

InSpire

We diapered 167 babies in September

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Above: Rev. Katherine blessing diapers at Mission Church on September 17; Below: Lori Thurgood and Rev. Susan, delivering the diapers



On September 17, during a Mission Church service, our 9:00 am congregants counted, bagged, and boxed 1,695 diapers for the Hammond Middle School Food Fair. The boxes were blessed by Reverend Katherine in one of her first opportunities to bless things officially as a new priest. Cheryl and Colin McBeth then stuffed the size 4 boxes into my car, where

sizes 1-3 already filled the trunk, for delivery to Hammond Middle School on September 21. Rev. Susan kindly offered to transport sizes 5 and 6 to the school on the day of the Food Fair. Many thanks to all who lent their hands to this effort and to all who purchased diapers.

Our diaper mission is extremely important, and

very much appreciated by the needy families in the Alexandria community. A total of 235 families walked the line at the Hammond Food Fair on September 21. I handed out 2,520 diapers to 167 of those families. Unfortunately, we once again fell a little short of sizes 5 and 6, so I will be increasing the target numbers for those sizes for the Food Fair on November 16.

We have some back stock of diapers in all sizes, so I am requesting diaper donations for only sizes 5 and 6 for the November Fair: 614 size 5s, and 765 size 6s. Please bring your donations to the church by Sunday, November 5. If you would rather us do the shopping, you can put an extra contribution in the Sunday offering marked for “diapers” and our shoppers will turn your love into diapers.

I will be bagging sizes 4-6 at church during the first three weeks of November, and welcome extra hands if you can spare an hour or two to help. Dates and times for this activity will be announced by November 5.

~ Lori Thurgood



Jo Belser, our Rector

Government or God?

“The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying ‘Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’” (Matthew 22:15-17)

“To the extent we live with dualistic, either/or thinking, we trap ourselves.”

Jesus was an Episcopalian, and I can prove it. When the Pharisees and Herodians approached Jesus and asked him if it was lawful for God’s people to pay taxes to the Emperor or not, his answer was, “Yes.” Yes, it is lawful to pay taxes and yes, it is lawful to “or not.” This is a typical Anglican answer, to break out of the false dualities—the false either/or mentalities—such as this, and embrace a middle way.

Of course, Jesus would not have missed the significance of the Temple leaders *and* the Emperor’s men approaching him together. This would be like one of the Navy commands at which I served, where the senior enlisted and senior civilian despised each other. When both came to me, together, and asked a question, I knew to be wary. Perhaps you have had a similar experience.

In any case, Jesus neatly sidestepped the trap that had been set for him when he replied, in effect, “both, and.” Give to the Emperor what is due to the Emperor, and to God what is due to God. Give what you must to the Emperor, remembering that all things are *due* to

God, but not all things are demanded—yet.

I have been thinking of this incident between Jesus and those who would trap him because this is the lesson appointed for October 22, when I was scheduled to preach, until events interceded. You’ll have to hear Rev. Katherine’s “take” on this lesson then. Meanwhile, the U.S. House of Representatives has lobotomized itself, our country teeters between fears of loss of democracy versus loss of national identity, and humanity’s raping of the environment has weaponized the weather. Which of these things will we lay at the Emperor’s—door, and what at God’s?

To the extent we live with dualistic, either/or thinking, we trap ourselves. It is possible that both views are right, or both wrong. It is possible that our democracy is at risk *and*, at the same time, that our national identity is threatened. Perhaps none of these things are fully true, but that something else is at work. What if the entity that seeks ultimate to divide us is blinding us to the truth: that God is ultimately in control

and that our government and our culture do not offer us life-giving answers? And yet, we must live in the tension between the two, the tension squeezing us very hard at present.

One of the ways that I live with the dualism is to reflect on the Resurrection Community that God has given us. We have different fears among us. We have different judgments about what the best path forward would be for our country and our climate. And yet, we participate in government and we speak justice—which is to say, love—in the public square, all while worshipping together in the name of the one and only God, who wills us to be one. The hardest part for me is that the One that God wills us to be isn’t *my* one or *your* one, but God’s One, who says, “yes, and” to all.

~ Rev. Jo

Housing—one of our ministries

Since community and housing are two of our ministries, I wanted to take this month to catch you up a bit on City and Resurrection activity related to housing. As always, Rev. Jo has included much of our activity in *e-Notes*. This article summarizes the past and adds the latest news.

Zoning for Housing (Z4H)/Housing for All (H4A) and the AlexWest planning process are initiatives being developed simultaneously and keeping us busy as we attend as many of the public hearings as possible. The culmination for these initiatives, however, are on different timelines. Z4H is scheduled for a vote by City Council on November 28, while the AlexWest process continues for another year.

The housing status quo

Alexandria currently has 80,000 housing units. Plans approved in the past two decades allow for over 50,000 additional units, of which about 15,000 units have their required approvals but are not yet built. Those units have been analyzed for impacts on infrastructure (water, sewer, open space, transportation, public schools, etc.) and accounted for in the City's long-range plans. In March 2020, City Council voted to increase the City's housing production allocation of 3,000 units by 2030, with a goal that 75% (2,250) of the units be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Z4H/H4A

Z4H is looking at reforms to the City's zoning laws in all sectors of housing – historic,

residential multi-family, townhomes, industrial, affordable, office to residential conversions, and single family along with transit-oriented development. On September 5, the City Council and Planning Commission [received staff recommendations](#) for the nine Z4H/H4A initiatives. From feedback so far, some residents don't think the recommendations go far enough, while others feel it went too far. The recommendation receiving the most community pushback is the one to allow one to four unit homes on the same footprint as a single family home in those neighborhoods.

A recent staff report describes housing units that would be allowed by Z4H beyond those already allowed by small area plans and existing zoning. Staff estimates that Z4H could add as many as 2,800 net new units over the next 10 years. The majority of those units (1,800) would be in the residential multi-family areas.

On October 2, [draft text amendments](#) were posted for community review. They will be the heart of the next community meeting on October 12.

AlexWest planning

Rev. Jo gave an excellent summary of discussions related to the AlexWest Plan in the October 1 *e-Notes*. We are reminded that this will be a 20-25 year plan and is the framework for individual projects that will be reviewed in depth as they are presented to City

Council. As Rev. Jo reported, most attention is being given to utilizing the 160 acres of existing surface parking space in the City's West End for new developments. The city is interested in the Southern Tower parking lot space as a way to build more affordable housing without displacing existing residents and putting parking under new buildings or in a garage in the area. Doing so, of course, is complex and has its many challenges.

Rev. Jo and I are actively involved on the "Housing Team" of VOICE Alexandria (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement). Rev. Jo also is active in YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard). I have additional engagement through Alexandria's Housing Affordability Advisory Committee. While strongly supporting the Zoning for Housing initiative and encouraging it to be bolder, VOICE and a number of other affordable housing advocacy groups are pressing for the additional funds needed to move housing projects forward.

If you would like more information or to become personally involved, both Rev. Jo and I would welcome your participation. We expect that each of these City initiatives will substantially transform the Beauregard Corridor, in which we and are one of only two churches. Please talk with me and I can tell you what would be involved.

~ Betsy Faga



Betsy Faga

“We expect that each of these City initiatives will substantially transform the Beauregard Corridor, in which we and are one of only two churches.”

A literary journey, of sorts

From sit ins, to little free libraries, to banned book week

The Oxford Dictionary defines a library as “a building or room containing collections of books, periodicals, and sometimes films and recorded music for people to read, borrow, or refer to.” Libraries are more than that. They are an education. They create an informed citizenry and offer opportunities for self-improvement. They provide a way out of ignorance.

Before the Civil War, it was illegal in many states to teach enslaved people to read or write. In some places it was also illegal for enslaved people to own books. Some of these laws also applied to free African Americans. Slavery didn't just shackle bodies, it also attempted to shackle minds.

Someone educated in the ways of slavery has the tools to fight it. An enslaved person who could read and write might forge documents to gain their freedom. They could also communicate with each other about the conditions in other places, uprisings, and escape routes. Literacy was a threat to slavery.

The end of slavery did not end illiteracy for formerly enslaved people. Segregated schools and libraries continued to shackle the minds of African Americans well into the 20th century. The schools and libraries available to them were inferior and underfunded.

The Alexandria Library Sit-In of 1939 was one of

the earliest attempts by African Americans to gain access to the education and knowledge that they had systematically been denied. The right to read continues to be challenged today.

In 2018, the American Library Association (ALA) revised its Code of Ethics. One part of that code states:

We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests. (Emphasis mine)

Equitable access. Yet there is no public library in Alexandria west of I-395, where the West End is the fastest growing neighborhood in the city. Is it because 43% of West End residents were born outside of the United States? Is it because 68% of West End residents are BIPOC? I don't know. I do know that our Little Free Library (LFL) brings books closer to our neighbors in Alexandria's West End and I thank you for your generous donations.

That same ALA Code of Ethics also states:

We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

And book banning is on the rise in the United States. According to the ALA, 2022 saw the highest number of



Our Little Free Library, taken on the day we had a commemorative “sit-in” there

books banned since it began keeping records 20 years ago. Over 2,500 books were banned last year, most for racial, sexual, or mental health reasons.

Book banning is an extension of earlier laws that made it criminal for enslaved peoples to learn to read or write and segregated libraries. Silencing diverse viewpoints makes some people “invisible”. Reading should be a way to share ideas, perspectives, and experiences. Hiding people's stories hurts all of us by making our world a smaller place.

Celebrating Banned Book Week is one way to show support for books that have been banned. This year, Banned Book Week is October 1-7.

We began a book drive for our LFL in early August to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the

Alexandria Library Sit In. We've continuing it through October 7 to commemorate Banned Book Week. Our initial goal was 84 books.

After an overwhelming response we increased the goal to 168 books (84 X 2). As I write this, we've collected at least 249 books. Don't feel you have to stop, though. I'd love to see some more banned books for the LFL.

There is a list in our parish hall of the top 10 books banned in 2022.

S~ Coral Childs

Our food ministry has tripled

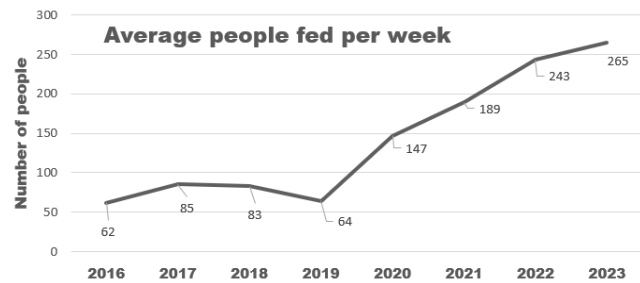
Since October 24, 2016, we have fed 52,786 people in 14,684 families—

The West End Food Pantry continues to thrive. The number of guests on Monday night dropped a little during the summer, but the numbers are increasing sharply once again now that additional SNAP benefits have ended. The number of families coming on Monday night is now generally in the high 80s of families, although we reached an all-time high of 94 families on October 2.

We are now one of five Alexandria churches that staff the food pantry on Monday nights (St. Joseph Catholic Church, First Christian Church, St. James United Methodist Church, and Fairlington Presbyterian Church, plus Resurrection). However, we obtain and stock the food in the pantry and—with one volunteer from St. James—prepare bags of food to give out on Monday nights.

To keep up with the need, we have had two deliveries of food from the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) in the last four weeks. Each delivery has brought us over 1,000 pounds of food, obviously too much food for our volunteers to pick up. It is a lot of food to get at one time and we don't have a lot of storage space. However, we work our magic and manage to find room. So many times, CAFB does not have what we need; so if they have it, we order it.

We are no longer giving out diapers at the pantry on the third Monday of the month.



We don't have the room to store them and all the food. St. Joseph's, Catholic Church, which formerly supplied most of the diapers, is now giving them to Mother of Light. Mother of Light is an organization in Alexandria that feeds over 1,000 families a month; they were thrilled to have a steady supply of diapers. Phyllis Johnson, from St. Joseph's, puts flyers in the bags of food we give out telling the clients about Mother of Light and other places they can get free diapers. All of our Church of the Resurrection diaper donations now are given out at the Hammond Market on the third Thursdays of the odd-numbered months.

Our only major problem in the food pantry is with mice. We already put non-canned food in bins with lids. The little critters have nothing from the pantry to eat but they come anyway. They eat the peanut butter in the traps and then poop around the traps, thumbing their noses at us for our feeble attempts to thwart them - or maybe they are mad they can't get at the food. The

exterminator is coming, so hopefully the problem will be solved.

We were so lucky to get the grant from CAFB for the refrigerator and freezer. They are bigger than the older ones and the extra storage space has really made a difference. Apparently, due to lack of funds, there will be no grants in 2024, so we got the grant for the units we have just in time.

We are also thankful that ALIVE! is still supplying us with bread, meat, eggs, and fresh produce. We could not give out these items every week without their help.

A sad note: Pedro Rivera has delivered food from ALIVE! to us every week since COVID began. He made sure we had what we needed. Pedro has left ALIVE! and we are sorry to see him go. Those of us who work at the pantry will miss him. We wish him the best and pray he finds a new job soon.

~ Emily Ewing

From the Deacon: Looking back and looking ahead

September 6 marked my one-year anniversary at Church of the Resurrection. Over the last year, I've:

- learned more about the Resurrection's history and its role in the community, and
- met long-term parishioners and new ones.

My ministry, while focused on Racial Justice and Healing, has included:

- facilitating adult class sessions on being an Episcopalian,
- leading pastoral services at Elancé, and
- participating in some of the connections with those living at The Spire.

I've learned about:

- the Food Pantry,
- Messy Church, and
- Mission Church.

It was wonderful to see so many people participate in the Benjamin Thomas Lynching Commemoration. The Spirit is alive and active at Church of the Resurrection. It is a great joy for me to serve alongside you and worship with you.

Our ministries together enrich me and energize me as I work with the Racial Justice and Healing Leadership Team. This faithful group meets monthly to plan the sessions we present and the engagement of the congregation. In addition to



Rev. Theresa

past Forums and the Summer Movie Series, the group has sponsored the Library Sit-In book collection and the recognition of Banned Books Week. On October 15, the team will sponsor a Forum on the work of the Diocesan Reparations Task Force, presented by Donna Archer, MD, a member of the task force.

As I look ahead through my second year at Resurrection, I'm excited about the new Sacred Ground Dialogue Circle. This Circle, which Verleah Kosloske co-facilitates with me, includes members of three Episcopal Churches, Resurrection, St. Martin de Porres, and St. James Mt. Vernon. The 11-session series began on September 24. "The series is part of the *Becoming Beloved Community* initiative of The Episcopal Church, a long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our

society." ([Invitation – The Episcopal Church](#))

Meeting about every three weeks, the sessions include discussions about films and reading that focuses on the history of our country. Each Sacred Ground Circle with which I've been involved has allowed me the opportunity to grow. The work we do in the Circles and the connections we make offer us new insights and new ways of walking the way of love and being in community.

I invite you to talk with the Racial Justice and Healing Leadership Team if you'd like to participate in the planning or implementation of the work planned for the next few months. Speak with Verleah or with me if you want more information about Sacred Ground. Read about racial justice work in *e-Notes* and the *InSpire* and join us. I pray that you, too, will feel the energy of the Holy Spirit in this work.

~ Rev. Theresa

"It is a great joy for me to serve alongside you and worship with you."

Wesley is the Scout Chaplain's Aide

Hi Church of the Resurrection! I want to tell you about my position as Chaplain's Aide in Scouts. I first got the position last fall when my Troop elected me to the role. I was interested in the responsibility because I believe I can and should dedicate some more time to God, and because a part of the Scout Oath (an oath saying we will be good Scouts) says "I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country," and a part of the Scout Law (the principles a Scout should live by) says "'A Scout is

reverent.'" Both of these say that in order for me to be a Scout, I should be mindful of God. As Chaplain's Aide, I say grace at all of my Troop's meals during campouts, and I also can help out with church services at summer camp. I will be Chaplain's Aide for a few more months, until someone else volunteers and is chosen at the next election. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me, I attend the 9:00 am service.

~ Wes McBeth



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A "home run" for Tom and Resurrection

Seven of us got up early on Monday, October 2, to attend a Eucharist service in Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary. Why? Tom Conroy, a member of Church of the Resurrection, was preaching his "senior sermon" at the service, which began at 8:15 am! We know that many of you wished you could have attended, too, so here's what happened:

According to seminarian María Teresa Bautista Berrios, Tom "delivered a beautiful and needed sermon where he drew us into the testimonies of [St. Thérèse of Lisieux](#), Judith, and the blind widow. He reminded that we are enough by the way we intercept and intercede for one another. Some amazing quotes from this morning: 'When one loves one does not calculate,' and 'The



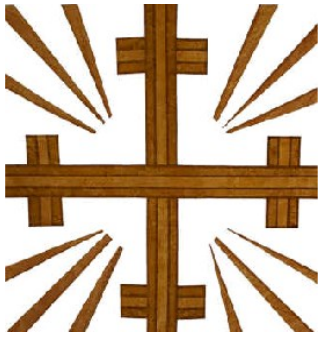
Left to right: Diane Kyle, Cynthia Bullard-Perez, Tom Conroy, Lea Fowlie, Rev. Jo, Bob Noé, Betsy Faga, and Elta Wilson

opposite of wealth is Justice.'"

From my perspective, Tom's sermon was very well crafted and delivered. He put the three women in conversation with each other. AND we could all hear and understand him, which is extremely difficult given the acoustics of Immanuel Chapel.

Nine members of Resurrection have been ordained to the priesthood, the last one was Jo Barrett in 1994 (who retired in 2019). We hope and pray that Tom will be the 10th or 11th. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

~ Rev. Jo



Church of the Resurrection

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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. Jo Belser
- Coral Childs
- Emily Ewing
- Betsy Faga
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- The Rev. Theresa Lewallen
- Wes McBeth
- Elta Wilson

“Thank you” for your stewardship

Pledge Status Report	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Number of pledges	59	59	57	54	62	54
Total amount pledged	\$ 244,186	\$ 239,536	\$ 229,068	\$ 206,002	\$ 203,884	\$ 183,747
Average pledge	\$ 4,139	\$ 4,060	\$ 4,019	\$ 3,815	\$ 3,288	\$ 3,403
Median pledge	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,704	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,110	\$ 2,448
New pledges (10)	\$ 16,880	\$ 14,520				
Percentage of \$238K	102.6%					
Pledges not yet renewed	5					
	\$ 8,760					
If everyone renews pledge	\$ 252,946	\$ 239,536	\$ 229,068	\$ 206,002	\$ 203,884	\$ 183,747

The status of our stewardship campaign for 2024, with five more pledges to go to reach our usual 100% participation

As this year’s Stewardship Campaign ends, our church again shows matured Christian formation. May we show it to the world we connect with.

In September, *Leading Ideas*, a United Methodist e-magazine, published “4 Key Characteristics of Missional Congregations.” It cited 4 key words: contextual, communal, innovative, and visionary. Our small church can claim all 4.

Context—Eugene Peterson’s contemporary translation of the Bible *The Message* reads: “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.” John 1:14a MSG. In daily, real terms, Jesus and his teachings live right here among us. We practice them right here, in our neighborhood.

Communal—We form a community that holds the bonds between us as sacred. What makes it so amazing is these are the same bonds that early Christians held. Certainly, our daily existence has changed since then, but nonetheless, Jesus’ command to love one another and even the

Nicaean Creed with its stiff language and cultural presumptions, both are revered and held sacred over thousands of years. It is this same concept of communal and community that Jo helped us exemplify in our communal meal this spring.

Innovative—Yawn... Just look next door. Then try serving on Vestry as you plow through financial records, approve bids for the Memorial Garden, and plan AC/Heating maintenance over the coming year. Rev. Jo does not stand alone here. We all help. First, we tend to business, then we get busy with food distribution, packing diapers, messy church and ... on and on.

Visionary—I’ll take that one. As we envision our culture’s envelopment in science such as AI (artificial intelligence), weaponization of outer space, pandemic threats perhaps from biowarfare experiments, driverless cars, bombs with “brains,” how do we find a path for the New Christian, the next generation? Where does Jesus and biblical teachings fit within all this? Is this the reason that church

attendance is dropping? We all look for these answers, but while we do, we focus on taking care of ourselves.

Where do we need to be for future generations? Perhaps just living next door. As this year’s stewardship campaign ends, may we give thanks that our church holds all the above sacred: our context, communal connection, our innovation, and our vision. May we bring it to the world we know. Stewardship says thank you.

~ Elta Wilson,
Stewardship Chair