

# InSpire

## Holy Week, Easter, and then a baptism, by the numbers

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We started Holy Week off on what I am calling our “Palmless Sunday.” Lesson learned: open the palm box long before retrieving it from the chill storage of our trash room. Translation: the palms were rotten. However, our worship was still meaningful as we reflected on the import of this event at the start of the week of Jesus’ Crucifixion.

By the numbers, we had 14 fewer people on Palm Sunday this year, 77 instead of 91. I had expected this because last year we celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Palm Sunday.



On Maundy Thursday, we gathered in our “Upper Room” (the nave) for Jesus’ “Last Supper.” Last year we held more traditional Maundy Thursday services at noon

and in the evening, with 17 and 26 people physically present, respectively. This year we had 44, one more than last year, and the exact same number as our last Maundy Thursday dinner Eucharist in 2023.

Our worship was enhanced this year by a contingent of choir members at each Holy Week service.



On Good Friday we held a solemn service at noon that let us hear and feel the portent of Jesus’ Crucifixion. As is our custom at Resurrection, this service included Communion from the Reserve Sacrament to remind us that God is always with us, even when we think otherwise.

By the numbers, our Good Friday attendance took a big hit: 38 all told this year compared with 53 last year. The difference was almost all due to the lack of an evening service, where 18 attended last year.



One of my goals this year was to experiment with holding all of our Holy Week services during daylight hours. So, in lieu of our traditionally sparsely attended Easter Vigil, we had a noonday Holy Saturday service. This gave us the opportunity to gather metaphorically in Jesus’ tomb between his death and resurrection and to remember that it is hope in God’s faithfulness that lets us endure such dark times.

Holy Eucharist is appropriately prohibited in the Episcopal Church until sundown on Holy Saturday. Among the ways we claimed hope while “in the tomb” was in seeking and receiving healing prayers.

By the numbers, our first-ever Holy Saturday service had 31 attendees, compared to 40 at last year’s Easter Vigil. It’s at this point you may remember that I just said Easter Vigils are “sparsely

*(Continued on page 6)*



*The Rev'd. Jo Belser*

## We have Forums

*“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death” (Philippians 3:10)*

One of the things that the Rev'd. Susan Ackley Lukens did so well when she was at Church of the Resurrection was to schedule (and teach quite a few) Sunday Forums. Well, now in our life “post-Rev'd. Susan,” we are working to set and keep a schedule of Forums so that you will know well ahead of time what's in the line-up. To that end, the schedule of upcoming Sunday Forums as it is known today is shown on the right.

What I hope we “get” from our Forums is to learn some more about our faith, scripture, our Resurrection Community, and/or the needs of the community surrounding the church of which we are a part. What I like most about Forum, though, is the opportunity to get a deeper view of other people's faith life. In this way I am inspired to try things that they do, like movement prayer for instance, and to see familiar topics in new ways.

With this in mind, I would ideally like to replace the June 29 slot with a Forum led by one of you on a biblical subject near and dear to your heart. In any of these cases, please let me know:

- Have you taken a course at Virginia Theological Seminary and want to share what you learned?

*“What I like most about Forum, though, is the opportunity to get a deeper view of other people's faith life.”*

### Upcoming Sunday Forums

May 11	Two women who spoke in Acts (Linda Goff)
May 18	Abundance Ministry (Kat Turner/David Ewing)
May 25	Alexandria faith communities' <a href="#">Affirmation</a> (Rev'd. Jo)
June 1	Genesis (Linda Lanam)
June 8	Diocesan Racial Justice and Healing (The Rev'd. Dr. Canon Lee Hill, Jr.)
June 15	No Forum: Shrine Mont weekend
June 22	Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers (Linda Lanam)
June 29	TBA (Rev'd. Jo)
July 6	Deuteronomy (Linda Lanam)
July 13	Biblical vs. political justice (Rev'd. Theresa)

- Have you read a good spiritual book recently and want to share it with the Resurrection Community?
  - Are you willing to lead a Forum but don't have a topic?
  - Do you have a topic you want to learn about but don't want to teach it yourself?
  - Do you want to nominate someone else to lead a Forum?
- Think about the best Forums you have ever heard. What made them the best? I'd bet it wasn't the polish of the presentation, but the authenticity of the presenter.
- So, let me know what would intrigue you, either to present or to hear.

*~ Rev'd. Jo Belser*

## We have a Book Ministry

Many nights my wife Emily watches *Modern Family* before bed. She says she finds it a good laugh after another tiring, difficult day. In Season 2, Episode 22, originally aired on May 11, 2011, titled “Good Cop Bad Dog,” Phil and Claire decide to switch parenting roles—Claire tries to be the fun parent while Phil takes on the disciplinarian role. As part of their financial cutbacks, Phil tells his daughters they need to use the library instead of the Internet, leading to Haley’s blunt remark about libraries being “where the homeless people go to the bathroom.”

It’s one of those classic *Modern Family* moments where humor meets social commentary. Clearly the Internet had already reduced the traditional roles of libraries and by extension, reading and printed books and materials. It is important to note that the remark was pre-COVID.

The Bible itself is a metaphorical library. It is a collection of 66 books written by various authors over centuries. These books include historical accounts, poetry, prophecy, and teachings. While there are no references to libraries, there are references to other books. Two direct references: the *Book of Life*, which symbolizes God’s record of those who are who are faithful (Revelation 20:12), and the *Book of Sorrows*, where God is said to record human tears and

struggles (Psalm 56:8).

The Church of the Resurrection Community includes several former librarians and library aides as well as many prolific readers. Our old church building contained a library housing books donated by Barbara Bishop. At least one of our fellow parishioners is active in his local library. It is not surprising that one of our most successful outreach projects is the Little Free Library. Coral Childs and Carleigh Rockett, along with a person from Goodwin House keep the Little Free Library well stocked. The books come from you, the congregation, from Coral’s gleanings from various library book sales, and purchases.

Recent changes in federal government policies regarding the funding of libraries and museums coincide with the emergence of the early stages of a Book Ministry at Resurrection. We have provided books to the library at the Hammond Middle School on Seminary Road as well as to families at the Hammond Market. Earlier, Resurrection collected a significant number of books to commemorate the 1939 Alexandria Library Sit-In, one of the earliest known civil rights protests in the United States.

We at Resurrection are now developing plans to distribute books at The Spire, at the West End Food

Pantry, and to support the science program at Hammond school.

Libraries have undergone significant transformations in the post-COVID era, adapting to new societal needs and technological shifts. Libraries are focusing on outreach, hosting events that bring people together, such as book clubs, cultural programs, and workshops. They are also collaborating with schools and nonprofits to enhance educational opportunities.

The West End’s The Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library embodies this approach. It offers a variety of services, including events for all ages, English language learning workshops, and even a beautiful outdoor Reading Garden for story time. Many of us enjoyed a series of movies related to Black history presented by the library.

You can help. Books, especially children’s books, are always welcome. Please leave them in the Mana Baskets.

~ David Ewing



David Ewing

*“Books, especially children’s books, are always welcome.”*

*This is a document that our Rector and Vestry have signed.*

*It will be the topic of our Forum on Sunday, May 25.*

*Rev'd. Jo hopes that the Affirmation across many clergy and congregations will lead to even closer relationships and actions together by all congregations in Alexandria.*

## AFFIRMATION

### To our community

We, who serve the many diverse faith communities of Alexandria, Virginia, proclaim:

#### 1

We see so many in our community gripped by fear, uncertainty and the impact of current events on our mental, physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. We regard humanity as a single body and know that if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. All of humanity is created from the same dust, fashioned in the image of the Creator, growing side by side, relying on each other to be good neighbors and good stewards of creation. We believe all people are created equally and should be treated with mutual respect and understanding. Therefore, we stand with the marginalized, oppressed, and dispossessed and speak with one voice, united in our shared spiritual imperative.

#### 2

We hear you. We welcome all voices and aspire to listen to all views, knowing that truthfulness is the foundation of all virtues, progress, and success and that every voice is accountable to the justice of God. Without truth there is no justice. We take counsel together with humility and mutual respect, knowing that wisdom and the shining spark of truth emerge only after the clash of differing opinions. We hear voices long silenced and listen for wisdom from all God's Children. Your voice matters.

#### 3

We bear witness. Our faith compels us to stand for mercy, inclusion, and human dignity. We affirm belonging over exclusion, justice over indifference, and love over fear. We are for a world where kindness and justice guide our policies, where the oppressed are lifted up, and where no one is cast aside. In a time of division, we choose unity. In a time of fear, we choose courage. In a time of injustice, we choose action.

#### 4

We pray. Hear us as we say, do not succumb to fear! Do not be disheartened or distracted from the mission we share to love our neighbors, seek peace, and pursue justice for all. Even as you take care of your emotional and spiritual health, sustain one another with the utmost love and compassion. Promote the welfare of the community as your own. Stand firm in hope, knowing that we stand with you in solidarity, committed to justice and working alongside you as ambassadors diffusing the light of love throughout the world.



## Our spring egg hunt

On Friday, May 2, about 45 children from The Spire raced around our joint courtyard hunting for plastic eggs. When they found some, they traded them in for a treat bag, snack, and juice box. This was a “spring” egg hunt this year for two reasons: With a very busy Holy Week and other special services in April, having time to organize the hunt seemed more doable in May. Also, the residents of The Spire are of different faiths, making a spring theme more sensitive to those differences.



*Two of our 45 egg hunters*

The event was held from 3:00-4:00 pm to enable the children to participate as they returned from school.

Collecting empty eggs and exchanging them for treats assure all the children have the same opportunity. There was great flurry and excitement by the children as they collected eggs and then hid them again for the next group of children to come. It was a delight to have a resident from Goodwin House join in the fun and be of help. The children are always accompanied by a parent, and all leave with smiles and a gracious “thank you.”

*~ Betsy Faga*



Betsy Faga

## We have a food pantry (that needs tuna)

“If we can’t get eggs to give away, let’s give away tuna.”

That was the thinking of our food pantry leaders when they were pondering how to give away more protein-packed food. No one could find, or afford, acquiring 90 dozen eggs each week, now that they are so expensive and rationed by our food providers.

*So, we are collecting your tuna donations through Pentecost Sunday, June 8.*

As of Monday, May 5, we had 116 cans. Much of the donations so far are albacore and wild caught, thanks to half-price sales at Giant Food stores. To put that number in perspective, it would provide each family with one can of tuna for 1.7 weeks, using the weekly average this year of feeding 235 people each week in 69 families.

Do we have a tuna goal? No. The goal is whatever you can provide by June 8. Yes, I know that we have received over 3,000 cans in previous tuna drives. However, that was when we could use your money and order cases of tuna from the Capital Area Food Bank. Guess what? We can’t get



*Our tuna donations as of May 5*

tuna from there at present. So, let me ask you: What can you give?

*~ The Rev. 'd  
Jo Belser*

## Holy Week, Easter, and then a baptism, by the numbers

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attended” at Resurrection. I should have added a caveat, “unless there is a meal,” which last year’s Vigil had.



Our Easter Sunday services this year were bittersweet. The great part: Easter! Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Easter Sunday is our Church of the Resurrection’s Feast Day, the day we value so highly it is our name. The numbers? 88 this year versus 90 last year. (I could tell you who those missing two were, but I won’t!)



The sad part of Easter Sunday: it was the Rev’d. Susan Ackley Lukens’ last Sunday with us after four-and-a-half years as our priest associate. We “prayed her out” with a blessing at each service. She cried; we cried. Then we wiped our tears and celebrated Rev. Susan’s many gifts shared so freely with us. And—of course—there was great food.

By this time you know my post-Easter-Sunday routine:



vacation! By this time, I know your post-Easter-Sunday routine: “low Sunday!” None of us followed our usual routines, though, because on Sunday, April 27, we baptized Benny Hall, the 8-month-old son of one of our newer members Taylor Hall and his wife Mara Dominguez.



Thankfully for us, Taylor gathered his and Mara’s family from around the country for the occasion. Thankfully for them, almost all of you showed up: 71 this year versus 62 last year.

Now, we all know that numbers aren’t everything. Thanks to your faithfulness, we survived my “let’s do all our worship during daylight hours” experiment. But, that’s what we do here at Church of the Resurrection: We show up, and adjust as necessary.

There are many who I want to thank for all that they did to make our Holy Week, Easter, and baptism services—and Sam Turner’s

memorial service on the day before Palm Sunday—go so smoothly. I’m thinking especially here of the choir and its leaders, the altar guild, our Deacon and seminarians, lectors, ushers, acolytes, and especially those who organized all of the many food-related events in the last month.

You may be wondering what might be different about our service line-up next year. I haven’t thought it through completely but an evening service on Good Friday would be a strong contender. Recently, when I asked the Vestry to help me evaluate our Ash Wednesday worship, there was a great suggestion for a “pre-work” service. Perhaps each of you will let me know what you think could work better next year. By the way: I’m all for another baptism next Easter; I could use your help making that happen.



Finally, I don’t want you to miss the parament on the credence table behind the altar this season. This was a gift to Resurrection from another church in our Diocese when we moved into our new building.

~ The Rev’d.  
Jo Belser

### Clergy & Staff

#### Rector

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

#### Deacon

[The Rev. Theresa Lewallen](#)

#### Pianist

Michael Lewallen

#### Bookkeeper

Holly Zarazinski

#### Consultant

Maryellen Tibbs

#### Parish

#### Administrator

Angie Armwood

#### Sexton

Beltway Cleaning, Inc.

## Coming Racial Justice and Healing events

The Racial Justice and Healing Team has planned several events for the coming months that they want you to know about so that you can plan to attend.

**Registration opens on May 15** for the Diocese of Virginia's Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrimage. [See page 8](#) for pilgrimage information so that you can register on May 15, when registration opens.



*Bishop Budde & Tim Shriver*

On **Thursday, May 22, at 6:45 pm**, we will host the livestream conversation between the Rt. Rev'd. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and Tim Shriver, disability rights activist and chairman of Special Olympics. As part of the *A Better Way* series of conversations presented by National Cathedral, this discussion will explore the role of dignity in our public life. This timely discussion brings faith, education, and public leadership into dialogue to lessen polarization and find hope for our democracy. **Join us at Church of the Resurrection for the livestream discussion and snacks.**

Do you know that regular admission to the City of Alexandria's museums is free for City residents? Even if you are not a City resident, the Racial Justice and Healing Team invites you to explore the museums and sites you haven't visited in a long time or have never explored.

May is National Historic Preservation Month, reminding us that preserving and continuing to research our history are important parts of our work of acknowledgement and understanding of the things done on our behalf that have brought us where we are a state and a nation.

The City of Alexandria is offering special events throughout the month at each of the City's museums. Specific dates, times, and costs can be [found online](#). The City's Web site says, "The Office of Historic Alexandria preserves and shares the history of the City of Alexandria with eight museums, historic sites, archives, archaeology, tours, exhibits, and public programs. Through powerful storytelling and confronting the City's past, Historic Alexandria enriches the present and inspires the future. We enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and serve as a partner in the City's equity and inclusion initiatives."

Fairfax County's Park Authority also features historic sites and information about the

Virginia native peoples on its [Web site](#). The Fairfax County Museum and Visitor Center also hosts events about the history of the area. During Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the County will hold an Asian Festival on Main Street in Fairfax City. The Festival is Sunday, May 18, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.



*John Yang & Jennifer Ho*

Arlington County's Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month recognition includes [Dialogues on Race and Equity \(DRE\) Conversation on Wednesday, May 12, at 7:00 pm](#). [Register here](#) for an upcoming conversation on "Addressing Anti-Asian Discrimination" hosted by DRE partner, the Glencarlyn Civic Association. [Learn more about Dialogues on Race and Equity](#).

The Smithsonian is offering myriad events, some online for Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The calendar if events can be found [online](#).

May is a great time to participate in local events, explore museums, and to learn more about our local racial and ethnic histories while we celebrate and honor the diversity of God's people.

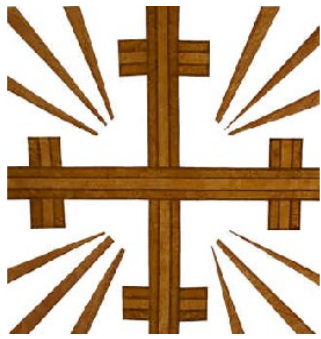
*~The Rev'd.  
Theresa Lewallen*



*The Rev'd.  
Theresa Lewallen*

*"... we  
celebrate  
and honor  
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of God's  
people."*





## Church of the Resurrection

2800 Hope Way  
Alexandria 22311-2220

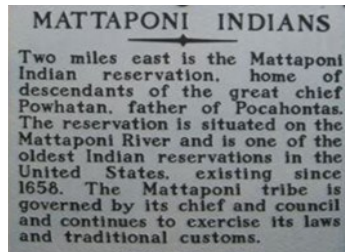
### About *InSpire*

*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*:

- The Rev'd. Jo Belser
- David Ewing
- Betsy Faga
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- The Rev'd. Theresa Lewallen
- Lori Thurgood

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.

## Diocesan Racial Justice & Healing Pilgrimage



Registration opens on May 15 for the Diocese of Virginia's Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrimage on Monday through Friday, September 22 through 26. The tentative itinerary (still subject to change) will be to begin and end each day at the Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond.

- Monday, September 22, visit the [Mattaponi Tribe](#) and [Upper Mattaponi](#).
- Tuesday, September 23, walk the [Richmond Slave Trail](#).
- Wednesday, September 24, visit [Mount Vernon](#) and [Alexandria](#).
- Thursday, September 25, visit the [University of Virginia](#) and [Charlottesville](#).
- Friday, September 26, visit the house cellar and [south yard dwellings](#) at James Madison's plantation at Montpelier.

More than a tour, this is a pilgrimage experience to encounter the Divine and walk together as soulmates for a time. This pilgrimage will be hard; it will require us to bring our best selves and to sit with many emotions as we learn more about the often-untold chapters of Virginia's racial history.

Cost is \$750, including accommodations, meals, and transportation. Scholarship assistance is available. All pilgrims must have engaged in some form of Racial Justice training (such as [Sacred Ground](#)). Look for the opportunity to register on the Diocese of Virginia's Web site.

~ *From diocesan brochure about the pilgrimage*