

The Spire

Newsletter of the Church of the Resurrection
A Welcoming and Inclusive Faith Community
of The Episcopal Church

May/June 2011

2280 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311



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Gavin Ritchie

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Message from the Rector

A Lens into Our Experience

This is my penultimate letter to you as your Rector. It's getting very close to my retirement and what will be my parting words to you...I'll have a lot to say about my gratitude.

As I write this I have completed the first set of three years of training in what is commonly known as "Family Systems Theory." This was developed by Dr. Murray Bowen, a psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry. Let me quote from one of his most esteemed students, Roberta Gilbert:

"(Dr. Bowen's) goal was to bring the study of the human into accepted science... A superior life course, according to this theory, is based on thinking rather than feelings, which come and go. The human's best thinking, according to this theory, is based on fact, not feeling, though feelings are given a great deal of attention. The theory is based on the family as the emotional unit, not the individual, though the individual is most important to the theory."

"Thinking *systems*, for most people, is a very different way of thinking. The brain must literally be retrained. Rather than thinking 'cause and effect,' so automatic to most of us (both by nature and by education), one looks for the *interrelations of the group*." "In this new way of thinking, no one is to blame or at fault. Rather, the emotional system itself operates as a unit, each one affecting all the other members."

For me, Anne, these insights are astounding. I identify as an ENFJ according to the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. I am by nature a "feeling" type. This is neither good nor bad; only one type of description. What it means is that I by nature lead off with an emotional response, which is helpful in some circumstances; disastrous in others.

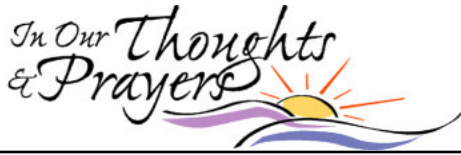
Bowen theory teaches that we have *choices* in our response. It doesn't *always* have to be feeling-based. We can actually *think* about our initiatives, how we'll time them, how we'll calibrate them, how we'll express them. And then how we'll respond to the responses we receive in return. This insight is *especially* relevant in relation to the closest people to us.

I sure wish I knew about this thirty-three years ago when I began ordained ministry, and *certainly* sixteen years ago when I arrived at Resurrection. I invite anyone interested in these concepts to join me for a forum on Bowen's ideas on Sunday, May 29th. It may launch you, as it has me, into an entirely new world of understanding life and possibility. That's what I call Resurrection!

Happy Great Fifty Days of Easter,
Anne+

Inside this Issue

Thoughts & Prayers	2
Parish Events	2
Message from Wardens	3
Outreach Corner	3
Calendar	4
Spire Society	4
Birthdays	5
Budget Summary	5
Shrine Mont	5
Sunday Schedules	6
Resurrection Art	6
Sermons	7-9
Pets & Parishioners	10
RCC News	10
Shrine Mont Reg. Form	11
Church School Quilt	12



PARISH EVENTS

Please keep in your prayers:

- Ryan & Veronica Byrnes
- Irene Cole
- Lea Fowlie
- Carlin Gray
- Kevin Kohler
- Angela Samela
- Susan Simmons
- Will Williams
- Nancy & Joe Willis
- Warrick Wolf

Names on the Prayer List are shown for one month, unless you let us know they should be retained for longer.

Pray for those currently serving in the armed services around the world:

- Cody Bergen
- Marcia Bossardt
- Stephanie Butler
- Mark Cullinane
- John Ellerbe
- Juanita Gibbons
- Amanda Graham
- Jason Hull
- Mark Latham
- Matt Lussenhop
- Dan Luster
- Darius Malveaux
- Thomas Moore
- Meera & Michael Noe
- Eric Wiese

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of those who have died:

- Jane Williams
- Lisa Draucker


COME AND WORSHIP WITH A TOUCH OF JAZZ!
Jazz Service at Resurrection on Sunday, **May 22** featuring Resurrection's Choir; you, the congregation; and the Rick Whitehead Trio.
 Continue the joy of the Easter season with uplifting music!

3rd Annual GREAT COME AND CLEAN IT UP DAY

Last month we cleaned up the Memorial Garden for Easter. (Thank you everyone who helped!) This month, on Saturday, May 21, we're gonna clean EVERYWHERE!! Bring your garden tools and friends. Breakfast and lunch will be served. Look for the sign-up sheet outside the parish office.



CELEBRATE
 Sunday, May 15, will be Chase Danford's last Sunday with us. He graduates from the Seminary on May 19. There will be a reception in his honor following the 10:00 service. Please come and bid him a fond farewell as we celebrate his time with us and his opportunities for the future.



SAVE THE DATE
Sunday, June 25
 For a special service and reception to honor and congratulate Anne Ritchie on her retirement.
 Join us in recognizing Anne for her sixteen years as Rector of the Church of the Resurrection and to wish her well as she pursues new ministries and opportunities.

Warden's Message

Dear Friends,

The Vestry welcomed the opportunity to visit with many of you during the March 27 Forum about the search process for an Interim Rector and Rector as well as a number of other activities taking place at Resurrection. The next conversation with the Vestry will be held during the June 12 Forum.

Lent and Holy Week led us on a journey of reflection, walking to Jerusalem with Jesus, and experiencing the joyful alleluias of Easter. The Vestry is now refocusing its attention on the selection of an Interim Rector. The Diocesan office is providing names of candidates interested in serving as our Interim Rector, and the Vestry has considered the questions that will be asked of those candidates. The Vestry subcommittee of Ken Gay, Senior Warden; Betsy Faga, Junior Warden; Linda Goff, Robert Reeves, and Martha Swearingen has reviewed four resumes, began in-person or telephone interviews, and will recommend two candidates who will be interviewed in person by the entire Vestry. We continue to plan to have an Interim Rector sharing her/his first Sunday with us on July 3.

The Vestry held a special meeting on April 14 to begin the process of naming members to the Parish Profile and Search Committees. The objective is to have approximately 9 members for the Profile Committee and 11 members for the Search Committee with several members serving on both committees to ensure continuity. Parishioners were nominated by vestry members to serve on the committees. The Vestry came to consensus about the persons the Senior Warden will ask to serve on the committees. The results of those contacts will be brought back to the Vestry for consideration and final approval of the make-up of the committees.

We thank God for his continual presence during our Vestry and Parish family discussions.

Peace and Blessings,

Ken Gay
Senior Warden

Betsy Faga
Junior Warden

OUTREACH CORNER

Resurrection Reaching Out to Help Others

A scoop of salt, a scoop of potassium, a scoop of baking soda, two scoops of sugar sealed in a plastic bag, when added to potable water, offer life-saving rehydration to those in danger of death from dehydration around the world. Nine Resurrection parishioners recently joined other volunteers in putting these oral rehydration therapy kits together at the Beth El Hebrew Congregation. The many hands that assembled over several days ended up making 20,292 kits that will be sent wherever needed. Last year's quantity was sent to Haiti. Thanks to Maureen Bryant, Betsy Faga, Lea Fowlie, Judy Isaacs, Jan Kester, Kathleen O'Malley, Mary Turner, Beth Wiggers, and Frances Williamson for participating in this ministry.

May

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
15 4 Easter 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist 11:20 am – Coffee and Forum 2:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave) 7:00 pm – Focus Inn	16 7:30 pm - Vestry Meeting (Library) 7:30pm - Circle of Prayer (Rector's Office)	17 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)	18 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist (Library) 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	19 6:00 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	20 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	21
22 – 5 Easter 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist 11:20 am – Coffee and Forum 2:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	23 7:30pm - Circle of Prayer (Library) 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	24 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Bible	25 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist (Library) 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA	26 6:00 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Healing Ministers (Library)	27 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	28 8:00 am - ALIVE! Food Distribution
29 6 Easter 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist, with healing 11:20 am – Coffee and Forum 2:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	30 Memorial Day Office Closed	31 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Bible Discussion (Library) Spire articles due	1 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist (Library) 7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)	2 6:00 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	3 SHRINE MONT 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida Youth Service (Nave)	4 SHRINE MONT
5 7 Easter 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist 11:20 am – Coffee and Forum 2:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave) SHRINE MONT	6 7:30pm - Circle of Prayer (Library) 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	7 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Bible	8 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist (Library) 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	9 6:00 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	10 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	11
12 PENTECOST 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist 11:20 am – Coffee and Forum 2:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	13 7:30pm - Circle of Prayer (Library) 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	14 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Bible Discussion (Library)	15 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist (Library) 7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	16 6:00 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	17 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	18

THE SPIRE SOCIETY

The Spire Society continues to grow! Society members now include Kate Donnell, Betsy Faga, Ken Gay, Anne Ritchie, and Bob Stufflebeam.

Please let us know if you have remembered Church of the Resurrection in your will. If you haven't, please consider this lasting way to support our ministry and mission.

BIRTHDAYS

If we have not listed your birthday, please contact the parish office, and we will add it to our records.

5/04 Letitia John-Williams
 5/05 Valorie Lee
 5/05 Bob Naismith
 5/06 Donita Allen
 5/08 Kelly DeMeester
 5/09 Samuel Merife
 5/10 Jason Thurgood
 5/11 Florence Zalwango
 5/14 Beelan Yonas
 5/14 Jacqueline Wiemeri
 5/16 Harold Blackford
 5/19 Bob Noe
 5/19 Mary Moore
 5/26 Clyde Iazzetta
 5/28 Patricia Bleicher
 5/29 Gail Collins
 5/29 Elizabeth Broderick
 5/30 Jacki Bracewell
 5/31 Barbara Bishop
 6/01 Logan Grady
 6/07 Frances Williamson
 6/07 Marian Stevens
 6/08 Susan Reinhold
 6/10 Edna Noe

2011 Vital Statistics

2011 Budget \$277,463

Income

Budget: (Jan.-Apr.) \$ 92,488
 Actual: (Jan.-Apr.) 77,121
 Over/UNDER Budget: (15,367)

Expenses

Expenses: (Jan.-Apr.) \$ 85,167
 Collections (Jan.-Apr.) 77,121
 Difference (expenditures
OVER collections): 8,046

“Thank you” to each of you for your generosity and continual support in helping to meet our budget for 2011.

Attendance

April 3	101
April 10	100
Palm Sunday	136
Maundy Thursday	46
Good Friday	45
Easter Even	41
Easter Day	181
May 1	88
May 8	116

Church of the Resurrection

Vestry 2011

Kenneth Gay, *Senior Warden*
 Betsy Faga, *Junior Warden*

Linda Goff
 Kathy Graham
 Milford John-Williams, Jr.

Terry Kester
 Michelle McBride

Gladys Payne

Robert Reeves

Marian Stevens

Martha Swearin gen

Bea Taylor

Kat Turner, *Register*

Frances Williamson, *Treasurer*

Shrine Mont 2010!

The 41st Annual Parish Retreat at Shrine Mont will be June 3-5, 2011.

Join our parish community at our Diocesan mountain retreat center for a weekend of good fellowship, good fun and good food.

Registration forms are available at the church and must be completed and turned in by Tuesday, May 24, 2011.

Please contact the church office if you are in need of financial assistance.

“If you've never gone, join us for this casual and meaningful weekend. If you've gone before, come again because it just keeps getting better.”

Upcoming Sunday Services

May 15, 2011 4 Easter	May 22, 2011 5 Easter	May 29, 2011 6 Easter	June 5, 2011 7 Easter	June 12, 2011 Day of Pentecost
<p>Readings: Acts 2:42-47 Psalm 23 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10 <i>Chase Danford</i> <i>preaching</i></p> <p>Readers Chase Danford (8) Lissa Reeves Eureka Vaughn Kat Turner Chalice Bearers Kat Turner Larry Dye Ushers Bob Naismith Maureen Bryant Altar Guild Lori Thurgood Orian Falkenburg Peggy Green Bea Taylor Building Supervisor David Ewing Tellers Dennis Jones Susie Jones Ruthmarie Finley Greeter Betsy Faga</p>	<p>Readings: Acts 7:55-60 Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14 <i>Anne Ritchie</i> <i>preaching</i></p> <p>Readers Terry Kester (8) Timothy Barnett Deena Jaworski Viranga Panangala Chalice Bearers Barbara Eversman Jacki Bracewell Ushers Carl Hull Frances Williamson Altar Guild Judy Isaacs Marian Stevens Gail Collins Building Supervisor Jay Madden Tellers Barbara Langford Bob Barnett Gay Colyer Greeter Kate Donnell</p>	<p>Readings: Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:7-18 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21 <i>Anne Ritchie</i> <i>preaching</i></p> <p>Readers Beth Wiggers (8) Barbara Eversman Susan Weber Kate Donnell Chalice Bearers Barbara Eversman Terry Kester Healing Ministers Barbara Bishop Terry Kester Deena Jaworski Ushers Kat Turner Tom Etter Altar Guild Lori Thurgood Lissa Reeves Jacki Bracewell Building Supervisor Will McBeth Cheryl McBeth Tellers Bob Noe Jan Kester Sandra Jackson Greeter Kate Donnell</p>	<p>Readings: Acts 1:6-14 Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 John 17:1-11</p> <p>Readers Jacki Bracewell (8) Nora Gafton Barbara Eversman Bea Taylor Chalice Bearers Barbara Eversman Bea Taylor Ushers Kat Turner Carl Hull Altar Guild Jacki Bracewell Building Supervisor Bob Barnett Tellers Elizabeth White Carl Hull Nora Gafton</p>	<p>Readings: Numbers 11:24-30 Psalm 104:25-35. 37 Acts 2:1-21 John 20:19-23 <i>Anne Ritchie</i> <i>preaching</i></p> <p>Readers Beth Wiggers (8) Beth Wiggers Deena Jaworski Lissa Reeves Chalice Bearers Barbara Eversman Terry Kester Ushers Letitia John-Williams Milford John-Williams Altar Guild Lori Thurgood Orian Thurgood Building Supervisor David Ewing Tellers Dennis Jones Susie Jones Ruthmarie Finley Greeter Beth Wiggers</p>

RESURRECTION ART

Attention to all the artists at church. We are establishing an art wall at the west end of the Parish Hall that will be used as a display area for framed art work. It can be oil or acrylic painting, watercolors or photography. The May display is photography work by Judy Isaacs. Next month Jacki Bracewell will display her photography and in July we plan to have Orian Falkenburg show her sketches of pets and other fabulous animals, including people! We plan to call our new art area the "Resurrection Art Seen".

If anyone has a better idea for a name, please let me know. Also, if you are interested in showing you work, contact Judy Isaacs or Jane at the church office and get your name on the calendar. Judy Isaacs @ 703/578-3678

SERMONS

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

*A homily for Maundy Thursday, April 21, 2011 by
the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie*

This night we celebrate Jesus' institution of what we call Holy Communion; Mass; the Holy Eucharist. Three of our four Gospels describe the event as Jesus takes bread, then wine, and reinterprets them as his body and blood, giving the church community a way of not only remembering Jesus, but actually *experiencing* Jesus.

John's version of that last night gives "Maundy Thursday" its name. "Maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum*, which means command. (Our English word "mandate" has the same root.) In John's Gospel Jesus says "I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you... By this shall the world know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another."

It's important to remember that the love the New Testament is talking about is *agape* love. *Agape* has nothing to do with having warm and fuzzy feelings toward another. *Agape* love means caring for someone without expecting anything back. *Agape* love is the kind of love God has for us. In John's Gospel, Jesus commands us to care for one another in the same way.

Jesus seems to link our showing *agape* with feeling peace; he tells his disciples "Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you." Jesus makes this connection: as we show *agape* love we find peace.

Let's test that connection. What happens when we *don't* show *agape* love? When we refuse to love *or* love with strings attached?

When we love with strings attached, with expectations, we keep our focus squarely on *ourselves*. We're caught up with what we want, what we demand, what we feel we *deserve*. We obsess over our own feelings and become controlled by them. This is complicated by our feelings being determined by outside events; if things go to our liking, we're ecstatic. If they do not, we're devastated. When we love with strings attached we put ourselves on an emotional roller coaster that we can't get off. That doesn't sound very peace-full.

What about *agape* love? When we love *without* expectations, we're free. We discover a capacity within ourselves that is not regulated by outside events, outside forces. Instead of bouncing between ecstasy and despair, we stand on level emotional ground. We're in touch with a limitless source of love, not only for others, but for ourselves. Believers call that source *God*.

Tonight, as we gather around the altar rail to receive the bread and wine we remember the love Jesus had and has for us. Let's also remember our call to love one another as he loves us, to love without expectation; to love one another with the love that comes from *God*. As we do, we'll know the *peace* of God, peace that passes all understanding.

INTO THE TOMB

*An Easter sermon by
the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie
on April 24, 2011, based on John 20:1-31.*

Have you ever felt dead? Used up by life, ruined by circumstance? Angry, bitter, depressed?

That's a grim way to launch an Easter sermon, I know. But it's just how I imagine Mary Magdalen felt. And, truth be told, life for *all* of us is pretty challenging. There are so many disappointments and defeats. Jesus knew pain and defeat, just like us. But then there's resurrection -- a reality I firmly believe not only happened to Jesus, but something that *happens for us*. Let's look at Jesus' death, as described in the Gospel of John.

As Jesus is dying, he entrusts his mother to the care of his beloved disciple, John. His last words are simple: "It is finished." Joseph of Arimathea, a rich Pharisee, buries Jesus in his own unused tomb. Joseph anoints Jesus' body and lays him to rest. End of story. At least... that *would* have been the end of the story...

But *then* Mary Magdalen – by the way, *not* a sinner, but chief among the disciples – Mary Magdalen comes to visit the tomb. Finding it empty, she runs back to the other disciples. Peter and the unnamed "beloved" disciple race back to the tomb. They go in, notice the rolled-up linen wrappings and see for themselves that the body of Jesus is not there.

So what happens *then*? Do they investigate? Do they ask questions? *No*. Peter and John simply go home. They do *nothing*. The Evangelist explains their behavior by saying “as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.” Sounds to *me* like running away.

But Mary refuses to leave the scene. Mary Magdalen *lingers* at the tomb, and because she does, she is graced by an encounter with two angels. And then she has the most wonderful experience of all: she meets again her beloved teacher, her “*Rabbouni*.”

At first, thinking rationally, she guesses that he must be the gardener. When he asks why she is weeping, Mary Magdalen tells him her deepest concern: “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Mary is ready to do whatever it takes to care for Jesus, even though she believes that he is dead.

Then Jesus says it; the crucified and risen Jesus calls her by name: “*Mary!*” At that very moment, she recognizes Jesus. Soon Mary Magdalen rushes back to the other disciples to let them know that Jesus is as alive as they are, as present and loving as ever.

They will not understand immediately. They will not understand until they have been willing to have their *own* encounters with the risen Lord.

Two very different responses to grief. Two very different outcomes. How like our own experience.

I once heard about two brothers. When their father died at a fairly old age *they* had two very different reactions. The older just wanted to get on with his life. He had no interest in holding a memorial service for his father or even talking about him, except to focus on his father’s many shortcomings. He would complain to his younger brother,

“He never really cared about me. Why should I care about him now?” His attitude didn’t change as time went by except that he grew more and more resentful. He couldn’t seem to let go of his father’s deficiencies. Whenever his brother invited him into a discussion about their father, he simply waved him away.

But the younger brother felt differently. He knew their father wasn’t perfect, but he focused on the gifts he had been given. He found a way to grieve without his brother’s participation. He allowed himself to miss his Dad.

Over the years the younger son felt a continuing, loving presence. His father *and* his mother weren’t dead for him at all. His father and mother were *alive* in his memories, offering their presence and their *love*.

I’m sad to say that his older brother never got it. He was just too afraid to admit the importance of his parents and the love they had for him. And the love he had for *them*.

This Easter story reflects a choice we have to make. Do we run away from resurrection, like Peter and John? Like the older brother in my story? Or do we stay near the tomb, close to our grief, willing to let sorrow open us to the depth of our caring? Are we willing to listen and hear ourselves called *through our grief* by name?

The best way to know the risen Christ as Mary Magdalen did is to *invite him into the empty tombs of our lives*. It’s not *his* tomb we need to enter, but our *own*. As we face into the disappointments and sorrows of our life, we encounter the risen Christ, holding us up, bringing a chance to live and love *again*.

A blessed Easter to you all!

RECOGNIZING JESUS

A sermon preached by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie on May 8, 2011, the Third Sunday of Easter, based on Saint Luke 24:13-35.

If you walk past the third, higher parking lot beyond the Spire, you’ll reach our Resurrection Memorial Garden. Many parishioners never walk over to see what is there. But what is there is worth seeing: a wonderful sculpture, depicting today’s Resurrection story. It was sculpted by the Reverend Craig Biddle in honor of Jim Green, our founding Rector. This was Jim’s favorite resurrection story, as it is mine.

The sculpture shows Jesus walking behind a married couple, making their way home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They do not yet know that it is Jesus; in fact they think this stranger rather clueless. He doesn’t seem to know the horrific events that have just transpired in Jerusalem. But what the stranger *does* know is his Scripture; as Luke writes, “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.”

When the couple reaches their home, the stranger makes as if to go on, but they urge him to join them for the evening: “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” At the supper table, the stranger takes on the role of host, and in typical Eucharistic action he takes the bread, blesses, breaks and gives it. That’s when their eyes are opened; but as soon as they recognize the risen Jesus, he vanishes. Despite the lateness of the hour, they rush the seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the others. By the time they reach them, the other disciples have had their *own* experience of the risen Lord.

There are some important concepts embedded in this story. One is that the risen Christ does not force himself on us. It’s up to us to invite him into our hearts. *We* need to say, like the couple, “Jesus, stay with us... stay with me!”

Another is how often we recognize the presence of God in *retrospect* rather than in the moment. Just like the couple, who said to themselves “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” So often it is only in looking back and reflecting on our experience that we understand its meaning.

What this story means to me is that God, the risen Christ, is walking alongside us, available to us at all times and in all places. When we listen to what he has to say, we hear our lives interpreted and feel our resolve strengthened. That’s the message Luke the Evangelist wanted to convey. But like that couple walking along the road, it can be very difficult to recognize the reality of God.

Our fast-paced, technologically distracting way of life compounds the difficulty.

We’re being trained to jump from one task to another, always in a reactive mode. Emails, tweets and facebook messages assault us mercilessly. There’s no time to catch our breath or to take stock of what we’re trying to do or why. We lose touch with our feelings, our desires and aspirations, and we lose touch with God.

How do we *look* for God? Every time we renew our Baptismal covenant we promise to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself” - perhaps the hardest promise to keep! Looking down on other people, focusing on *other* people’s flaws just comes so naturally.

I think of C. S. Lewis’ wonderful send-up of conventional religion, *The Screwtape Letters*. Here is an excerpt featuring an older devil, Screwtape, advising his nephew, wannabe devil Wormwood. He instructs Wormwood how to pervert the churchgoing experience:

When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbors. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like “the body of Christ” and the actual faces in the next pew... Provided that any of those neighbours sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous...

Judging others by their appearance, or by their past comments or political position is a great way to miss the presence of God. Instead we *look* for the negative and we *find* it.

Unfortunately, when we pre-judge people we cannot listen to insights that may actually be valuable! Even when we disagree with what they have to say we may benefit by having our own opinions clarified. And there is rarely only one valid side of an issue. As physicist and philosopher Nils Bohr famously observed, “The opposite of a great truth is not a lie. The opposite of a

great truth is another truth.” That’s the mystery of paradox, which itself is a pathway to the presence of God.

Perhaps even more challenging is experiencing God, the risen Christ, within *ourselves*. Remember that couple on the road to Emmaus? They already knew the Scriptures; they had memorized them from childhood. But they weren’t able to interpret and apply them to their own experience. The risen Christ came alongside and helped them understand.

There is so much we discount and diminish about ourselves. And I strongly suspect this isn’t just *me*. Over almost thirty-three years of ordained ministry, I believe our besetting sin is not arrogance as much as it is self-demeaning, self-diminishment. That’s why churches emphasizing guilt and sin, hell and damnation have such success – at least on the surface. Churchgoers are already willing to admit shortcomings. We say the Confession every week.

It’s harder sometimes for us to believe the Absolution. Just think about it: every week we ritually confess our shortcomings and God grants us a new start. Of course, it’s up to us to look critically at behavior that continues to harm others or ourselves. But God’s forgiveness and love are guaranteed. *Guaranteed*.

Our challenge is to love and care for ourselves one-trillionth as much as God loves us. The Gospel affirms that each one of us here in this church and each one of us outside these walls are worthy, part of the beloved community that God wills for the world. *We must not sell ourselves short. All of us* are worthy of all God’s love. *Each* of us is God’s child.

That’s why we’re here. We’re here to learn to *recognize* that Stranger who appears, unannounced, on the highways of our experience.

We’re here to be reminded how deeply we are connected to one another, and how intently we need to listen to and courageously *learn* from one another.

We’re here to be reminded of our own grace and dignity; grace and dignity that nothing and no one can ever take away.

As Jesus meets us in so many unexpected ways, let’s remember to invite him into our lives and into our hearts: “Jesus, *stay* with us. *Stay* with us now and *always*.”

PETS and PARISHIONERS: RUTHMARIE FINLEY and OLIVER

“Oliver,” maintains Ruthmarie Finley, “is MSD, my special dog.” Why? you wonder. “Simply because he is my dog. Nothing especially unusual, except he is as cute as can be.”

If, perchance, you have had the opportunity to meet this sweet little fellow, you will be able to confirm his specialness and his cuteness. Oliver Finley is a 12-year old red (and gray) dachshund. He came into Ruthmarie's life in January of 1999 and has made a significant difference ever since. “Oliver's companionship is one that I treasure dearly,” avers Ruthmarie. “He responds so readily to attention and returns affection without hesitation.”

“Although he has quieted down a bit since he has gotten older—Oliver *is* a little clown!--he still loves to play with his ball,” relates Ruthmarie. “He can become a little pest on occasion when I have company, and he thinks they are there solely to play ball with him.”

For the best confirmation of Oliver's specialness, listen to Ruthmarie's story of how her MSD came into her life. “I truly feel that God had a hand in my getting Oliver because of the convoluted way I acquired him. My previous dog (a dachshund) died only six months after I moved to Billings, MT in 1999 to be closer to my mother. It was such a devastatingly lonely feeling being in a new town and losing my companion. In the meantime, through volunteer work, I made friends with a couple who owned two dachshunds and were still in touch with the owners of their two dogs' 'parents.' In November 1998, the mama dog of my friends' two dachshunds was let out in the yard. After a goodly time, the owners thought it strange that the dog didn't want to come back in. They discovered that their dog had delivered a little puppy who at that point was lying out there in the snow. They hadn't had the slightest notion that the dog was expecting, so it was quite a surprise (even though mama Cinnabon and papa Sir Stimpie cohabited and were not 'fixed'). That's how Oliver came into the world, and it was at the insistence of my friends that I needed 'a man in my life' in the form of this little puppy. I balked at first, but my friend got her way; one look at Oliver and I was hooked. We'll always be special pals, together and in memory.”



Look for “Pets and Parishioners” every month in the SPIRE. Next month: Our rector, Anne Ritchie and her Westie, Tosh. Want to be profiled with your pet? Contact Kate Donnell at kate58cgd@earthlink.net.

NEWS OF RESURRECTION CHILDREN'S CENTER

Here at RCC we are beginning the countdown for the end of our 2011-12 year. Our regular session ends right before Memorial Day. We will then meet for some summer camp fun till June 17. But the ending of our school year is always bittersweet – and that is especially so this year. June will mark the end of our 40th year serving the community's children and families and we have had great fun this year celebrating that very special anniversary. As well, the ending of this school year coincides with Anne Ritchie's last days as rector of the Church of the Resurrection. Though we will look forward to meeting and working with an interim rector, we will miss Anne, who has provided RCC with warm and thoughtful support for so many years. We send her our love and wish her much luck with all of her new endeavors – and we hope she keeps in touch with us!

To the entire Church of the Resurrection community, we send our heartfelt thanks for giving us a home and the opportunity to provide a quality preschool experience to children – and especially to those with special needs or disabilities. We couldn't do our good work without you! And we hope you all have a wonderful summer.

Shrine Mont 2011 Registration Form

Friday evening, June 3 - Sunday noon, June 5

NO PETS!

Attendee Information (Please list all who will be attending with you.)

Last Name	First Name	Relationship	Grade	Age	Male/Female

___ I am a Shrine Mont newcomer!

Street Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Daytime Telephone _____
 Evening Telephone _____
 E-Mail _____

Special Needs?

Check all that apply.

I/We need a ride to/from Shrine Mont

Stairs or walking a distance is a problem for me.

Housing needs: _____

Other special needs: _____

Category	Fees	Number Payments Attending	
Adults (ages 13-up)	\$145.00	_____	\$ _____
Children (8-12)	92.00	_____	_____
Children (4-7)	42.00	_____	_____
Children (0-3)	FREE!	_____	_____
Crib Rental	6.00	_____	_____
Subtotal			_____
Scholarship (with Rector's prior approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>		NC
Total Amount Enclosed			\$ _____

Make Checks payable to Church of the Resurrection, and put "Shrine Mont Payment" on the memo line.

Reservations and payments must be received no later than May 24. Checks can be turned in at the church or mailed to:

Church of the Resurrection
ATTN: Shrine Mont Retreat
2280 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311

Volunteer Opportunities

I can give someone a ride

I'd like to help out with the children for about an hour

I'd like to help set up for the parade (decorations & snacks)!

I'd like to help clean up after the Saturday night social time!

