

# The Crossing

## From the Rector



### *Finding God in the Shoestrings of Life*

Hurrying through the supermarket a number of years ago, I accidentally knocked over a display of shoelaces. Impulsively, and in my embarrassment, I flung a packet of brown men's shoelaces into the shopping cart and after paying for them, put them in my pocket.

I was then off to the rehab hospital where I'd been visiting with Donald, a member of my congregation in Norfolk, who was living alone and had no family to speak of. He had become paralyzed after he had fallen from a ladder trying to get leaves from the gutters on his house.

That day I found Donald unusually despondent. "Fr. Bill," he said after he came back in from his therapy session, "I've tried to be cheerful about all this and take this one day at a time, but sometimes I feel that God simply doesn't care anymore about what happens to me." Having no good answer, I said to Donald, "Well, I can certainly feel your agony, but I can assure you, as I am sitting here that God does care." We just sat for a while in silence.

Before I leave, I always ask to have a prayer with the person or persons who are in the room. This time, as I prayed, I asked God to let Donald know that He was always with him, even in his discouragement and in the times he feels uncared for.

As I was getting up to leave, Donald asked, "But the way, no big deal, but as the nurse was putting my shoes on, she broke one of my shoelaces this morning. Could you get me a new pair?"

Shoestrings! I reached in my jacket pocket and took out the brown pair I had bought at the supermarket after my shoestring display incident. We both stared at them in some sort of bewildered awe and amazement. We both looked at each other and laughed with that "oh my God," "Twilight Zone" laugh. Shoestrings! For a pair of shoes on feet that could not move to wear them out. For a set of hands that couldn't even tie the bow. As I bent down and laced the strings into Donald's shoes, I said, "Donald, if God cares enough to get you shoestrings before you even ask, I'm certain He cares enough about you in even more important ways."

Brown shoestrings of all things! When I get discouraged, all I need do is to think of them and know that God cares for me as well, right down to the laces in my shoes.

Sometimes the circumstances of our lives can leave us paralyzed and discouraged like the "Donalds" of this world. Sometimes the crosses we bear seem too big to handle, leaving us feeling useless, abandoned and alone. As we encounter the fullness of Jesus' humanity during this Lenten season, may Christ's Divinity bless us with resurrection to new life as we come to Easter Day, when once again we can say, "Alleluia," as we encounter the brown shoestrings of our everyday.

Fr. Bill

## St. John's Calendar of Events

### Upcoming Events Save these Dates!

- **Feb 12**—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper @ 6pm
- **Feb 13**—Ash Wednesday services @ Noon and 5:30pm
- **Feb 14**—St. Martha's Guild meeting in Eppes Hall @ 7pm
- **Feb 20**—Lenten Programs @ Noon & 7pm: Noon Program—Bring a sandwich, soup and drink provided; Potluck supper @ 6:15pm & program @ 7pm
- **Feb 21**—Vestry Meeting in Ribble Hall @ 7pm
- **Feb 27**—Lenten Programs @ Noon & 7pm, potluck supper @ 6:15pm
- **Mar 6**—Lenten Programs @ Noon & 7pm, potluck supper @ 6:15pm
- **Feb 13**—Lenten Programs @ Noon & 7pm, potluck supper @ 6:15pm
- **Feb 24**—Soup Sunday after 10:30am service
- **Mar 14**—St. Martha's Guild meeting in Eppes Hall @ 7pm
- **Mar 20**—Lenten Programs @ Noon & 7pm, potluck supper @ 6:15pm
- **Mar 21**—Vestry Meeting in Ribble Hall @ 7pm
- **Mar 24**—Palm Sunday/Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt
- **Mar 28**—Maundy Thursday—Agape Dinner @ 6:15pm & Stripping of the Altar @ 7pm
- **Mar 29**—Good Friday service @ Noon
- **Mar 31**—Easter Sunday services at 8am and 10:30am

## Senior Warden's Report by Chuck Frederickson

On February 2, the Vestry held a retreat to start our strategic planning process for the next five years. This was a very productive meeting and will lead to a roadmap for us to follow as we look at our parish ministry, personnel, physical resources and our financial resources for the next five years. As the old saying goes, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

This is an especially exciting time to embark on this effort because right in the middle of the period we will celebrate our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The folks who met in 1840 to organize St. John's must have laid a really good foundation because our parish has survived wars, fires, depressions, recessions, good times and bad. Our challenge now is to preserve those core values that have sustained us for so long while stimulating progress to become even better!

We will keep you all informed as we continue to develop our plan and when completed will use it as a benchmark to measure our progress through the year. This parish is blessed with many gifts to share with each other and with the community – there is great potential here, and I look forward to "hitting the road" in the year to come.

### Noon Lenten Luncheons 2013

*Guest Speaker: The Rev. Dale Custer*

*The Benedictine Way - Ancient Wisdom for Our Modern World*

**February 20 - St. Benedict and his Invitation**

**February 27 - Listening and Stability**

**March 6 - Change and Balance**

**March 13 - Material Things and People**

**March 20 - Authority and Praying**

### God Is

A poem by Julie Niven

It's a feeling of being entered  
and opened at the same time  
an imperceptible click  
the perfect fit  
the knowing that God is.

### Junior Warden's Report by Conrad Cobb

Some behind the scenes' things about our buildings and grounds that you may not be aware of:

We have ordered from the Lewis and Hitchcock pipe organ builders a new blower and motor assembly for our organ. Our old blower and motor was built back in 1914 and needs to be replaced. It has given us many good years of service.

We are also working on ways with the help of T & S Mech. to lower our heating cost for the Epps building by making some adjustments to the hot water boiler.

You may have noticed some new water damage on the walls inside our church. We had a roof leak repaired and the complete roof inspected in October 2012. After some recent heavy rain, snow and ice we have some new leaks. Our slate roofer has inspected these new leaks and will repair them as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please ask me.

### St. Martha's Guild by Carol Hayes

We are a very busy group and are always looking for new members to join us. This is a very rewarding ministry here at St. John's.

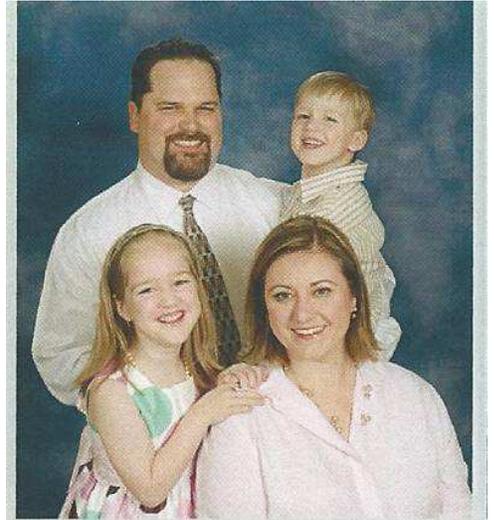
Thanks to a lot of hard work involved with the bazaar, St. Martha's was able to purchase the large double door refrigerator in the new pantry. Last year we donated over \$1500.00 to outreach in the community and through the diocese and approximately \$1800.00 to St. John's. We appreciate the support of our parishioners in our endeavors.

Coming up, we will have our regular monthly meetings on February 14th and March 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor in Eppes. On March 28th (Maundy Thursday), we will prepare the Agape meal.

The date for the annual yard sale has been set - Saturday, May 18th. It is never too early to start searching out your treasures to donate.

## Parishioner Profiles by Pat Doherty

It's Mardi Gras time in New Orleans! Melissa tells me it goes on for several weeks. She attended college in a small town not far from New Orleans and wanted to go to Mardi Gras. Meanwhile, Phillip was working in construction in Dallas. He and some friends also wanted to go to Mardi Gras. One of the friends happened to be Melissa's sister. She arranged for Phillip and a couple of friends to bunk at Melissa's apartment. They all enjoyed Mardi Gras! However, Phillip had an added bonus. He had met and fallen for Melissa! He visited Melissa, who was studying psychology at the college, several times and decided she was the one for him. They were married in a small historic Episcopal church in Louisiana on April 1, 2000. Phillip got a job procuring supplies for an oil rig company. This meant too much travel. So they decided to move to Prince George, where Phillip's parents lived. His parents were moving to Germany for some time so their house was available. When Catherine was born eight years ago, the first female baby in the Melesky family for some time, her grandmother made many trips back from Germany to visit her granddaughter. Melissa and Phillip now also have a son, Wyatt.



**Phillip, Melissa,  
Catherine and Wyatt  
Melesky**

Melissa went on a search for an Episcopal church where she felt comfortable. When she brought Catherine to St. John's, Catherine proceeded to jump down the stairs after communion. Melissa expected to see frowning faces but all she saw were smiles. Those smiles and Rev Bill's jokes made her decide that St. John's was the place for the Melesky family. Another great family at St. John's!

**NOTICE:** In the event of inclement weather, service cancellation notices will be announced on TV station WWBT-12 on Sunday mornings.

### Mary Parlier Appreciation Sunday!



### A THANK YOU "RERUN"!

I am still reliving and reveling in the wonderful Sunday in October when you so graciously and generously honored me with all the surprise activities that took place. I placed a "thank you note" in the bulletin on the following Sunday, but I realize that some of you perhaps did not see it there.

I wanted to be sure that ALL of you know how very much I appreciated the love and generosity expressed in the beautiful Jamestown Cross, the delicious lunch, and the very generous monetary gift that were presented to me.

I am still amazed that the whole church was able to keep all the preparations secret and pulled off a complete surprise on me...although I was expecting it to be Choir Appreciation Sunday.

Thanks again to each of you. Your love and support throughout these many years have been a joy and a wonderful blessing to me.

God bless you all!

Mary Parlier

## Outreach & Mission at St. John's by Carol Hopkins

**“...as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matt. 25:40) (RSV)**

**Updates** on Fall and Winter 2012 Outreach efforts:

In **September** we (St. John's Church) donated clothing, personal care items, school supplies, toys, board games, and more as well as \$158.15 to **Jackson-Feild Home** in Jarratt. We also donated art and school supplies, puzzle books, sports equipment, clothing and shoes, decorative pillows, towel sets, flashlights and batteries as well as \$133.15 to **Boys' Home Inc.** in Covington.

In early **October** we sent **Kasey Crute** at UVA a packet of encouraging notes and also drawings from our Sunday School children. At Halloween we mailed Kasey a “SCare Package” of Halloween cards and decorations.

The **United Thank Offering** (Fall Ingathering) brought in \$249.40 for UTO's many diverse ministries.

In **November** we donated food and money for **Thanksgiving food boxes** for six (6) families in the Hopewell area.

The **Hopewell and Prince George Food Pantries** each were sent \$91.50 from the Thanksgiving Special Offering and excess funds from the Thanksgiving food baskets.

In early **December** we distributed the **2013 Gifts for Life Catalogs** from Episcopal Relief & Development for your use at Christmas and throughout 2013.

**Caroling for Cans on December 16** was a great success in many ways! Thirty (30) carolers of all ages made a “joyful noise” and spread Christmas cheer along the Francis & Appomattox Streets & Cedar Lane loop. We **collected 195 canned or dried food items for the Hopewell Food Pantry**. Several choir members led the singing; the children took turns ringing the doorbells; a light rain did not dampen our spirits. The Sansone's provided hot chocolate and marshmallows afterward, and a good time was had by all.

From the **Christmas Special Offering**, the **James House** in Hopewell received \$381.66, and **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Louisa** was sent another \$381.66 to help repair damage from the 2011 earthquake.

We sent letters to our **sponsored child** in Ethiopia, Tariku Asele, through **Compassion International**, as well as \$20 for Tariku's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in November and also \$24 for his Christmas gift.

**Thank you** to all who participated and gave so generously so we can minister outside of our pews.

**Letters of appreciation** have been received from Jackson-Feild Home, Boys' Home, UTO, Salvation Army, Hopewell Food Pantry, Prince George Food Pantry, and the James House.

**Current projects and Plans for Winter/Spring 2013:**

**February 10** is **Theological Education Sunday**, a day set aside to pray and give for all laity and clergy whose ministry is Christian education, wherever that ministry happens. Envelopes are in the Narthex for making donations directly to **Virginia Theological Seminary**. VTS in Alexandria VA seeks to educate men and women for leadership in the Church.

We are sending a **Valentine care package** to Kasey Crute at UVA on February 11.

**March** is **Episcopal Relief and Development Month**, and we will focus on raising funds for **Disaster Relief** and learning more about Disaster Preparedness & Prevention.

**May 12** is **UTO Sunday**. The **United Thank Offering** is a mission ministry of the Episcopal Church USA that grants between \$2.5 and \$3 billion every year for both domestic and global needs. The **Spring Ingathering** gives our church family the opportunity to give thanks for our blessings by using the blue UTO envelopes.

**Ongoing Outreach:**

**Food Pantries of Hopewell and Prince George**—There is always a basket in the Narthex for collecting canned and dried foods for our local food pantries.

**The Shepherd's Place**—Donate your used-but-useful clothing or household items to this non-profit thrift store on 201 E. Broadway. (Items must be clean and mended.) The store is sponsored by the Hopewell Ministerial Association and staffed by volunteers from local churches. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**The James House Intervention & Prevention Services** in Hopewell always needs used cell phones and travel size toiletries.

## Board Votes to Dissolve Camp Wakonda

St. John's Church received a letter in December 2012 from the Board of Directors of Camp Wakonda stating that they had voted on September 20 to dissolve Camp Wakonda effective November 1, 2012. For the past eighteen or so years this camp--a ministry of the Diocese of Southern Virginia--has provided a camp experience for children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Quoting from the letter: "There are several reasons for making this decision-- an aging board of directors and increasing difficulty in finding sufficient counselors, to name a few. However, the most telling reason is the fact that, over the past decade, medical improvements in the treatment of this malady have drastically increased the health and lifespan of those infected. The good news is that we seem to have outlived our reason for being."

Quoting again from the letter: "We, the Camp Wakonda Board, would like to express our gratitude for your support over the years. It has meant so very much to the many children and families we have been able to serve."

## Change Coming to Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville

The latest information available on Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville is in a press release from Saint Augustine's University in Raleigh, North Carolina, on November 21, 2012. Saint Augustine's is exploring the possibility of acquiring Saint Paul's College. As of that date, the Boards of Trustees of both schools had "agreed to move forward with joint management of the Saint Paul's College operations beginning January 1, 2013. The joint management agreement will allow Saint Augustine's University to complete its due diligence on the proposed acquisition while providing support to the Saint Paul's College campus. A plan is being developed that will create a campus of Saint Augustine's University at the Saint Paul's College site."

"Saint Augustine's University is committed to preserving the legacy and history of Saint Paul's College. This strategic decision by both boards will allow for enhanced educational opportunities for the students currently enrolled in both institutions and will support the vision of the greater Lawrenceville community."

Founded in 1888, Saint Paul's College is one of three historically black colleges affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Saint Augustine's University and Voorhees College are the other two.

## Jackson-Feild Homes Admits First Boy

On October 16, 2012, the first boy in Jackson-Field Homes' 157-year history was admitted.

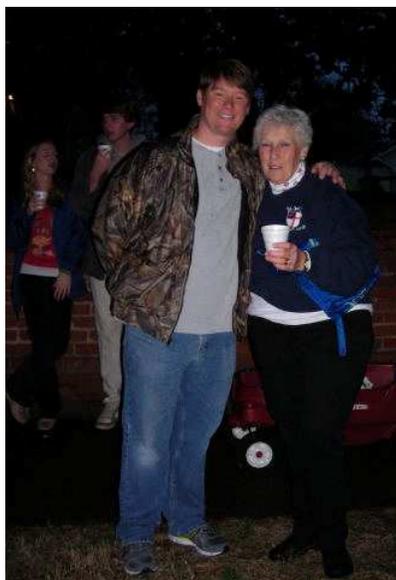
In 2010, Jackson-Feild adopted its Trauma-Focused Treatment model in order to meet the needs of girls who were severely emotionally disturbed as a result of abuse and neglect. With this model, JFH has experienced success in helping girls where others had failed. As a result of this success, agencies across the Commonwealth that place children into residential facilities have been asking JFH to accept boys as well as girls. Trauma, abuse, and neglect know no gender. In fact, the majority of children currently served by the Commonwealth of Virginia are boys, yet until now there has been no residential treatment facility available to meet the needs of severely traumatized boys. After much thoughtful and prayerful consideration, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation to accept boys into its Adolescent Psychiatric Program.

While the Home is not the place previous generations remember, the mission has remained steadfast—to identify, treat, and heal trauma and to build resiliency in children.

## Memorial Lights Advent/Christmas 2012



### Caroling for Cans



## Sunday School News by Lisa Sansone

Before Christmas the Sunday School had collected enough money to support the Episcopal Relief and Development fund. We voted how to use the money and the honey bees won. With our collected funds we purchased honey bees and a hive for a family in an underdeveloped country for Christmas. We continue to collect during our offering time in chapel and soon we will be voting again. Will it be a pig, a goat, or a chicken who will win this time?



Since Christmas the Sunday School students have been learning about Jesus' life as a boy and young adult. We learned about His own baptism and had a small baptism in our chapel as we re-told the story. We learned how Jesus was tempted and how he stayed strong. Then we tested our own strength. We learned about how Jesus loved the little children and how we are so lucky that He loves us.

Coming up we prepare to celebrate the Easter season. Lent begins on February 17<sup>th</sup> and we will start our own Lenten services. We will make pretzels in Sunday School. Did you know that the pretzel is a traditional Lenten treat? When early Christians would pray, they would cross their arms and touch each shoulder with the opposite hand and the pretzel was born! We will also be making crowns of thorns, accept this time when the children do a good deed or make a sacrifice they will remove their thorns!

March will be a busy month! On March 17<sup>th</sup> we will recognize St. Patrick's Day and we will be going green. Wear green and come join us. We will eat green and learn the story of St. Patrick. For one day we'll all be Irish. On March 24<sup>th</sup> we will enjoy our usual Easter Egg Hunt and be reminded of the story of Benjamin's Box. Our Resurrection Eggs tell the story of Easter. On Easter Sunday we will be joining the congregation and flowering the cross. Maybe we will even put on St. John's first Easter pageant!

Ash Wednesday Services  
Wednesday, February 13 at  
Noon and 5:30 pm

505 Cedar Lane  
Hopewell, Virginia 23860  
Phone—804-458-8142  
E-mail—stjohnshopewell@verizon.net

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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## *Schedule of Services, Meetings, & Events*

The following list gives the times for regularly scheduled monthly events.

Check Calendar on Page 1 for Special Events.

**Holy Eucharist Rite I—8:00 a.m. every Sunday**

**Holy Eucharist—10:30 a.m. every 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays**

**Morning Prayer—10:30 a.m. every 5th Sunday**

**Children & Youth Sunday School—10:30 a.m. most Sundays**

**Adult Choir Rehearsal—9:00 a.m. every Sunday, Ribble**

**Nursery—10:30 a.m. every Sunday**

**Bible Study—7:00 p.m. Wednesdays, Eppes Hall**

**Vestry Meeting—7:00 p.m. Thursday after the 3rd Sunday, Eppes**

**St. Martha's Guild—7:00 p.m. 2nd Thursday, Eppes**