

InSpire

How to make an annual meeting meaningful

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We held our annual congregational meeting on Saturday, December 6. There were 29 people in attendance, 62% more the minimum required for us. The numbers do not tell the story of this year's annual meeting, though, due to the strong sense of what I can best call "ownership" in the room.

After accomplishing what we were mainly there to do—elect new Vestry members to fill terms completed by Courtenay Brinckerhoff, Cheryl McBeth, Verleah Kosloske, and David Ewing—we elected Dennis Jones, Robert Reeves, Mike Long, and Helen McIlvaine as the Vestry Class of 2028. You can see [on page 5](#) all the members of the 2026 Vestry.

At the annual meeting, I briefly reported about the Vestry's three goals for the year: stewardship of invested funds (which resulted in our impactful Abundance Ministry), exploration about a citizenship ministry next door at The Spire (in abeyance), and transitioning to online bill paying (not yet fully implemented). I also touched briefly on our stewardship campaign for 2026 ([see the article on page 3](#)) and the



church's operating fund status this year. On this latter topic, we are ahead through October, but we will need extra income, please, if you can give some to end the year well-primed for our clergy transition next year. I did not share the 2026 operating budget; it should be adopted on December 16.

Senior Warden David Ewing told about the search now underway for a new Rector. Highlights: In November, the Vestry formed a Discernment Committee to lead the search, with Coral Childs and Betsy Faga as co-chairs and Patrick Coleman, Lea Fowlie, and Verleah Kosloske also as members. On December 16, the Vestry will finalize a short vision of Resurrection in the future to aid the committee in its search. The Discernment Committee then

works to find out more from the congregation about what is needed in the church's next priest and then finding people who can provide what is needed. The ultimate decision about who to call as Rector, though, is the Vestry's. David said that, all going well, he expects a new Rector by late summer of 2026.

The agenda then turned to a group exercise suggested by an "alternative input" to a Vestry exercise to discover a shared vision of our future three years from now. This alternative vision is summarized by "fewer members, little money, discouragement, and thinking that Resurrection had called the wrong Rector." The exercise was to think about

(Continued on page 2)



The Rev'd Jo Belser

How to make an annual meeting meaningful

(Continued from page 1)

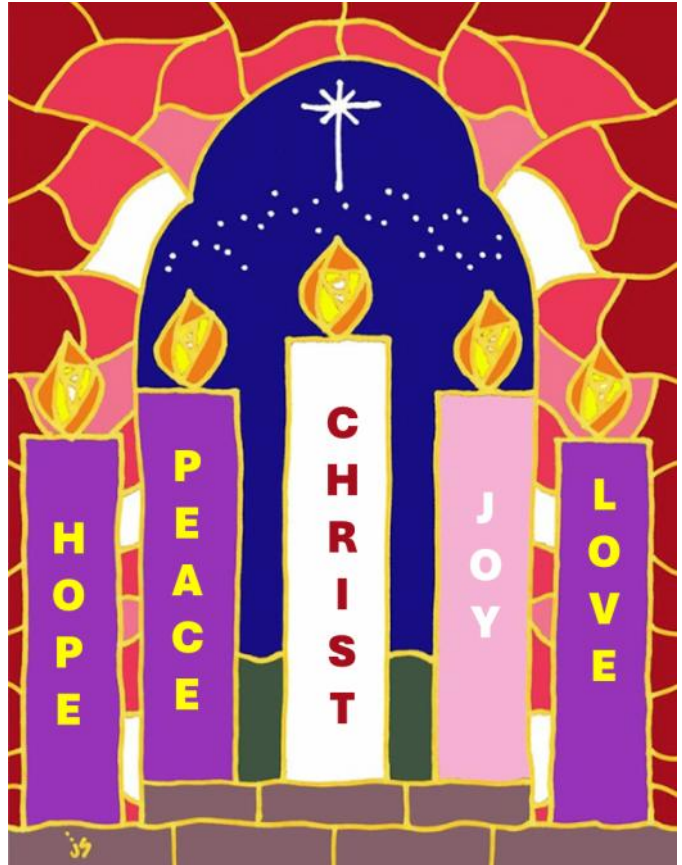
ways of preempting this outcome, ways that all amounted to, “everyone take ownership of and work together to accomplish the church’s mission and ministry.” Junior Warden Kat Turner facilitated this exercise, reminding us that we had been in that exact same position before, at the start of the last interim period, but the actual outcome so far has been pretty spectacular.

So, you brainstormed and ended up acknowledging that there indeed is much each of us can do to carry the church’s mission and ministry forward to a new reality.

After that hard work, we sang and prayed, then blessed the food that everyone had provided. There was ample food and all was excellent. But you know *that*; after all, this *is* Church of the Resurrection.

In closing, I would ask what you might be willing to do—not forever, but on an interim basis—to help prepare for and carry out the coming interim at Church of the Resurrection. Whatever God’s Spirit might be nudging you to do, it *is* time to take new ownership of your beloved Church of the Resurrection. What’s important is not *what you*

“What’s important is not what you do, but how you do it.”



The candles of Advent—and life!

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do, but how you do it. Do whatever you do with a spirit of hope, joy, peace, and love—yes, the themes of the four weeks of Advent—and I guarantee that both your church AND you will be better off for your service.

If you are wondering from the title of this article what all this has to do with making an annual meeting meaningful, here’s the answer: For me, a meeting is

meaningful when I know I something important happened at the meeting because I participated. I hope that at the annual meeting you resolved to *own* Church of the Resurrection. If so, the 2025 annual congregational meeting was meaningful for you, too.

~ Rev'd Jo

Our stewardship campaign shows commitment

Thank you for your 2026 pledges

This year's stewardship campaign was a major success. Thanks to the leadership of Rev'd Jo, co-chair Kat Turner, the 2025 Vestry, and everyone who participated, we exceeded our financial goal of \$215,000. Every Member canvas conveyed a message of care and concern across the congregation. I was especially glad to reconnect with two members I had not been in contact with for several years.

The campaign results align closely with the core findings of the recently completed Congregational Vitality survey, particularly in terms of level of participation. Thirty-one of thirty-six members completed the Vitality survey, and forty-seven households responded in some way to the stewardship outreach, demonstrating broad engagement.

I was deeply moved by the continuing support from members who do not live nearby or who are unable to

Pledge Status Report	
	2026
Number of pledges	48
Total amount pledged	\$ 227,995
Average pledge	\$ 4,750
Median pledge	\$ 3,550
New pledges	\$ -
Percentage of \$215K	106.0%
Pledges not yet renewed	2
	\$ 2,600
If all renew "flat"	\$ 230,595
# of "flat" pledges:	11
# of increased pledges:	30
# of lowered pledges:	7

travel; their presence in spirit is felt every Sunday and sustains our life together.

Finally, I hope the Discernment Committee will draw strength from this

campaign as evidence of the congregation's strong commitment—an encouraging signal to prospective clergy candidates.

~ David Ewing



David Ewing

"The campaign results align closely with the core findings of the recently completed ... Vitality survey."

What's in your Advent box?

For several years, we have asked you to fill a box with food for the Food Pantry during Advent. We ask those who wish to participate to contribute one item per day (or more!) to their Advent box. Boxes should be brought to church on or after Christmas Eve, where they

will be blessed on Sunday, December 28.

Boxes may be wrapped, decorated, or left plain. Here is what the Pantry needs most: canned soup (not cream soups), canned fruit, and complete pancake mix.



Our Food Pantry by the numbers

Each week, *e-Notes* has info about what happened in our Food Pantry that week. The announcement tells how many families we provided food for and how many people the food we gave them fed. These are the number of people who came to the pantry for food, and the total number of people in their families.

What these numbers show is that the pantry was open 48 weeks so far this year, with three weeks to go. In all, the pantry has been open on 466 Mondays since we began it on October 24, 2016.

We know, though, that the number of people the pantry serves changed dramatically in 2020 and since. Before the pandemic began, we were providing food to an average of 77 people in 23 families.

Things changed in during the pandemic. Since then, the pantry has, on average, provided food for 249 people in 55 families. This number is still trending up, as shown by the average in 2025 of 264 people in 64 families.

Turns out, the food pantry we began nine years ago has become greatly needed. Church of the Resurrection members should know that:

- There is a dedicated (but tiring) team of people who stock the pantry on Mondays and other days of the week, as needed.
- There is a small group called the “dawn patrol” who pick up food donated by the Panera at Inova Hospital in the early hours on Monday mornings.

- There are people who pick up and deliver food from the Capital Area Food Bank.
- There also is a small group of people who figure out what is needed and either order food from the Capital Area Food Bank or scrounge for what the food bank doesn’t have at local stores.

We are grateful for the combined collaborative efforts of St. James United Methodist Church, St. Joseph Catholic Church, First Christian Church, Fairlington Presbyterian Church, and our own church, without whom we could not staff the pantry when it is open from 5:00 to 6:30 pm on Monday nights.

~ Rev’d Jo

“Turns out, the food pantry we began nine years ago has become greatly needed.”

Total for 2025		3,084	12,678
Count for 2025		48	48
Average for 2025		64	264
		Guests	People
Total 2016-2025		19,897	73,785
Count 2016-2025		466	466
Average 2016-2025		43	158
Days open since the pandemic began		295	
Total since the pandemic began		16,328	73,327
Average since pandemic began		55	249
Total before pandemic began		171	
Count before pandemic began		3,977	13,088
Average before pandemic began		23	77

Our 2026 Vestry

Our 2026 Vestry promises to be up to the very high standards of all previous vestries, which is to say, it contains a full range of strong, committed leaders.

Class of 2026 (meaning, their term ends at the end of 2026)



Kat Turner
Senior Warden



Dan Parker
Communications



Maureen Bryant
Outreach



Judy Isaacs
Parish Care

PLEASE NOTE:

Each person has their name listed below their photo, with an indication of their ministry area in 2026. Each person has agreed to these areas. However, they have not yet been formally approved by the Vestry. In any case, please pray for these people now and in the year to come; they will be making major decisions on behalf of the whole church.

Class of 2027 (meaning, their term ends at the end of 2027)



Amanda Vann
Register/RJAH



Ken Gay
Treasurer



John Kirk
Junior Warden



Roland Blocksom
Adult Forum

Class of 2028 (meaning, their term ends at the end of 2028)



Dennis Jones
Assistant Treasurer



Robert Reeves
Worship



Mike Long
Building/Grounds



Helen McIlvaine
Outreach

Clergy & Staff

Rector

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

Deacon

[The Rev'd Theresa Lewallen](#)

Pianist

Virginia Sircy

Seminarians

Kate Mumey

Torie Linner

Bookkeeper

Holly Zarazinski

Parish

Administrator

Angie Armwood

Sexton

Beltway Cleaning, Inc.



Left to right: Eleonora Gafton, Al Tiedemann, and Coral Childs at our participatory pageant in 2019

December 24: Christmas Eve service at 7:30 pm

December 25: Christmas Day: Bring your lunch at noon — table Eucharist

December 28: Services at 8:00 and 10:00 am

January 4: Services at 8:00 and 10:00 am, with pageant at 10:00 am

Our Christmas pageant this year

On January 4, we will have a five-minute pageant at the start of the 10:00am service.

The presentation will require about a dozen volunteers to portray the characters for the story. Rev'd Jo has asked some asked people to participate, but still needs volunteers. (So far, we have Joseph, one magi, King Herod, baby Jesus, the innkeeper, and the angel.)

The beauty of our pageant this year is that it has no speaking parts. Instead, the choir will sing the story so

that everyone will be able to hear it.

As Nick King reminded us last year, "It important that we continue to act out the nativity narrative because this is the one, if not only one, of the places to see and hear the story anew. We need to hear the story again and again so that we will never forget what it is that we're about."

The characters are angels, shepherds, an innkeeper, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Herod, and the magi. The players are asked to provide their

costume from "garments" at home. There also are a limited number of costumes available at church; please consult with Gay Colyer about what might already be available. However, bathrobes are always a good costume, as are scarves, draped fabrics, and whatever you choose to represent your character best.

Lastly, this is how you volunteer. Please [e-mail](#) or call Angie Armwood in the parish office (703-998-0888). I look forward to this.

~ Rev's Jo

Who was David?

Excerpted from our November 23 Forum

At a recent Forum, I shared my reflection on the biblical David and David in sculpture.

Most of us were probably introduced as children to the biblical David: the young shepherd who vanquished Goliath. As we grew older we learned about other parts of David's life. He modeled strong friendship with Jonathan. David was an ideal king and forefather of the Hebrew Messiah and an accomplished psalmist.

There are also the biblical stories that show David in a less admirable light: as rival to Saul and an outlaw in exile; as adulterer with Bathsheba and murderer of her husband Uriah; as a dysfunctional father. Like all of us humans, David is multi-faceted, with both much to respect and much to regret.

Artists, too, have found different aspects of David to portray, even when they were depicting his famous battle with Goliath. This event has inspired many artists because of the timeless virtues of courage and bravery and good triumphing over evil, with God's intervention. I have always been struck by how differently three of my favorite Renaissance sculptors were inspired by this event.

Donatello's David from the 1440s is a bronze statue just over 5 feet tall depicting his moment of triumph. At this time, artists were moving



Left: Donatello, by Rufus46, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#);
Middle: Michelangelo, by Rico Heil (Silmaril), [CC BY-SA 3.0](#);
Right: Bernini, by Antoine Taveneaux [CC BY-SA 3.0](#),
all via WikiMedia Commons

away from Medieval influences and looking to classical works for inspiration. David is clearly slight and young and is nude except for his boots and helmet, reminiscent of the Roman God Mercury. David has an enigmatic smile and is holding Goliath's sword as he rests his foot on the severed head. His strength has come from God, so the statue shows the power that one can find following God's word.

Some 60 years later, Michelangelo undertook his 17-foot-tall David. In Michelangelo's David he is not standing victoriously over the head of Goliath but rather awaiting battle. He looks contemplative, perhaps even wary, as his brow is drawn and his neck tense. His left hand holds a sling draped over his shoulder and down to the handle of the sling in his right hand, conveying potential energy.

That potential energy is fully realized in Bernini's 5'7"

marble sculpted in 1623 as the Baroque period was emerging. Renaissance statues were meant to be viewed from one side only, but Bernini's David is 3-dimensional, challenging the viewer to walk around it. David is preparing to throw the stone that will fell the unseen Goliath and the viewer is in the middle of the battle. The sculpture broke new ground in implied movement and psychological intensity of David's anger and aggression. David is wearing shepherd's attire with the too large armor of Saul at his feet along with a harp presaging his future as a psalmist. It captures a fraction of time in the course of a continuous movement.

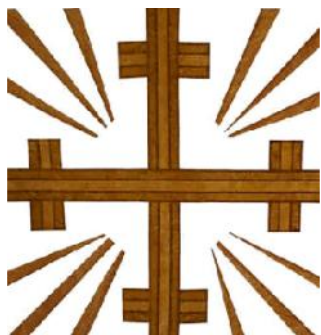
Which David do you prefer? The moment of quiet triumph, the studied preparation for a monumental endeavor, or the dynamism of heroic action?

~ Kat Turner



Kat Turner

*"Which David
do you
prefer?"*



Church of the Resurrection

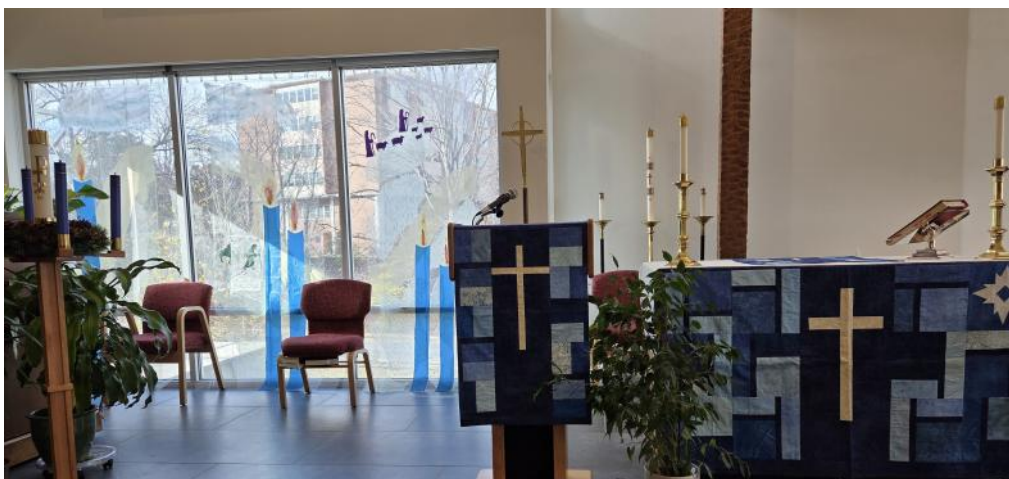
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About InSpire

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'd Jo Belser
- Gay Colyer
- David Ewing
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- Kat Turner

It looks a lot like Advent



Three of our four window hangings designed and made by Farrell Hartigan—one for each week of Advent—and our paraments (altar frontal and the like designed and made by Ken Gay.

By the time you read this article, it will be nearing or just past the Third Week of Advent. When you worship before Christmas, please take time to look around and rejoice in the beauty of our church and its appointments. I especially love the distinctive new look of Advent in our still relatively new church building.



The wise men are making their journey to follow the star, winding their way to the Christ Child. On their way, though, it will be Christmas.

By the time you read the January newsletter, we will have celebrated Jesus' birth anew.