

InSpire

Resurrection discerns anew

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

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The dictionary says that discernment is the ability to judge well. But what does discernment mean to a Christian community like ours? Romans 12:2 tells us that we are not just trying to make a good decision; we are trying to discover the will of God and use that to guide our decisions.

This year the Vestry has a major goal of “Discerning stewardship of the church’s investment funds,” and this has launched a new discernment process that began on Palm Sunday. The Beatitudes Committee, chaired by David Ewing, is tasked with leading this congregational effort.

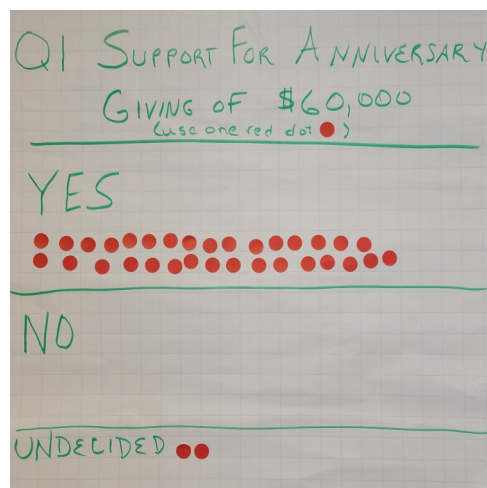
We began by considering another of our major goals for the year: “Celebrating Resurrection’s 60th anniversary,” including making outreach gifts of up to \$60,000 to help people. The discernment model we are using is serving as a pilot for the broader discernment goal.

We began this new discernment by naming as many options as we can think of and discussing them among ourselves. Where do we agree and

disagree? Can we find where our passion lies? Where do we think we can make a difference? We generate as many ideas as possible, listen to each other, pay attention to our feelings, and then show our current preferences. We then revisit our discussions to see if we feel any different than we originally felt. Maybe we are persuaded by what we heard from others. We have prayed about our choices. Maybe we asked ourselves what Jesus would do.

Our discussion on Palm Sunday suggests that there is very strong support for anniversary gifting, and a preference to select a limited number of recipients to maximize the impact of each gift. There also seems to be a preference for limiting the recipients to organizations operating in Alexandria and nearby communities.

Parishioners on Palm Sunday were asked to



Early inputs about our proposed anniversary outreach giving

consider in what areas the anniversary gifting might be made from among 15 broad categories that had been suggested since the project was first announced. In reviewing these discussions, the Beatitudes Committee is looking at giving in the areas of Education and Community Needs. This latter category includes several of the area discussed on Palm Sunday: feeding programs, emergency financial aid, and eviction prevention.

On April 14, we will meet again in Forum discussions

(Continued on page 6)



Jo Belser, our Rector

Do you see what I see?

I'm convinced that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it through to completion on the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

Church of the Resurrection is thriving, and that vitality was evident for all to see on Palm Sunday, when we celebrated our 60th anniversary. This was because we worshiped in one big service at 10:00 am that day, jamming 82 of us into the nave and getting creative about parking. With five at our 2:00 pm service at Elancé that day, our total was 87.

Maybe you attended our Palm Sunday anniversary celebrations. But what did you see? What did you feel? What did you tell others about these events?

- Did you see people waiting out their last days of life? I saw vitally alive people worshipping God and following Christ Jesus' teaching about living for others.
- Did you feel anxiety about our future? I felt joy and love and pride in this community and I left confident that our obvious thriving in the here and now will continue in the future.
- Did you discount of the people present by subtracting the number of clergy who God has gifted us? On Shrove Tuesday, someone from Goodwin House told me the "word" there was that we have more clergy than congregants. One of



Clergy, choir, and acolytes on Palm Sunday

my favorite things that happened at our Palm Sunday celebration was "word" from a woman who is waiting to move into Goodwin House Alexandria that those there who had told her about our church had "seriously undersold" Resurrection.

I will admit that I had been a tad worried that our huge anniversary celebrations on Palm Sunday might detract us from Holy Week and might potentially overshadow our Easter Sunday celebrations. Boy, was I wrong! More of you turned out for our Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday events this year than last, and we had more people attend on Easter Sunday than the week (or year) before! You may not have noticed the Easter Sunday crowd, spread out as it was over five worship services. Our Easter total

this year was 168, with 90 of them on Easter Sunday (78 were either at the Vigil on Holy Saturday or at our Journey to the Resurrection service at Elancé at 2:00 pm that day).

You and I both know, though, that attendance is only one indicator of vitality. What other measures do you use when evaluating the health of our Resurrection Community? In our recent Forums about who God might be calling us to help with the money he has given us, you have suggested two other ways to evaluate our church's health: our fellowship (hospitality to those who God sends us) and our outreach. I would add our faith formation for people of all ages. What do you see, feel, and tell about these things?

~ Rev. Jo

Maundy Thursday	43
Noon	17
PM	26
Good Friday	46
Noon	26
PM	20
Holy Saturday	78
2:00 PM	32
7:30 PM	46
Easter Sunday	90
8:00 AM	13
9:00 AM	25
10:30 AM	52

Our Freedom of Worship at Resurrection

Many years ago, I visited Stockbridge, Vermont, and the Norman Rockwell Museum. Rockwell was an American painter famous for his *Saturday Evening Post* covers and his “Four Freedoms” series during World War II. I saw those paintings during that visit.

Rockwell painted the “Four Freedoms” in 1943 and based them on President Roosevelt’s 1941 State of the Union address. In that speech, Roosevelt listed four universal rights: Freedom from Want, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, and Freedom from Fear. These values later became part of the United Nations charter.

“Freedom of Worship” shows eight people of different faiths in a moment of prayer, including a Jewish man with a prayer book and a Catholic woman with a rosary (the model, Rose Hoyt, was Episcopalian). I was reminded of that painting during Holy Week at Resurrection.

I began with an outdoor dance performance at Virginia Theological Seminary featuring two seminarians dear to us: Tom Conroy and Diane Kyle. The Saturday performance was cold and windy, but it was moving to watch the joyful movements of the dancers in different holy spaces.

We celebrated Palm Sunday and our 60th birthday on March 24. This was the first time we had the entire

congregation together for a single service and it was a joyous occasion. We processed with palms, sang hymns, had a light lunch, and began discerning about our 60th anniversary gifting.

There were two services on Maundy Thursday and two on Good Friday. This year saw two firsts: a noon service for Maundy Thursday and a prayer vigil between the two services on Good Friday. At this later event, there were paper and pencils, Bible verses, prayers, and hymnals available to those who needed them to reflect on the words of various Holy Week hymns.

Approximately 30 children from The Spire participated in our Easter Egg hunt at 11:00 am on Holy Saturday. Children collected Easter Eggs and then turned them in for prizes. At 2:00 pm, Tom Conroy led a lessons-and-hymns type Easter service called *Journey to the Resurrection* at Elancé. (See photos pages 4 and 5.)

On Saturday evening, we enjoyed a potluck dinner followed by an Easter Vigil service at sundown. The nave served as our “upper room,” where we dined together before worshipping.

Easter Sunday, we had three services commemorating the resurrection and beginning the Easter season. This was also our 3rd anniversary in the new church. Alleluia!

As you can see, we worshipped in many ways



Starting the Palm procession



Rev. Jon in a new role on Maundy Thursday



Good Friday worshippers

during Holy Week—
Freedom of Worship indeed!

~ Coral Childs

When you put your trust in God, your journey is filled with accomplishments



Eleonora Gafton

It was April 24, 1984, when I arrived in the United States. Filled with great hopes, I embraced a new life completely unknown to me. I did not speak the language and even though I had traveled in Eastern Europe, everything was very unfamiliar and culturally new and different. One of the most bizarre facts that I did not understand and found very strange was the many churches in the area. You see, I had lived in a Communist country where the few churches had no services and their doors were locked. In my journey in this county, the church has played an important role for me, I could call my church home. First, I had a great experience with a Catholic church in Arlington where I had an internship to cook for the resident priests the Friday fish dinner, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday brunch, and to create a menu for the week. It was right up my alley. I introduced vegetables to my Irish priests, which was new for them. They declared, "We are meat, potato, and fish Friday." Yes, there was some push back at the beginning that became fully accepting as they learned to enjoy a new culinary plan. This endeavor helped me to settle in my next journey when I was accepted to Cornell University, a dream of mine, and yet I never knew how it would manifest. I was thrilled to be

accepted, yet, once again, very unfamiliar with how the higher education system works, I filled a small U-Haul with my desk, a futon, and a suitcase with some clothing, and embarked on my journey. The cousin of the monsignor's secretary in Ithaca, who was married to a Hungarian man, was God's gift. I quickly faced new challenges when I learned the cost of attending an Ivy League university. I placed my trust in God. I had faith that things would work out, and they did. In 1999, I joined Church of the Resurrection, and I can say with my whole heart that I found my family and my true home. I felt embraced, supported, and truly aligned with my upbringing to help those in need and lift up those who are in distress or experience hardship.

This year on April 24, I will be celebrating 40 years in this country. Looking back on my journey, a young girl

who did not speak the language, yet filled with desire to excel and succeed, had great dreams. I am proud and grateful for this country and to the family of my Church of the Resurrection who embraced me and supported me in my journey. I received my Doctoral degree in Clinical Nutrition in 2021 and I submitted my portfolio for consideration in the rank of full professor this spring. I know that God is always with me, and he keeps me safe and allows me to share and inspire those around me. My grandfather always said, "material things can be taken away any time, yet knowledge is always yours, when you put your mind to it you can achieve your dreams."

May God bless all of you and thank you for your support and encouragement always.

~ Dr. Eleonora Gafton



Early at the Easter Egg Hunt for Spire children

Coming Racial Justice and Healing events

Resurrection’s Racial Justice and Healing team is continuing its multifaceted approach to the work. We continue our connections with the City of Alexandria by raising awareness of local events, including those related to the [Alexandria Community Remembrance Project](#). Members of Resurrection attended a showing of the documentary about the 1939 library sit-in and the documentary about two descendants of Armfield and Franklin, the notorious slave traders once located on Duke Street in Alexandria.

We invite you to participate in two events remembering the 1897 lynching of Joseph McCoy. The Joseph McCoy Remembrance will be held **Tuesday, April 23, at 5:00 pm at Penny Hill Cemetery** on the 700 block of South Payne Street. There the City will hold a ceremony at the site of Mr. McCoy’s burial, including a wreath-laying and remarks. Parking is available on South Payne Street and at Nannie J. Lee Center (1108 South Jefferson Street).

Alexandria’s faith community also will hold an event in remembrance of Joseph McCoy on **Sunday, April 21, at 3:00 pm** in the Lettie Pate Evans Room of the Addison Academic Center at the Virginia Theological Seminary (3737 Seminary Road). Details are available on the [Alexandria Community Remembrance Project](#) Web site and in e-Notes, or contact me.



Resurrection members last year at an event remembering Benjamin Thomas, the other of two teenagers lynched in Alexandria

At the Vestry’s request, the Racial Justice and Healing team is beginning to plan to conduct a needs assessment of the neighborhood through conversations and surveys. Please let us know if you are interested in learning more and if you are interested in participating.

We plan to partner with Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE) to

assist with voter registration in the Beauregard Corridor. Details will be shared as we have more information.

As we look ahead to Juneteenth, we will share details about local events, including worship services.

Let us know if you’d like to join the Racial Justice and Healing Ministry’s leadership team.

~ Rev. Theresa



The choir at Elancé for “Journey to the Resurrection”

Resurrection discerns anew

(Continued from page 1)

after each of our services to see this direction reflects true discernment. Do we feel that God is guiding these choices for our anniversary gifting?

We will also discuss the discernment process as we take up the broader question of how we will discern the best use for our investment funds. Among

the questions we expect to discern over the coming weeks and months are:

- How much of the invested funds should be used?
- What areas of need should be supported?
- Should recipients be limited to a particular geographic area?
- Is this a one-year or multi-year effort?

- Are there other ways in which our unspent funds might remain invested and still help to do God's work in the community?

As the discernment process continues, parishioners will have the opportunity to suggest specific organizations as possible recipients of Resurrection's giving.

~ Kat Turner

The importance of spiritual retreats

Two weeks before my recent ordination my husband Ron and I spent 10 days on Oahu. Ron was there for work, so I took the opportunity to travel with him. While he worked, I explored some of the island. I wanted to find places to conduct short self-guided retreats. Retreats in all shapes and forms are an important part of spiritual formation. On Oahu I found a wonderful trail to Makapu'u Lighthouse, and beautiful beaches such as Waimea which afforded me time just to explore, time and space to be, and time to talk with God. I also found the lovely Byodo-In Temple where I spent time reflecting on my journey to that point in my journey of formation, the upcoming ordination, and just listening to God. It was an opportunity to connect with myself, nature, and God our creator.

There are many reasons why retreats are important. For one, they can help us to remove ourselves from the



familiarity of our usual patterns or surroundings. They allow us to get away with God. In Luke 5:16 we read "Jesus often withdrew Himself into the wilderness to pray." The Greek word for "withdraw" means to retire, go back, to *retreat*. Our Lord and Savior set us an example.

It was wonderful and blessed to be able to retreat in Oahu but withdrawing can be achieved closer to

home. Whether going to a place like Roslyn Center in Richmond, perhaps Shrine Mont, walking on a nearby trail, or simply sitting in a garden or park. Retreats come in all shapes and sizes. I encourage you to take some time out to rest and focus. To have time to listen, to pray, and build relationship with yourself and God.

~ Rev Jon

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Sexton

Beltway Cleaning, Inc.

“Earthquake” rocks our food pantry

West End Food Pantry Guests: February 2023 compared to 2024		
Week	2023	2024
1	46	112
2	75	93
3	82	106
4	58	103
Total	261	414

The West End Food Pantry experienced a 58% increase in the number of shoppers during the month of February 2024 compared to the same month last year. The guests included clients who hadn't been seen in months, those who were regulars, and new folks. This trend continued in March. The chart above shows the numbers.

There were 153 more guests in February 2024 than February 2023, a number derived by subtracting the 2023 total of 261 from the 2024 total of 414.

Each guest gets a bag with six shelf-stable items provided by us each week, plus meat, eggs, bread, and fresh produce provided by ALIVE!. This means that we provided 918 more items in February this year over last year (153 guests times 6 items).

Each item we provide the food pantry guests averages \$1 in cost. This makes the total additional cost of dry goods this February \$918.00. (This presupposes that the food is available,

which we usually get from the Capital Area Food Bank.)

It is critical to note that the Pantry was blessed that month as members of the congregation donated cans of food in the Manna Baskets in the narthex, as did folks from the other churches. This averages 160 cans per month. During February, we had one member of the congregation who donated 40 cans. This proved to be very important in helping to handle the surge in need.

Another great gift this year was a donation of \$8,358.38 for the Pantry from outside our congregation. This will help us deal with the surge of need, as we are currently spending \$3,000 every month and a half for food.

Further, the Pantry received a steady stream of small, sturdy brown bags with handles from the residents of Greenspring Village in Springfield, where some of our members collect them from people who got them for meal carry-out. The bags are perfect for distributing

fruit and vegetables at the Pantry. The repurposed bags are a financial savings to us as well as an environmental benefit to all. On occasion, Greenspring residents also share fresh fruit and canned food. This helps to diversify the offerings provided the guests. Because Greenspring has adopted a new food delivery system, the Pantry has hoarded a supply of the bags that will be a source of great help for weeks to come.

In response to the quake, the Pantry acquired an additional, teeny-tiny refrigerator from ALIVE!. This allowed additional storage of eggs and some meat.

The hosts of the Pantry are also facing a challenge of additional record keeping required by ALIVE!. This second earthquake could lengthen the processing time to intolerable levels. In addition to privacy concerns, less than half of the guests use English as primary language. The hosts are working with ALIVE! to arrange for its volunteers to collect the information and to provide translators in Spanish and Farsi.

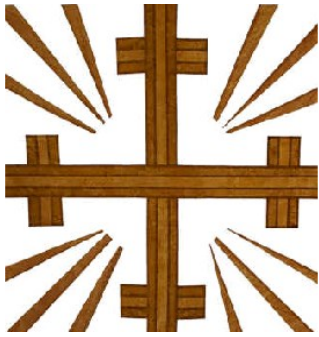
Notwithstanding all of these challenges, the Pantry volunteers remain upbeat. The clients appreciate the food they receive. And, thankfully, the temperatures are getting a bit warmer!

~ Emily and David Ewing

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 and David Ewing
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- Judy Isaacs
- The Rev. Theresa Lewallen
- The Rev. Jon Scarffe
- Kat Turner



Church of the Resurrection

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Judy Isaacs

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 13 units of affordable housing to its community. Question is: What is God calling us to help our neighbors now?

Changing planet, part 2

This article completes Judy Isaacs' review of the book, "We Survived the End of the World," begun in last month's issue of InSpire.

Steven Charleston, a Native American and an Episcopal bishop, has so many excellent thoughts on care of the planet that it is hard to cover them all here. I recommend that you read the book, then loan it to family members and discuss the book among yourselves to see what conclusions you draw.

In five chapters of the book, Charleston tells the thinking of four Native American prophets and the philosophy of the Hopi people called "the Dreamers." I also like to believe in dreams and miracles and I think it will take a miracle to have our two cultures have a similar vision regarding the care of the planet.

Native Americans believe in taking only the resources that are needed and sharing what they have with others. Our culture in this country is to take what is available, such as for large-scale industrial mining for minerals that pollute streams, to overuse water, clear-cut forests that releases carbon into the atmosphere, and upset the balance of nature by want

only killing predator animals. The result has been atmospheric rivers that create much damage on our west coast, and forest fires, melting polar ice, and the loss of human lives due to drought and extreme weather world-wide.

future that gives them hope.

Much has been done to alleviate the damage but there is still much more that can be done.

Ultimately we need to trust God and trust ourselves that positive

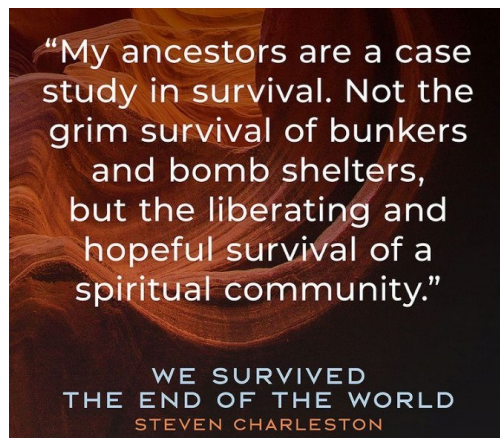
changes can and will be made. We can achieve this through our love that we show for each other and the world we live in. We can all be Dreamers who believe this is possible.

The conclusion of our Presiding Bishop Michael

Curry's Easter blessing speaks to us all:

"May the God who rides upon our storms and raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead hold us all, the entire human family and **all of God's grand and glorious creation in those almighty hands of love.**"

~ Judy Isaacs



"My ancestors are a case study in survival. Not the grim survival of bunkers and bomb shelters, but the liberating and hopeful survival of a spiritual community."

**WE SURVIVED
THE END OF THE WORLD
STEVEN CHARLESTON**

Charleston recommends a meeting of the minds between the two cultures and expresses this through the voices of the Native Prophets. His vision suggests that we all can become prophets and be bearers of a different viewpoint on our care and preservation of the earth. We are raising a new generation of children who are aware of what is happening and want to make changes so they will have a