

InSpire

Feeding a hungry world

On October 30, a beautiful sunny Sunday morning, 102 people of all ages met to share in work, worship, and a meal. Thanks to Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) and our co-sponsors, VTS' Seminarians of Color, we were able to use the expansive space in the Refectory (dining hall) to pack 10,152 bags of rice, soy, and vitamins/minerals. The packages will be sent to the Philippines for use in a school feeding program where the meal is an incentive to come to school.

All the needed materials and know-how were provided by Rise Against Hunger, a non-profit organization with a mission to end hunger. Those participating included 50 parishioners from Church of the Resurrection with the remaining attendees from VTS and U.S. Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) members from Mount Vernon High School.

At the 10-, 30-, 70-, and 100-percent points of packing, a huge gong called us to pause for time to sing and pray. The Gospel reminded us that we could feed a lot of people with only "five loaves of bread and two fish." The



Confession acknowledged our need to re-center and reshape ourselves when we become too self-centered. Our prayer challenged us to continue to find solutions for hunger and poverty. Then we

ending with the Eucharist while singing Taizé to strengthen us to do the ministries God calls us to do. The work truly was our worship and the worship our work!

(Continued on page 8)

Inside this issue

[Feeding a hungry world](#) 1, 8

[What kind of thanks will you give?](#) 2

[Who have you thanked lately?](#) 3

[Reflections of a midwife on Christmas Eve](#) 4

[Sunday dinner at the shelter](#) 5

[More book adventures](#)

[A happy Halloween it was](#) 6

[Some things I think you should know](#) 7

[Feeding a hungry world \(continued from page 1\)](#) 8



Jo Belser, our Rector

2022 Vestry

Senior Warden

Linda Goff

Junior Warden

Coral Childs

Treasurer

Ken Gay

Register (ex officio)

Kim Hildred

Creating Community

Betsy Faga

Kim Hildred

Kathy Parnell

Barbara Langford

Healing Community

Coral Childs

Barbara Eversman

Bea Taylor

Peggy Tiedemann

Learning Community

Linda Goff

Cynthia Bullard-Perez

Ken Gay

Dennis Jones

Ken Payne

What kind of thanks will you give?

“Enter with the password: ‘Thank you!’ Make yourselves at home, talking praise. Thank him. Worship him.” (Psalm 100:4 MSG)

At Thanksgiving each year, we count our blessings and give thanks to God for them. For some, our thankfulness is a bit shallow. It goes something like this, “Thank you, Jesus, for the luxuries you have given me. I am very glad that I don’t live in (an undesirable place) or have (a terrible disease). God, you really have been good to me! Amen.”

As you ponder in a deeper way the many gifts God has given you, ask yourself how you will share some of those gifts with others. On one level, you could write an extra end-of-year check. Organizations of all kinds take advantage of people’s end-of-year generosity and bombard us with requests for money. I commend your response to whatever you hold most dear.

But what if our giving thanks prompted us into new action? There are many good deeds we could do, both in the world and through Resurrection. For example:

- Are you mobile and healthy enough for light lifting with time to spare on Monday mornings? Perhaps you could help our pantry crew stock the food pantry. I suspect those who already do this

task give thanks for life and health as they do it. And I know I give thanks for them!

- Do you have a home and enough food? Perhaps in thanksgiving you could help our dinner crew provide and serve a meal at the city shelter on January 1 or March 5. This wouldn’t be about getting a job done. Truth is, we need to help others more than the shelter crew needs our help.
- Do you have enough money to meet your basic needs and pay your pledge? Perhaps you could provide a box of diapers every month for a baby who needs some.

give
thanks

If you turned your thanksgiving into action, I am sure your thanksgiving would be deepened. We get to keep our blessings, paradoxically, when we give them away.

But what if our acts of giving thanks inspired each of us to do even more? What if our thankfulness prompted

us to do something well beyond our comfort zones? What if our journeys of thankfulness led us to questions like, “Why do we have so much while others have so little?” What if our journeys of thankfulness led us to a quest for justice?

The City of Alexandria is beginning an 18-month process to review and update the Alexandria West Small Area Plan and will affect all neighborhoods west of I-395, including Newport Village. This process will create a vision for the area’s long-term future (which is to say, our neighbors’ and our future) and explore topics like housing affordability, equity, culture, land use, mobility, pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility, and connecting existing and future open spaces. What if you were moved to participate, to help those without a voice have one in this process?

So this Thanksgiving, as we feast with family and friends and count our many blessings, I pray that we embrace the blessings we have and to share them as we walk in justice. How will you give thanks for all that God has given you?

~ Rev. Jo

Who have you thanked lately?



During this month of thankfulness, have you taken the time to thank someone for being the special person they are to you?

Have you thanked the Lord for his special relationship with you?

Psalm 100 (Living Bible) proclaims that we are called to thank and praise God for all that he is, all that he has done in our lives, and all that he will continue to do.

“Shout with joy before the Lord, O earth! Obey him gladly; come before him,

singing with joy. Try to realize what this means—the Lord is God! He made us—we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Go through his open gates with great thanksgiving; enter his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the Lord is always good. He is always loving and kind, and his faithfulness goes on and on to each succeeding generation.”

In her book, *Journey Through the Psalms*, Professor Denise Dombkowski Hopkins writes: “Praise is communal act. We are reminded in praise that our relationship with God is not private but a shared experience with the people of God of all times.

Amidst confusion and crisis, the praise of God in worship provides a focused center that demands the recovery of our historical symbols and language. In and through praise, then, we can become fully human, fully whole, and firmly anchored in community. This praise of ours is never static; instead, it speaks of our dynamic relationship with God.” Biblical Scholar, Patrick Miller suggests; “Praise and thanks are in a sense the final word, the direction one is headed, in the relationship with God.”

During this season of Thanksgiving, do you feel yourself moving toward praise and thanksgiving in your relationship with God?

~ Linda Goff



Linda Goff



The Blessing Mobile was back on All Saints' Sunday. We blessed 1,500 diapers to give away at the Hammond Fair in mid-November. Then we blessed 80+ boxes of cake mix and 80+ cans of frosting to give to the food pantry guests for Christmas.

Reflections of a midwife on Christmas Eve

Margaret Riccardelli is sharing—as a gift to each of you—this letter her sister Vita wrote on Christmas Eve 1976 when she was Ghana. Vita worked as a midwife at a small rural clinic in a village called Lawra. When a woman was about to deliver she would be summoned by a tap on her window.

*“I will wrap
him in
swaddling
clothes...”*

Peace and love, always. Here I am waiting for midnight mass to begin, resting on my bed after a busy day at work. Oops, the familiar tap on my window. The man says, “A case, Sister,” so off I went on my motorbike. All hope of attending Christmas Eve mass and getting a night’s sleep lost forever

Now I am waiting for my lady to bring forth her newborn babe, and I will wrap him in swaddling clothes. It’s a beautiful night out, and every star in the heavens is showing its best.

Mass has already begun, and I can hear the singing all the way from the church about half mile away. Christmas hymns in the local language, twi. How lovely it sounds.

My lady is a poor village woman, illiterate and doesn’t speak much. She is in tremendous pain as she nears her time, yet not a word is uttered. She bears all her pain and suffering in silence.

As I await the time her baby is ready to make its entry into our world, I can think of only Mary, the mother of Jesus, who also was in labor. After being with my lady, I

wonder if she bore it all in silence. The husband and mother are also waiting outside the labor room to welcome the new arrival.

I feel a tremendous feeling of excitement and joy, much more than I’ve ever felt during a delivery. It’s 11:00 pm, mass began at 10:00 pm, and I’m getting more excited as midnight approaches.

After all, a Black Jesus is coming into the world and I am the chosen one to deliver him. What a privilege is mine!

Well, well Marg, it wasn’t a Black Jesus, but a Black

Mary at 12:15 am, Now I’m on my way home happy and tired.

Here it is 4:45 am the same morning, the tap on my window and another case. I’m tired and cold. It’s winter here, but I crawl out of my warm bed and get on my trusty motorbike to the clinic. And so, I got my Black Jesus and what a beauty he is and what a cry he has!

Happy Christmas.

Marg, I had my third Christmas baby at 7:15 am. I can’t wait to see you.



Vita (left) and Margaret Riccardelli (right)

Sunday dinner at the shelter

Dinner went well at Carpenters Shelter on All Saints' Sunday, November 6. We served chili, vegetarian chili, and rice. Toppings for the chili included cheese, sour cream, and onions. We also had mac and cheese—which is always popular with the children—and a tossed salad. For dessert we had a variety of cookies. Since the winter shelter is now open, the extra food was served there the next night.

We had six people working in the kitchen: Rev. Susan, Margaret Riccardelli, Betsy Faga, Elta Wilson, and Angela Armwood (an 8:00 am parishioner), and me.

Deena Jaworski and Kathy Graham provided the salad.

There are currently 29 adults and 12 children residing in the shelter. We served about half of the children and about half of the adults. There was a set of twins and two older children in one family, but the twins aren't yet eating solid food.

As we were getting ready to leave we had a conversation with the shelter's meal coordinator about what food goes to the winter shelter and what stays at the main shelter. It was interesting to find out that after the kids are in bed (by 9:00 pm), the adults who are interested can

come back downstairs and enjoy coffee or tea and have whatever sweet they find in the kitchen that appeals to them. So, even though we thought we had a lot of leftover cookies, the residents could enjoy them after 9:00 pm.

We will make and serve dinner at the shelter again, next on January 1. While the winter shelter is open, we need to prepare for at least 50 meals. This could go up as winter progresses, perhaps as high as 60.

~ Maureen Bryant

More book adventures

Last month I shared about meeting a boy from The Spire who reads books about astronomy and science. So, like others among us, I visited a used book sale to acquire some.

On October 27, I was at Burke Branch Library. Children's hardcover picture books were \$2 each and I purchased \$20 worth for our Library.

The woman at check out asked me why I had children's books when my child is in college. I explained about the Little Free Library and suddenly

an arm came over my shoulder and handed her a \$20 bill. A voice said, "Get 10 more books for that Little Free Library."

God had sent an elderly gentleman who introduced himself as Frank. He told me he loved reading, libraries, and Little Free Libraries. He also said he is starting chemotherapy in November. So, if you have a moment, please give a prayer of thanksgiving for Frank, and maybe one for Frank's healing, too.

~ Coral Childs



Our Little Free Library in front of the church on North Beauregard Street



Betsy Faga

A happy Halloween it was

Fifty children from The Spire came to the courtyard after school on October 31 to receive Halloween treats, and a good time was had by all. The event was coordinated by Church of the Resurrection and AHC Resident Services. Thanks to our “candy packing team,” we had 80 bags of candy to distribute. AHC provided bags of chips or Cheetos, fruit candy, and water. We displayed all the treats on the tables, which were decorated with festive Halloween balloons.

Fayetta was there, all decked out as “Witch of The Spire.” For those who haven’t yet met Fayetta, she is a wheelchair-bound Spire resident and a Church of the Latter-day Saints member who occasionally attends Resurrection’s Messy Church services. It also was heartwarming to see the mom’s sit on the side walls

and chat while the children played in the courtyard. Thanks to Rev. Jo and Rev. Theresa for joining in the festivities.

But what about the other 30 bags of candy, you might ask? It worked out perfectly that it was Resurrection’s turn to serve at the food pantry that night. We provided individual candy to all people standing in line as well as bags of treats to the children. And lastly, the candy from the remaining bags was taken to Carpenter’s Shelter

November 6, the evening Resurrection prepared and served dinner. We were told that candy is being saved for a special children’s event to be held in the beginning of December.

I give my and our Resurrection great thanks to those who donated the candy and prepared the bags. As is God’s way, our joy was once again multiplied to help others beyond The Spire in even more ways than we had envisioned.

~ Betsy Faga

Clergy & Staff

Rector

[The Rev. Jo J. Belser](#)

Deacon

[The Rev. Theresa Lewallen](#)

Priest Associates

[The Rev. Dr. Susan Ackley Lukens](#)

Seminarian Intern

[Reggie Hayes](#)

Director of Music

Deena Jaworski

Organist/Seminarian

Dr. Thomas Conroy

Bookkeeper

MaryEllen Tibbs

Parish Communicator

[Jimena Amurio](#)

Sexton

Zewdi Taddese



Some things I think you should know

The what and the why of a few topics of general interest

Thanksgiving 2022

Our Thanksgiving Day worship service will be at **10:00 am** on—wait for it—Thanksgiving Day, November 24.

I have heard that many of you will be away, given that you can now be with your families and friends more safely than in recent years. In fact, Rev. Susan, Rev. Theresa, and our music director Deena Jaworski will all be away, along with most of our choir. **HOWEVER**, Tom Conroy and I would very much welcome you to worship with us and sing joyously as we give thanks.

Forum goes live

Our Sunday Adult Forums will move from 12:30 pm on Zoom to in-person at the parish hall at noon, beginning November 27. This will require your help to reconfigure the parish hall from its setup up for Sunday School. Fortunately, the tables are all on wheels and there are folding chairs in the parish hall's storage closet.

New class begins 11/27

When Forum goes in-person on November 27, we also will begin a 15-week class between the 9:00 and 11:00 am worship service (at about 10:00 am). This will be more a conversation for newcomers and others interested in learning how

“Jesus was an Episcopalian.” The class will be led by our clergy and seminarians on a rota. Please let Rev. Jo know if you would like to attend so that we can acquire enough of the easy-to-read 15-chapter text.

Christmas Eve services will be at 4:00 and 7:30 pm

First, you may be wondering “Why two services?” I would love to have a packed full house at only one Christmas Eve service. But that doesn't seem prudent this year, not only due to continuing safety concerns but also because consensus hasn't coalesced on just one time. So, you choose. The choir will be at the later service. Those who have later plans for the evening can come earlier. Either way, Rev. Theresa, Tom Conroy, and I will be there at both services.

When will our organ be done?

I hope for organ music on Christmas Eve, but I doubt that will be the case. Either way, though, we will have fabulous music at all our worship services. And the façade pipes will look great.

Christmas Day worship at 10:00 am

Christmas Day is on Sunday this year. We will have only one service that day, at

10:00 am.

New Year's Day worship at 10:00 am

New Year's Day also is on Sunday this year. We will have only one service that day, at 10:00 am. However, we invite you to a carol-sing after the service, followed by a potluck meal. PS., Please bring a dish to share.

<Time warp...>

Shrine Mont 2023

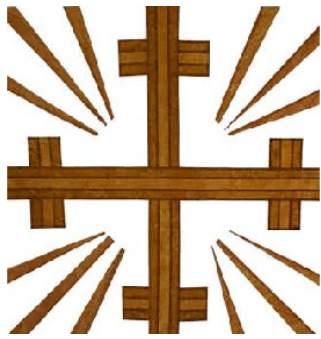
Our Shrine Mont weekend in 2023 will be from Friday, June 16, through Sunday, June 18. This is the very first days after schools are out in Northern Virginia—June 15 in Prince William County and the City of Alexandria, and June 16 in Fairfax County. This was important to some of you who wish to attend, so we declined the first weekend offered, which was in early May. Our Shrine Mont weekend coordinator for 2023 will be Coral Childs, who no doubt will welcome your help and your early decision to attend. We will be on the lower campus (rooms to be determined) and will be in the [Hall House](#) for group events.

~ Rev. Jo

About InSpire

InSpire is the monthly newsletter of the Church of the Resurrection, describing the people of our congregation and our faith journey together. The following individuals contributed to this issue of *InSpire*:

- Jimena Amurio, Design
- The Rev. Jo Belser
- Cynthia Bullard-Perez, Acquisitions
- Betsy Faga
- Lea Fowlie, editing
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- Linda Goff
- Margaret Riccardelli



Church of the Resurrection

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Alexandria 22311-2220

Church of the Resurrection serves the people in the Beauregard Corridor of the City of Alexandria, home to many recent immigrants. In April 2021, Resurrection completed an eight-year mission to provide 113 units of affordable housing to its community.

Feeding a hungry world

(Continued from page 1)

After the meal-packing, worship, and cleanup came the meal—an indoor picnic! Grill-masters Bob Noé and Will McBeth kept a steady supply of hamburgers, veggie burgers and hot dogs coming. In true Resurrection fashion, the side dishes and desserts were endless. Even more important was feeding our deep thirst to be together after a long pandemic hiatus of fellowship gatherings. There were table conversations galore.

It took a village to pull the event off, and thanks abound for a most successful day to:

- Rev. Jo for generating the event, coordinating with Rise Against Hunger, and for planning and coordinating the worship;
- Deena Jaworski for planning and (with Tom Conroy) leading the music;
- VTS for the generous use of its space;
- Vanessa McCormick, VTS' scheduler, who connected us with Major Melvin D. Burch-Bynum, US Marine Corps, retired, and his group of JROTC members;
- Herschel Wade, President of VTS' Students of Color, for notifying the VTS community and arranging for use of a grill;
- Tom Conroy and Reggie Hayes for getting fellow seminarians to help with the heavy lifting;
- Cynthia Bullard-Perez, Coral Childs, Deena Jaworski, and Helen McIlvaine who served on the planning committee.

And most importantly, to all who attended with joyous enthusiasm and your favorite potluck dish. Praise be to God!

~ Betsy Faga

