

InSpire

How will you observe a holy Lent this year?

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If this is February it must mean Lent is coming. What does that mean? Wikipedia tells us that Lent is the solemn Christian religious observance that prepares us for Easter, echoing the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and being tempted by Satan before beginning his public ministry.

At church we begin Lent with Ash Wednesday, our Sunday liturgy is more solemn, and we end with Holy Week leading up to our glorious Easter celebration.

But what does Lent mean to each of us, individually? The coming of Lent has had me thinking about how I have observed Lent in the past. As a child it was all about giving up something like candy, usually selected by my mother and perhaps more with an eye toward the grocery budget than any theological underpinning.

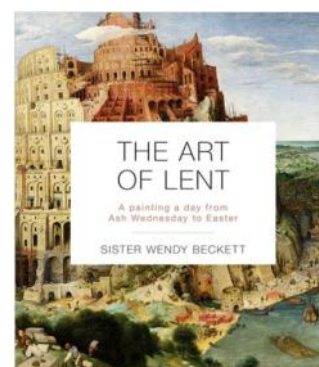
As a young adult Lent became an opportunity to re-affirm New Year's resolutions that had already fallen by the wayside: more attention to healthy eating, no alcohol, more exercise. It seemed to be about doing things to improve my physical life. And, I confess, when I failed at some aspect of my Lenten discipline, it was easy to think, well, I've

blown it, better luck next year.

In later years Lent became less about what I was sacrificing and more about what I was adding to my life, kind of like a spiritual boot camp: pray more using the Episcopal rosary a friend gave me; don't miss church on Sunday; read scripture daily. This outlook has felt more like a way to achieve the deeper intimacy with the Lord which Christianity.com describes as the meaning of Lent.

What I haven't been able to do over the years is really and truly deepen my spiritual life. I have tried to do this, but I have a fidgety mind, and I find when I attempt meditation and contemplation I soon find myself mentally answering e-mails, charting chores that need to be done, or making grocery lists in my head. That is why the rosary is a good discipline for me, as I can focus on a prayer as I touch each bead.

Another standby for me has been [The Art of Lent](#) by Sister Wendy Beckett, a Carmelite nun, whose little 5x6 book displays a piece of art for each day in Lent that you can study as you read her accompanying meditations on silence, contemplation, peace, joy, confidence and love.



Sr. Wendy's book

This Lent I am going to try again to deepen my inner spirituality, without relying so much on external prompts. I am also giving myself grace to realize that I may fall short some days, but that perseverance is a spiritual gift too.

Resurrection has recently introduced a new practice that can help us all during Lent and beyond. Centering Prayer (learn more [here](#)) is held at the church on Mondays at 4:00 pm and welcomes everyone. While I've not been completely successful in quieting my mind, I am making progress and plan to attend as often as possible during Lent.

Lent is coming. What will you do in this season of preparation?

~ Kat Turner



The Rev'd Jo Belser

Seek Christ anew this Lent

At Bible study this week, I learned from two of our attendees that Alexandria's Alfred Street Baptist Church is nearing the end of an annual 30-day event called "[SEEK](#)." Quoting from the church's Web site, "This is a time for us to come together as a community and SEEK the face of God through prayer, devotion, and fasting. Remember, the objective of fasting is not only to eliminate things from our daily routine, but to also replace them with prayer. This year, we are fasting for 30 days from Monday, January 12 – Wednesday, February 11."

"... a community seeking God's will could use time together in prayer."

What got my attention is that SEEK is a structured program of over 38,000 registered participants who are clearing space in their individual lives for prayer to discern God's will in preparation for Easter. Each person can choose their fast from one or more of three categories: food, finances, and focus (related to social media and entertainment). There are online resources to help people track their progress and to meet daily online for prayer with other people who are fasting.



I am not trying to "sell" you on this version of Lent. I also am not denigrating it. Instead, I have two goals in mind.



Our Ash Wednesday services this year will be at 7:00 am on Zoom and in-person at noon

First, SEEK is a great reminder of the *purpose* of whatever discipline we might take on or give up this Lent: is ideally to clear time and attention in our lives to seek God, through—as our Book of Common Prayer suggests—"self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."

Second, it seems to me that a community seeking God's will could use time together in prayer. So, I join Kat Turner in recommending that you participate in centering prayer at the church on Mondays at 4:00 pm. This is a practice that helps empty us (fast from?) our thoughts to be more receptive to God's.

The "hive mind" that our Senior Warden is suggesting for Resurrection is one

where Christ is the head of the hive. Or, to use the apostle Paul's metaphor of the "body of Christ," the Church is a unified entity with Jesus as its head, calling its members to work together to do what God has given them life to do.

Lent is a great time to seek Christ anew before Easter and to be part of the "hive." To this end, I also invite you to begin our Church's 40-day version of SEEK on Ash Wednesday, February 18. We will have two services that day, a shorter "early-bird service" [on Zoom only at 7:00 am](#) and the full Ash Wednesday liturgy in person in the church and [on Zoom at noon](#). Although it is not required, it would be helpful if you [let me know](#) that you will be attending the early-bird service.

~ The Rev'd Jo Belser

Yes We Can!

Remember the slogan “Yes We Can!” from Barack Obama’s presidential campaign? I am proposing that Resurrection repurpose this to describe our period of transition for a new Rector.

Why? Vestry Goal 3 for 2026 is “Assure continuation of essential liturgical, operational and administrative functions of Resurrection through 2026.” Whew! When you think about it, that’s a pretty tall order, especially without Rev’d Jo and Rev’d Theresa to lead and guide us. During our time in the wilderness, when we were at Virginia Theological Seminary and on Zoom without a church building, we were fond of saying, “The church is not the building; it is the people.” Well, this is another chance for all of us people to **Be The Church**. How are we going to do it?

At our snowbound Adult Forum on Zoom on January 25, we discussed how we plan to proceed. First, we introduced the concept of **Hive Mind**. The *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, via Google, describes it:

The collective thoughts, ideas, and opinions of a group of people regarded as functioning together as a single mind.

I think you can see how this is applicable to Resurrection. It will take the collective wisdom of all of us, working together for a common goal of calling a new rector, to assure that the important aspects of Resurrection

continue so that a new rector comes to a church that has remained fully alive in our interim period. Resurrection is a beacon of God’s love in our community – the food pantry, after school club, the little free library, and so much more. But we are not just a community resource for social services, we are a worshipping community whose spiritual needs also



must be served as we continue to worship God. This means some of us will need to take on new roles in the interim.

The second concept to guide our transition is an activity that I have dubbed **The Matrix**. Several of us, principally former senior wardens and ministry leaders, have been working to develop a list of *all* activities that comprise Resurrection as we know and love it. We have identified nine functional

areas: liturgical/worship, parish life and admin, outreach, communications, music, building, grounds, financial, and technical.

On February 8 and 15, copies of The Matrix will be available in the narthex and parish hall. The Matrix is a lengthy document and the drafts you see are bound to have some mistakes – this is where the Hive Mind needs to spring into action.

Over the Sundays in February, you are invited to review these documents to see if anything you particularly care about has been forgotten. Look, too, at columns 2 and 3 that name the responsible party/parties for each task. You are also invited to write your name in the columns for which you are willing to assume responsibility both now and after April 12.

After February 15, the Vestry will examine a collated version of The Matrix. Where there is a blank space in column 3, Vestry members will either have to identify someone willing to do it or decide that this is something that we will give up at least during the interim, or maybe permanently.

Yes, we are facing some challenging times ahead, but I have confidence in Church of the Resurrection. Yes We Can!

~ Kat Turner



Kat Turner

*“It will take
the collective
wisdom of
all of us,
working
together...”*

Good hands: our January 10 Vestry conference



Dan Parker

It was 8:30 am and there were no bands or confetti; just a bunch of sober souls willing to do the work at hand. We needed to set goals and come up with a strategic vision for our church. I shuffled over from the Spire; the sky was as grey as a dirty nickel. As we sat around, rubbing our eyes and gulping caffeine, Rev'd Jo gave the opening prayer.

Kat Turner, our Senior Warden this year, said, "before we do anything we are going to do an ice breaker." Split into groups and share something you have in common," she said. That woke me up.

I groaned inside, I am an introvert and making small talk isn't my thing. Moreover, didn't we all know each other? Maybe not. My group included Amanda Vann, Mike Long, and me. We had a glorious time and kept talking beyond the deadline. Kat achieved her goal. We were relaxed, comfortable, and awake. A good place to be for the work ahead.

It's 9:30 am and we got started. A Vestry Volunteer Sign-up sheet was passed around. Responsibilities that one assumes for orderly efficient meetings to occur. The Vestry is a well-oiled machine that takes its mission seriously. Rev'd Jo, our leader and parliamentarian, has prepared the agenda and with patience we complete an astounding amount of church business in each session. Much like a mother

who cleans, cooks, and attends the needs of her Children, Rev'd Jo is to us. She is the glue we are the pieces. We have all expressed that we will miss her greatly. But now, we must find a new Rector. Our first goal of three today and the strategic vision.

Let's go over this a bit. After Rev'd Jo announced her retirement to the Vestry last fall, we fell into the grieving process. At the last stage (acceptance) the Vestry immediately rose to the occasion with the help of the Rev'd Will Dickenson, the diocese transition minister. He laid out the process, and one them is a Discernment Committee, brave souls whose goal is to find new rector/priest candidates.

Today we formalized this:

#1 Goal-Call a new priest/rector: The Discernment Committee will present candidates to Vestry with Rev'd Will's guidance. Votes are taken. It passes.

The next goal concerned the Abundance Ministry that we started last year, 2025. We appointed new members: yours truly and Carolyn McDonald, in lieu of Kat Turner and Verleah Kosloske.

#2 Goal-Fund and continue the Abundance Ministry: Resurrection is blessed to have this ministry for the community. Many



Our 2026 Vestry members

churches can't, but we can and we do it generously. More on this in this edition of the *InSpire* by John Kirk our new Junior Warden. Votes are taken. It passes.

#3 Goal-The continuation of essential liturgical, operational, and administrative functions:

In other words, "Who is on first?" This has been tackled by Kat with an enormous amount of work in the release of "The Matrix," a detailed analysis of who does what, when, and where. Kat will reveal more in this edition of the *InSpire*. Votes are taken. It passes.

I glanced at the clock, it's almost 10:30 am. A break is taken. Coffee and food, small groups are chatting. Outside I see the sun and parting clouds.

One great task remains, The **Strategic Vision**. I will call the SV for short.

The SV was recommended early on by Rev'd Will Dickenson. It is a guideline, a vision from the Vestry to the Discernment Committee

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Thanking our senior seminarian, Katherine “Kate” Mumey

On Sunday, March 22, we will say farewell to our senior seminarian, Katherine “Kate” Mumey, as she ends her time at Resurrection. Kate will be leaving a bit earlier than usual to make several required trips to Texas in April and early May for ordination-related milestones and forthcoming parish placement.



During her time with us, Kate has offered gifts that have shaped and strengthened our common life. Her preaching has been marked by clarity, depth, and a rare ability to hold scripture, lived experience, and theological insight in a single, generous arc. Many of us will long remember her recent sermon on *radical abundance*, in which she reminded us that the Kingdom of God is never a private table or a solitary path, but a feast wide enough for every hunger and every hope. She has not only preached that truth — she has embodied it among us.

Kate has been a steady, joyful presence in worship,

formation, and pastoral life. She has listened deeply, prayed faithfully, and stepped into our rhythms with humility and grace. We are grateful for the ways she has shared her gifts, her questions, her laughter, and her hope with this community.

As she prepares for ordination and the next steps of her ministry, we send her with our affection, our gratitude, and our prayers. May the abundance she proclaimed return to her in every new place she serves. May God bless her journey, her calling, and the communities that will soon be blessed by her presence.

~ David Ewing



David Ewing

Good hands: our January 10 Vestry

(Continued from page 4)

to help them move forward. Sort of daunting trying to summarize and make an elevator speech about the church. David Ewing made the first stab, a first draft. He is eloquent. More amending and subtracting, much like sculpting a topiary, a final version. Thanks to Helen McIlvaine, a newcomer to the Vestry, as an agent of change to the verbiage. She added a lot of clarification.

The above are highlights of our conference. We discussed many other things. I would remiss not to mention that we welcomed new members to the Vestry: Mike Long, Dennis Jones,

Robert Reeves, and Helen McIlvaine, and thanked those who were departing: Courtney Brinckerhoff, David Ewing, Cheryl McBeth, and Verleah Kosloske. A special thank you for John Kirk for taking on the role of Junior Warden. Finally, Kat our Senior Warden is a gift to us all. Her organizational skills are essential; we would be lost without her. She feels like Moses, so help her out where you can, be a good hand and God will help us do the heavy lifting.

You may have noted the reference to “Votes are taken.” A procedure but important one. Ideally the votes are unanimous which

they were, no person left behind, unified going forward. Rev’d Jo, leading by consensus with patience and sensitivity. A characteristic that I admire and hope for in a new Rector.

It’s close to our scheduled 1:00 pm adjournment and closing prayer. Time to go now. The sun is out now. There is a chill in the air. A day of God’s work; Our hands, voice, and heart are committed to our community and our world. I feel that we are in good hands. The good hands of a loving God. Hopefully we are bearing Fruit.

~ Dan Parker

Abundance Ministry thrives

The Abundance Ministry had a very successful 2025. We began this ministry, developed policies and procedures, and awarded a total of \$125,000 to five (5) organizations (see the chart). We also committed to giving \$5,000 more to Culmore Clinic to defer moving expenses when they occur.

Giving was temporarily suspended in 2025 when we learned that Rev'd Jo would be retiring. This resulted in us not awarding \$41,667 in funds allocated for gifting in 2025; these funds are now available for use, as needed.

The original goal was to spend \$500,000 over three years, or \$167,000 annually. We currently have commitments for 2026 for RISE and presumably our food pantry and the Alexandria Scholarship Fund.

Membership: The ministry was initially co-chaired by David Ewing and Kat Turner with Vestry members Gbehlee Savice, Courtney Brinckerhoff, and John Kirk as members. When Gbehlee had to resign from the Vestry, her seat—both on the vestry and on the committee—was filled by Verleah Kosloske.

David Ewing and John Kirk are now the co-chairs, with Courtney Brinckerhoff, Dan Parker, and Carolyn McDonald as members appointed by the Vestry. We are open to other members of the church joining if they feel led and are approved by the Vestry.

Disbursements	Amount	Notes
Resurrection Food Pantry	\$36,000	Replaces line item from our operating budget and increases it to cover annual expenses.
Lazarus West End	\$16,000	Approximately one month of operating funds.
Scholarship Fund of Alexandria	\$20,000	Allocated early so that students would have information as they were making school choices
Culmore Clinic	\$10,000	An additional \$5,000 promised for when they move to temporary quarters which probably will not occur in 2025.
Grace Church's Food Pantry	\$10,000	One-month operating cost
RISE program	\$33,000	Spire Rent subsidy
Allocated to date	\$125,000	
Remaining from 2025	\$41,667	\$5000 additional committed to Culmore in a future year.

Types of awards: Last year, we gave priority to feeding programs, emergency financial assistance, education, and “new initiatives.” This year, we added mental health as a category and are open to programs supporting issues related to immigration.

Amount: We made \$10,000 the minimum award to ensure grants were impactful. Smaller donations are made from the outreach budget or other funds.

Recipients: We give preference to Christ-centered organizations and to trusted partners with whom we have or want to develop a relationship. However, we will look at

any non-profit that provides essential services to our community, especially our local community. If you are interested in bringing an organization to our attention, we have a form to use that will ask for the information we need.

Summary: The Abundance Ministry is here to serve you. If you are interested in serving in this ministry or if you have a worthy organization in mind that you'd like to nominate for funding, please speak with any member of the Ministry. If you have any questions, please feel free to [contact John](#) at or [contact David](#).

~ John Kirk & David Ewing

Clergy & Staff

Rector

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

Deacon

[The Rev'd Theresa C. Lewallen](#)

Pianist

Virginia Sircy

Seminarians

Kate Mumey
Torie Linner

Bookkeeper

Holly Zarazinski

Parish

Administrator

Angie Armwood

Sexton

Beltway Cleaning, Inc.

Reflect on Black history this Lent

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the first celebration of Black History. In 1926, Harvard historian Carter G. Woodson and minister Jesse E. Moorland began Negro History Week to raise awareness of the African American people whose contributions to society had been forgotten or left out of the narrative of history. Consider a local pilgrimage to the Freedom House, Black History Museum, and Hayti Community Exhibit at The Alexandria Archeology Museum over the course of three or four weeks. Take time to reflect on what you see that is new or unexpected. How has what you saw impacted your understanding of the resilience of African Americans and their contributions to Alexandria and society?

The Episcopal Church will celebrate the Feast of Absalom Jones on Saturday, February 14, at 10:00 am at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The service will be broadcast on the Cathedral's [Website](#), YouTube channel, and Facebook page.

Last month, the National Park Service removed an exhibit that mentioned Absalom Jones, the first Black Episcopal priest. He was born into slavery and after much frustration and rejection within the largely white Episcopal Church, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The exhibit text included a discussion of

slavery during the fight for freedom in our nation's founding. It was considered text that the current administration does not think reflects well on our country.

On February 28, The Black History Museum will host [Fight for the Right to Read Program](#). Join authors Jeff Gottesfeld and Michelle Y. Green, along with illustrator and Howard University graduate Kim Holt, for a family program that highlights their new book; *Fight for the Right to Read: Samuel Wilbert Tucker and the 1939 Sit-Down Strike for Library Reading Equality*.

During Lent, we repent of our sins, the things we have done and those being done on our behalf. Our lives in the Body of Christ are incomplete when some of our siblings are left out intentionally, forgotten, or intentionally erased. We are also called to walk in truth. Consider learning about individuals who have shone the light on injustice or whose contributions you may not fully know about.



Ida B. Wells,
public domain image

Recently, I have been considering learning more about a person I admire. Ida B. Wells put her life on the line with her bold work to shine a light on lynchings and to fight segregation. She also fought for Women's Suffrage. I plan to read her autobiography [Crusade for Justice](#) this Lent to understand the risks she took. The book, banned in some school districts, is the discussion text for the Alexandria Tables of Conscience fundraising dinner in early March.

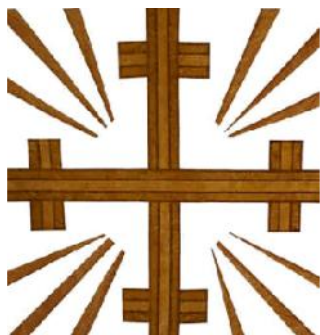
If you are looking for African American spiritual writers to support your Lenten practice, some suggestions include, Rev. Dr. Kellie Brown Douglas, Howard Thurman, and the Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery, particularly *Becoming Human: The Holy Spirit and the Rhetoric of Race* which was selected for a Diocesan Book Study last year.

May you have a blessed, Spirit-filled start to Lent walking with new understanding of the truth, brokenness, and the reparative work that has been and continues to be part of who we are as a church and a nation.

~The Rev'd
Theresa Lewallen



The Rev'd
Theresa Lewallen



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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
- Discernment Committee
- David Ewing
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- John Kirk
- The Rev'd Theresa Lewallen
- Dan Parker
- Kat Turner

In search of a new priest



The Discernment Committee alerted you in *e-Notes* that February would be a time of sharing in our discernment process as we prepare to call a new priest. For those who attended the January 11 Forum, you will recall that the first steps of discernment are recommended by the Diocese to take place in January and February. During that time we're sharing who we have been, who we are now and who God is calling us to be. This leads to time in March when the committee will digest what we've heard and prepare a Community Ministry Portfolio (a profile of Resurrection). I want to say "hang on to your hats" because that means we have a lot of interaction planned for February. However, that doesn't seem to be quite the appropriate phrase to use for something so important and serious.

Instead, I invite you to take a deep breath with us, say our discernment prayer: *Lord God, you know the needs of your Church in every place: Look graciously upon us, the people of your Resurrection, and grant us the guidance of your Spirit as we seek a new Priest for this parish. Give us discernment, wisdom, and confidence in your timing.*

We pray for the life of our parish, that we may continue to be strengthened in the mission you have given us. Amen. Now, take a moment in silence to listen to what God is telling you. For *"We're not hiring a priest – We're seeking God's will for our parish in the next chapter of our story and discerning what spiritual leader will help."*

At the January 11 Forum, we shared why we came to Resurrection and what feeds us here. Now, we invite you to participate in the upcoming listening sessions we have planned:

Sunday, February 8 – We will hold small groups after each service to share who we are now as a worship community. Also, we will give you a written survey in person or by e-mail to gather some of the demographics of our congregation and what's important to you. Please return the survey by Sunday, February 22.

Sunday, February 15 – We will hold small groups after each service to share who God is calling us to be and the qualities of a priest who will help us meet that calling. Also, we will post the framework of a timeline with a few key times in the history of the church and ask

you to add in other highlights of our history over the next few weeks.

Sunday, Feb 22 – We will plot where you live on a large map. You will receive a short written survey either in person or by e-mail to ask for further input about the qualities we want in our next priest.

For those who are unable to attend our Forums, we will be reaching out to determine the best way to share your thoughts.

We are advised by the Rev'd Will Dickinson, our Diocesan transition minister, that the timeline isn't written in stone. In true Resurrection style, we'll be flexible and adjust as seems best.

Dear God, lead us and guide us along with way.

~ Discernment Committee:
Coral Childs,
Patrick Coleman,
Betsy Faga,
Lea Fowlie,
Verleah Kosloske