

The Rainbow



JULY 2021

Two members of Christ Episcopal Church have been named recently as Distinguished Professors at their colleges.

Dr. Joseph Allen, Chair of the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences at Concord University, has been promoted from Professor to the rank of Distinguished Professor, becoming the first faculty member at Concord to achieve this honor. Dr. Robert Merritt, former Dean of the College of Arts and Letters and Chair of the Department of English at Bluefield College, has been named the college's first Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing.

“Dr. Joseph Allen’s promotion to become Concord’s first-ever Distinguished Professor is an honor well-deserved,” stated Dr. Edward W. Huffstetler, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, in a news release published by Concord University. “He has spent his entire career as an innovative classroom instructor, a tireless researcher and scholar, and as a faculty member dedicated to service, both to the institution as well as the profession as a whole.”



Allen was cited for a number of achievements, including his effectiveness in the classroom with continual use of new and creative pedagogical strategies and his scholarship, which is often grant-funded, including his most recent \$200,000 National Science Foundation grant awarded this year that will fund undergraduate students’ field research on the west coast of Greenland. The project, to be led by Allen, joins Concord with Montana State University in researching earthquake dynamics. Other research has been supported by grants from the American Chemical Society, WV EPSCoR, and the National Park Service. Current field sites involving students, in addition to Greenland, include the Colorado Rockies and the southern Appalachians of Virginia and West Virginia.

Allen’s promotion to Distinguished Professor is also due to his extensive service record, which includes participation and leadership in faculty committees and membership on the statewide Advisory Council of Faculty, which comprises faculty representatives who advise groups including The West Virginia Legislature, the Higher Education Policy Commission, the West Virginia Council of Community and Technical College Education, and the West Virginia Institutions of Higher Education Board of Governors.

Allen came to Concord in 1998, founded the Environmental Geosciences program in 2004, chaired the Division of Science, Mathematics, & Health from 2002-2014, and was a finalist for WV Professor of the year in 2019. Prior to his promotion to Distinguished Professor, he served as Professor of Geology in the College of Science, Mathematics, and Health.

He earned a Bachelor of Science in Geological Sciences from Michigan State University; a Master of Science in Geology from East Carolina University; and a Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from the University of Kentucky. Dr. Allen has also served as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Tennessee.

Dr. Robert Merritt became Bluefield College's first faculty member to be named to the rank of Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at the April 21 meeting of the Board of Trustees. A formal announcement will be made at the President's Convocation on August 18.



“Dr. Rob Merritt’s achievements as a creative writer have influenced Bluefield College students for over three decades, said Dr. Marshall Flowers, Vice President for Academic Affairs. “His published works have brought recognition to him, to Bluefield College and to Central Appalachia. It is an honor for Bluefield College to be the educational center where Dr. Merritt’s scholarly and creative achievements have encouraged aspiring creative student writers.”

Merritt begins his 33rd year of teaching at Bluefield College in August. For 20 years the Chair of the English Department, Dr. Merritt also served as the college’s first Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. His contributions to the college include service as the Director of the Honors Program and 30 years as the Faculty Advisor to *The Bluestone Review*, an annually produced literary and arts journal he founded in 1992. In 2013, he received the Distinguished Faculty Award.

Merritt’s poems, essays, and articles have appeared in numerous publications, and he is the author of four books, including three books of poetry, *Landscape Architects*, *The Language of Longing*, and *View from Blue-Jade Mountain*, and one critical work on poet Ezra Pound: *Early Music, and the Aesthetics of Ezra Pound*. For eight years he was a fiction judge for the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition.

Merritt was awarded a 1992 Mellon Foundation fellowship in the Humanities Faculty Scholars Program at the University of Kentucky, and in 2013 a fellowship from the Appalachian College Association to research Cross-Cultural Poetics of China and Appalachia. Grant-funded teaching fellowships have included a summer program as Visiting Professor of American Poetry in Nanjing, China, at Jiangsu Second Normal Institute, and a semester teaching international students at Imperial College in London, England. Other grant-funded projects have included multiple writing workshops and poetry readings, a visiting writers’ series, and for 10 years an online literary journal, *The Nantahala Review*, which he edited. As a longtime member and former board member of the National Association of Poetry Therapy, he has presented workshops on the healing power of writing.

Merritt came to Bluefield College in 1990. He earned a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Kentucky.

Christ Church is fortunate to have two such recognized scholars and teachers in its congregation.



How should a Christian celebrate the 4th of July?

By Father Chad Slater

The early church found itself in direct conflict with the civic government of its day. Indeed, many of the first Christian martyrs were killed for being seen as traitors to the empire. Christians at the time were notorious for their failure to put the empire's needs above their own convictions. They would not swear allegiance to the Emperor, would not serve in the army due to their pacifist stance, and did not sacrifice to the gods of the pagan people around them. This made them unusual, revolutionary, and dangerous to the civic authorities.

The very earliest Christians would have been mortified to find a Roman eagle—or any sort of national symbol—inside their place of worship. Indeed, for the early church the idea that faith and civic government could be intertwined was a truly bizarre and foreign concept. Christians were countercultural and placed their allegiance in a kingdom not of this world.

Over time, however, the Christian faith triumphed and became the state religion (again, truly a foreign concept to the early forebearers of the faith). As C.S. Lewis once pointed out, the church in all its history has rarely been able to resist the temptation to trade grace for power. In the annals of Christendom we find love and mercy in the actions of so many individuals and some of the greatest sins perpetrated in the name of God in the actions of government.

How then are we as people of faith to commemorate the founding of our temporal power? A cursory glance at Christian history and theology may suggest we are to ignore any celebration of worldly power or patriotism. Indeed, as Christ himself once asked, “How can a man serve two masters?” Surely we must eschew all ideas of pride in a country and instead focus our energy and praise on the building up on the kingdom for which we promised to serve in baptism?

Well, I'm not so sure. I think there is a healthy, Biblical, and rational way to acknowledge our nation at points in our common life together—both civilly and liturgically.

Paul writes in I Timothy, Chapter 2, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.” It is a right thing to pray for our civic leaders. The Book of Common Prayer mandates, in fact, that during the Prayers of the People we include supplications for those in civic leadership. Praying for our nation as well as our leaders is an extension of what Paul asks us to do. There is no harm in asking God's blessing on our land—as long as we are not asking for it at the expense of another.

It is, however, important to note, that we like our early Christian forebearers are to be unusual, revolutionary, and dangerous to the civic authorities. We are first and foremost Christians, and our ultimate allegiance is to God. We should be actively working to ensure that the dignity of all human beings is respected, the needy are not forgotten, and the hope of the people is not taken away. We are to remind those in authority that they, like we, must answer to a higher power. We are to call out injustice and preach virtue to those who need to be reminded.

One of the missions of the church is to connect our life in Christ with the daily work and earthly duties we possess. Our national life is intimately intertwined with who we are and how we operate. To ignore our nation or its needs is to ignore a part of ourselves. This was what Paul was speaking to when he wrote in I Timothy. To place our nation above our calling as Christians makes it an idol. Our nation needs our prayer, our witness, and our ministry.

We are, as a people of faith, to pray for and celebrate the godly heritage of our nation. We are fortunate to live in a place where we are free to express our faith and allow our convictions to guide us. It is entirely good and right for us to give thanks to God for this, ask God to continue to bestow his blessings upon us, pray for our wrongs to be made right, offer prayer of intercession for those who have died in service to our land, and give further thanks for those presently in service to our nation. This is, in every real way, the work of the church.

This Independence Day we celebrate in our parish not by flag waving and overly patriotic songs, but by being faithful to the words of instruction that Scripture provides—to pray and keep our priorities straight. The collect for the days sums up our hope, as Christians in America:

*Lord God Almighty,
in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us,
and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn:
Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace
to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Let us pray but let us never fall into the false ideology that God should bless America and no place else. Let us celebrate but let us never hold a nation in higher esteem than we hold God. Keep in mind that our nation, just as any nation would be, is a division of the family of God and on some blessed day those divisions shall cease and all our brothers and sisters around the world and throughout history will come together. There are no flags in heaven, just the banners of glory for our God. Until that day comes, may God shed his grace on this land and embolden us to be a beacon for liberty, righteousness, and peace.



Vestry Meeting

by David M. Kersey, Senior Warden

On June 3, 2021, the Vestry held a special meeting to consider the Bishop's permitted changes to rules implemented throughout the diocese to address health concerns stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. After much discussion, the Vestry adopted the permitted changes, including return of the choir and singing of hymns, while social distancing and wearing masks. Those new rules were distributed to the congregation by email, effective Sunday June 13, 2021. Unfortunately, the new rules were not uniformly followed and after the service several church members in attendance expressed concerns to Father Slater and Vestry members. These concerns ranged from anxiety over failure to comply and frustration over trying to sing while wearing a mask. Father Slater had also heard from the Bishop, who regularly views our service on-line. Father Slater accepted full responsibility for the noncompliance and frustration and apologized to the Vestry. The Vestry and Father Slater engaged in a long and full discussion about those issues and how to address the concerns raised from the congregation and the Bishop. Above all, it was agreed that all persons who attend our services must feel safe and should be assured that the rules established for worship in this time of pandemic will be followed for everyone's benefit. Father Slater suggested the following as revisions to the newly adopted rules-(1) as long as masks are required to be worn during the service, we will not have a choir (2) no hymns will be sung during the service, though

instrumental music will still be used, as it has been since resuming in-person worship (3) we will sing the service music, while wearing our masks. Father Slater will remind attendees during the service about the mask mandate and there will be prompts placed in the bulletin, prior to the service music, reminding that masks must not be removed for singing. Peter Richardson made a motion to adopt Father Slater's recommended changes to our coronavirus rules, which motion was seconded by Peter Taylor. After additional discussion, the Vestry voted unanimously to approve the motion. The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Father Slater.

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Christ Episcopal Church-Bluefield Vestry was held in Rowley Hall, on June 16, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. Social distancing was observed.

Present:: Victor Bowman, Peter Richardson, Peter Taylor, Linda Ammar, Betty Nash, Elizabeth Clement, David Kersey, Delia Kersey, Father Slater

Absent: Alyson Bowling

After the declaration of a quorum, the meeting was opened with a prayer for the parish.

The treasurer's report was given by Vic Bowman. The church's finances are currently stable. We have received 65% of the expected annual income. The endowment funds' balances continue to increase from investment gains. The operating account is down from last month, but that reflects ordinary fluctuation in cash flow. The extra ordinary expenses have already been discussed in prior meetings and there are no new anomalies reflected in the current statements. Upon motion of Betty Nash and second of Linda Ammar, the treasurer's report was unanimously accepted.

David Kersey gave the Senior Warden's report. Our capital campaign for the heating/cooling system has been very successful, to date. The church has received donations from 23 individuals/families, totaling \$16,359.11. The 1912 Foundation also gave \$15,000 to the project, making the total of private gifts \$31,359.11. The church has received \$10,996.81 from the Building Endowment Fund, as undistributed income reimbursable to the church, unused from the prior two years. The first St. Lucy Fund withdrawal was \$12,803.69, making the total funds currently on hand \$55,159.61, for the quoted project cost of \$91,800. The Vestry has committed the second and third quarter St. Lucy Fund withdrawals to the project and expects those two withdrawals to be close to the first, which would add \$25,600 to the project cost and leave a current deficit of \$11,040.39. After expressing thanks for the generosity of the congregation, the Vestry decided to wait to begin the DeBottis Fund withdrawal process, as the balance of the project funding will not be needed before this fall and other gifts may be made in the interim.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden's report. The church sent the initial payment for the heating/cooling project of \$45,900 to S & R Refrigeration. Later, it was learned that Mitsubishi did not have all the necessary units and other components available to ship to S & R and that S & R does not have to pay Mitsubishi until all the hardware is available for shipment. After discussion with S & R, it was decided that S & R would return the uncashed check for the initial installment and that the church would place and hold those funds in the RJ account until S & R advises that the hardware is ready to be shipped. Peter and Father Slater had done a walk through the church to determine other building/grounds needs. A meeting of the Building and Grounds committee will be held after the service on Sunday July 11 to discuss the items that need to be addressed. The piscina in the sacristy had been stopped up, but has been fixed by Wolfgang the plumber.

Committee Reports-

Communications-Delia Kersey-The rainbow continues to be produced with the kind and appreciated assistance of Susanne Pulse and Mimi Merritt.

Education-Elizabeth Clement-No report, but Elizabeth was again recognized for all her good work during this difficult time.

Evangelism-Betty Nash-Guest/visitor cards will be returned to the pews. Sometime this summer, Father Slater plans to host a get together for more recent members to help reacquaint them with the church, after the difficulties created in worship due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Finance-Vic Bowman-Already covered in the treasurer's report.

Outreach-Peter Taylor-Food pantry will be held tomorrow, Thursday June 17. Attendance and need are expected to rise, as government coronavirus money peters out. Betty Nash and Charlie Blevins were recognized for all their good efforts in helping with the food pantry. Father Slater advised that the Diocese of Southwest Virginia has made two donations of approximately \$500 each to the food pantry, which reflect some of the assets of St. Mary's, paid to the diocese when that church closed.

Parish Life-Linda Ammar-We have held coffee hour after the Sunday service for the past four weeks. In keeping with guidelines established by the Bishop, they have been held outside on the sidewalk on Tazewell Street with social distancing observed. Linda and Mary Catherine Williams have hosted each time, which includes taking tables and chairs outside each week. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up for that ministry. The picnic is scheduled for August 29, at the City Park. For the present, we will plan for the traditional potluck model, subject to change depending on then effective coronavirus pandemic guidelines. Father Slater advised that he had received a request to hold coffee hour in the Columbarium space. After a full discussion, the vestry agreed that current coronavirus guidelines could not be observed in that small space and determined that coffee hour shall continue to be held outside on Tazewell Street, or in event of inclement weather, inside Rowley hall, until further notice.

Father Slater gave the Rector's report. The results of the parish-wide survey were distributed in notebook format to the vestry members. Father Slater requested the members to read and digest the results in preparation for analysis and discussion at the August meeting. He will place sign up sheets for committees on the railing in the narthex this week. He recommended at least 3 members for each committee and encouraged committee chairs to seek out individuals, if enough members do not sign up.

Bill Denny's mother passed away this week and Father Slater asked the members to keep Bill and his family in their prayers.

Father Slater has ordered age appropriate "camp in a box" materials from the diocese, in lieu of in person camping at Peterkin this year. He will pick those up this week, while he is in Charleston.

Father Slater will be on vacation with his family from July 10 thru 17. It was agreed that we will have morning prayer for the Sunday he is absent, rather than seek a supply priest.

Diocesan Convention will be held in Morgantown, September 24 and 25. Susanne Pulse and Mimi Merritt are our delegates. The convention will be electing the new Bishop.

Episcopal Relief and Development Fund mike boxes have been distributed. They will be collected in September. Additional boxes are available, if needed.



Our Prayer List for July: Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Lee Puckett, Sr., Mabeline Robinson, Bea Paine, Lynn Burney, Donna Fortune, Bob and Peggy Walk, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Sarah Irwin, Janet Slager, Kelly Cox, Dean Farmer, Haddon Lazenby, Jack Burchette, Nick, JL, Cis Barrett, Kathy, Randy Snider, Lane, Loraine, Sherry, Margarette Joplin, Emily Broome, David, Cady, Martin, Marion Lowe, Harry, Ben Rose, Jay Kephart, Rick Longworth, Jack, Sheri, Dan, Kathy, Hamilton Jones, Kensley, John, Emily, Kathleen Nieman, Alan Riggins, Brenda Payne, Buck and Louisa Sowers, Elizabeth Kane, Betty, Matt, Eric, and the Denny family

July 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Independence Day Sixth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Morning Prayer Building & Grounds Meeting after Church	12	13	14	15 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Food Pantry	16	17
18 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	19	20	21	22 Saint Mary Magdalene	23	24
25 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	26 Saint James the Apostle	27	28	29 St. Mary and St. Martha of Bethany	30	31

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

July 4, 2021 John and Delia Kersey
 July 11, 2021 the Marra and Fortune families
 July 18, 2021 Mike and Kay Sudduth
 July 25, 2021 David and Debbie Faber

Altar Guild for July:

Linda Thomas and Chris Justice

Birthdays:

July 1 Wendy Harris	July 13 Bonnie Taylor	July 20 Phillip Morgan
July 2 William Clement	July 15 Bill Davis	July 22 Jennifer Slater
July 3 Erin Elam Simon	July 17 David Hardin	July 23 Kray Davis Luxbacher
July 9 Louisa Sowers	July 18 Don Harris	July 25 Becky Steorts
July 10 Catherine Wimmer-Anderson	July 18 Caroline Wilkinson	July 26 Joe Allen
July 11 Ben Faulkner	July 19 Tripper Thomas	July 28 Shirley Ofsa
July 13 Peter Richardson	July 20 John Beckett	July 28 Mike Sudduth

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
200 DUHRING STREET
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



JULY 2021

Editor in Chief: Delia Kersey

Editor: Susanne Pulse (susannepulse@gmail.com)

Copy Editor: Mimi Merritt

Contributors: Linda Ammar, Bea Paine, Mimi Merritt

Graphic Design: Susanne Pulse