few tickets.

God bless you,

Debbie Ventura Dventura1021@gmail.com 304-575-2656

CPC Quilt Fundraiser

Raising funds for Ministry of the Written Word **CPC** (Church Periodical Club)

The Church Periodical Club is an independent, affiliated organization of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, dedicated to the Ministry of the Written Word, providing materials, both religious and secular, to children and adults both here and all over the world through grants.

Easy to buy your tickets.

Hawaiian Batik



Star



MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT

FOOD PANTRY

61 bags of groceries were distributed
49 kerosene vouchers were handed out
Scarves, socks and diapers were also available for the community



VESTRY MINUTES CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH – BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021

The monthly meeting of the Vestry was held on January 20, 2021. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was attended virtually, by Zoom.

Present: Rev. Slater, Linda Ammar, David Kersey, Vic Bowman, Tom Coughlin, Betty Nash, Peter Taylor, Delia Kersey and Elizabeth Clement. Absent was Alyson Bowling and Frank Dragotto.

Father Slater called the meeting to order and declared the presence of a quorum.

Father Slater opened the meeting with devotionals from the Book of Occasional Services.

Father Slater reviewed the December 31, 2020, financial statement. The actual income received for 2020 was \$197,995.00 and expenses were \$227,995.00. However, there is a discrepancy in the checking account beginning balance compared to the ending balance, taking into account the loss reflected in the financial statement. Therefore, the financial report was tabled until next meeting, giving time for reconciliation.

Father Slater then reviewed the historic policy of the church, providing the Rector with discretion to nominate the Senior Warden and Junior Warden. He then nominated Tom Coughlin to continue in the role of Junior Warden and David Kersey to serve as Senior Warden. Upon second of Linda Ammar, they were approved unanimously. Father Slater also announced that Frank Dragotto had agreed to continue in the role as parish treasurer.

Committee chairs were then appointed:

Communications-Delia Kersey
Education-Elizabeth Clement
Evangelism-Betty Nash
Outreach-Peter Taylor
Parish Life-Linda Ammar
Worship and Spirituality-Alyson Bowling
Finance-Vic Bowman

Father Slater explained that each Vestry member has or will receive a binder with all documents applicable to operating the church, including copies of the Building Endowment Fund and St. Lucie Fund agreements.

Father Slater then gave the Rector's report. The outdoor Christmas Eve service held in the adjacent parking lot was attended by 25 cars of persons. The church has received positive feedback from the 12 Days of Christmas Program posted virtually. The church will continue with the virtual services during the pandemic restrictions on in-person services, which are expected to stay in place until this Fall. Father Slater read an email he had received from a member of the congregation, expressing frustration with no "in-person" services, encouraging the Vestry to resume regular worship and opining that keeping the church closed to worship is a mistake. There was a full discussion among the members, agreeing that it is frustrating that we cannot meet "in-person" and expressing worry that staying closed may hurt the church in the long run. It was pointed out that there are many examples of the virus being spread at church services and that the physical health of the congregation is as important for the Vestry to protect, as is the spiritual health of the congregation. It was further noted that, at the present time, 9 parishioners are known to be infected with the virus. Ultimately, the Bishop has prohibited meeting "in person", based on the color map of infection rate adopted by the State of West Virginia. There was consensus among the Vestry members that we should not disobey the Bishop, but that we should resume "in person" worship as soon as it is permitted and may be done safely.

Father Slater then reviewed options for Ash Wednesday worship, acknowledging that our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper hosted by the ECM would not take place. He reported that new candles for the altar were acquired as a memorial to Joe and Kitty Graham. Dart Cox, a long-time member of St. Mary's, passed away. Father Slater had visited her shortly before her passing and her daughters were with her at the end.

There are no current upcoming events. One hundred six persons viewed the service this past Sunday, reminding us how important our virtual services have become in this trying time. We will continue to stream our services and look for other opportunities to spread the Gospel, while "in person" worship is unavailable.

There being no further business, Father Slater adjourned the meeting with prayer.



Please Keep the Following in Your Prayers: Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Lee Puckett, Sr., Mabeline & Elton Robinson, Bea Paine, Lynn Burney, Marilyn Denney, Donna Fortune, Bob and Peggy Walk, Susan Jewell, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Sarah Irwin, Janet Slager, Kelly Cox, Maxine Stevenson, Dean Farmer, Haddon Lazenby, Jack Burchette, Nick, JL, Cis Barrett, Kathy, Patsy Arnold, Randy Snider, Lane, Loraine, Sherry, Margarette Joplin, Scott Rust, Emily Broome, David, Cady, Martin, Marion Lowe, Margaret Westfall, Harry, Ben Rose, Rev. Mark Seitz, Jay Kephart, Al Marra, Rich Longworth, and all Healthcare Personnel and Frontline Workers.

February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Presentation of our Lord Online Service at 7:00 pm	3	4	5	6
7 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 10:00 Morning Prayer	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Last Sunday after the Epiphany 10:00 Morning Prayer	15	16	17 Ash Wednesday Online Service at 7:00 pm	18 9:00 Food Pantry	19	20
21 First Sunday in Lent 10:00 Morning Prayer	22	23	24 Saint Matthias the Apostle 7:00 Vestry	25	26	27
28 Second Sunday in Lent 10:00 Morning Prayer						

The following people have graciously donated flowers for the month of February:

February 7, 2021	Denise Melvin
February 14, 2021	Betty Nash and Charlie Blevins
February 21, 2021	Lent
February 28, 2021	Lent

Altar Guild for February:

Elizabeth Sudduth and Delia Kersey

BIRTHDAYS

February 3	Missy Thomas	February 13	Jim Justice	February 19	Jim Pulse
February 4	James Patrick Paine	February 16	Tyler Harris	February 22	Margaret Anne Marra
February 10	Nathaniel Taylor	February 17	John Wimmer	February 22	Rick Wilkinson
February 13	Lucy McCue Dancer	February 19	Denise Melvin	February 25	Kay Sudduth

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
200 DUHRING STREET
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



FEBRUARY 2021

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