



## A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

### The 50 Days of Easter

#### A Story of Resurrection Hope

Looking back over her life, one woman, approaching ninety, reaffirmed her own Resurrection hope. For she knew what it meant to trust. As a child, she trusted her own mother, who put her on a train in Cincinnati, Ohio, back before World War I, and took her to Bayland, Mississippi, where her father was logging the virgin hardwood forests of the Yazoo River drainage basin. As a young woman, she trusted her intellectual gifts when she studied Greek and Latin at Mississippi State College for Women, despite knowing she would probably wind up teaching children of all ages in a one-room school in the midst of the Great Depression. As a grown woman, she trusted her sense of calling to motherhood, despite the fact that her first child didn't arrive until she was 35... while other women her age were doting grandmothers, she was blessed with a third child at age 45!

Above all, she knew what it meant to "put your whole trust in God's grace and love." Whatever the "chances and changes of this life" brought to her, she never lost sight of what the 1928 Prayer Book used in her parish called God's "manifold and great mercies." As old age shrank her world from house, to apartment, to a managed care facility, and finally to a semiprivate nursing home room, her theology of trust was repeatedly tested, especially by her declining health. And as her own impending death became an ever more daily companion, she drew inspiration from Scripture, especially Isaiah 40, verses 29 and 31, which she liked especially as it's translated in the Living Bible: "God gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to

the weak...they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Crippled by arthritis and almost totally blind from glaucoma, she had written in her Bible next to the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, we can no longer fly like eagles or even run without being weary. But this is the only time we will be old. Show us what to do with these years." She knew what it meant to trust God—not naively, but when life was complex and difficult and reasons abounded for giving up.

My husband Wayne's mother Jeanne, died during Lent in 2002, surrounded by family and friends who lovingly stood vigil with her. Surely God was in that room as well. Wayne recalls that his Mom never ceased to trust that God's "manifold and great mercies" awaited her. Fully an Eastered--woman, her eyes were open, like the eyes of all the blind that Jesus had ever healed...or ever touched or taught. She knew that our whole lives are an Emmaus road full of the bends and turns of chance, sometimes leaving us almost immobilized by grief and fear. She knew that this is the only road we have, and the one on which when we renew our trust we begin to live again.

Dear Friends, Our Education and Formation committee has been asking the parish for several weeks, if any of you would like to explore the question of baptism, confirmation and/or reaffirmation in the church. When candidates for baptism in The Episcopal Church, are being examined on the way to joining the church, we ask simply whether they are ready to "put their whole trust in God's grace and love" – a God who shows that love by inviting us to table and into a community that will never end. It's that trust that marks us as God's own – God's trust of us, and our growing trust of God. This story

about Wayne Floyd's mother, is one of the most powerful stories I know, of someone who lived into a spiritual journey that insisted that 'to trust' God, which leads to trusting one another, is one of the fruits of a maturing spirituality...a faithful journey of the heart. These 50 days of Easter invite you into your own commitment to this journey of trust. For you may, "No longer be able to \_\_\_\_\_ or even\_\_\_\_\_. But this is the only time we will have to be\_\_\_\_\_. Show us what to do with these years.

What is God inviting you to explore? Where are you being challenged in your life these days? Invite another to journey with you...and Thanks be to God for all we have and are!

Love and blessings to each and every one!  
Nancy Lee+



## A LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT

### RECTOR

Happy Eastertide!!! We had such a wonderful and joy-filled Easter this year at St. Thomas' which was preceded by a very faith-filled Holy Week and Lenten journey. While we reside in Eastertide in this month of May, I have been thinking about what it means to be a "resurrected people", for that is what we are as living members of Christ's body in the world. A resurrected people.

One of the things I love about our Christian calendar is that Easter and Eastertide falls in Spring time. Spring, when everything which looked dead is coming back alive: flowers, plants, bushes and trees all sprouting new growth. What a great time for a resurrected people to be exploring our own resurrection from 40 year old ashes. Whatever decision is made by our Vestry, whether to build a new church or do something else, we are a resurrected people held in God's loving embrace. As this issue is prayerfully considered and discussed by our Vestry, I think it is important to remember that, as Christ's body in the world, we always need to keep fore-front in our minds and our prayers the need to afford a gracious and loving ear to those who may not agree with us, or with whom we do not agree. Being Episcopalian, followers of the Via Media (the middle way), we need to be respectful in our listening and hope-filled in our outlook. We need to be willing to come to our common table, differences and all, and share our common meal, knowing that Christ's love for us is something that holds us together as a community no matter our differences.

We are a growing and thriving community of believers seeking to not only make Christ known and to find Christ ourselves, but always ensuring that those who come in our door are not only radically welcomed but can find a place to sit, pray and become part of our community.

A Blessed Eastertide to all.

John+

## St. Thomas' Spiritual Formation Through Service

From John Trumbo

Jesus, both in word and example, calls his disciples to be in service to the poor.



Reaching out and caring for others was central to his ministry, and as the church, it is central to our ministry as well. Service to others, however, not only benefits those who are served, but it shapes, forms and changes those who serve. When we reach out to others, we experience an opportunity to meet the presence of the risen Christ in those whom we serve as we share in Christ's ministry.

Organized and led by Tim Johnson and Brad Latham, St. Thomas' Spiritual Formation Through Service group began in January of this year to provide participants with:

a deeper understanding of Christ's call to be in service to others;

an opportunity to participate in a monthly service project with other parish members; and

an opportunity to reflect on service to others, both individually and in a group setting.

Approximately sixteen St. Thomas' parishioners currently take part in the Spiritual Formation Through Service program. The group volunteers at different organizations throughout the city -- Christ House, Green Door and Charlie's Place -- preparing meals and spending time with homeless and disadvantaged individuals.

Located in Adams Morgan, Christ House welcomed its first patient on Christmas Eve, 1985. Today, it's a 33-bed health care facility and temporary residence for those who are homeless and sick. The average patient stay is approximately 35 days, but no patient is discharged until they are medically stable. Christ House provides medical care, social services, nutritious meals and a place to rest ([www.christhouse.org](http://www.christhouse.org)).

Describing his experience at Christ House, Paul Isakson says, "I've been impacted by the incredible cheerfulness of the main chef there. She's clearly got a close, personal relationship with Christ and the joy just comes through her." While a chef is always present to assist volunteers, St. Thomas' members plan and prepare a full menu from scratch, serve and share the meal with Christ House clients, and clean up the kitchen and dining room afterwards.

"I've also enjoyed how serving others takes my focus off of myself and onto something much bigger and more important," Paul continues. "Plus, it's just been fun getting to know other parishioners better and have fun doing something really good."

Phillip Kronstein helped coordinate St. Thomas' service at Green Door, located on 16th St. NW. Since 1976, Green Door has helped thousands of people with mental illnesses from St. Elizabeth's Hospital, homeless shelters and community mental health centers learn to live and work independently. Green Door is recognized nationally as one of the most successful programs for people with mental illness ([www.greendoor.org](http://www.greendoor.org)).

In addition to preparing meals, St. Thomas' members interact with Green Door clients about struggles they may be facing including job interviewing and work place ethics. "I enjoy making something tangible -- food! -- for the folks at Green Door, and the chance to share and fellowship with them afterwards," explains Mollie Lemon. "The service we engage in is a two-way street: we plan and cook a meal, and the clients help us with the dishes and cleaning up afterwards. I look forward to these dinners each month."

Steve Holt agrees that "it has been a joy to be welcomed into the community at Green Door. I very much look forward to our time together each month."

In addition to Green Door and Christ House, St. Thomas' members serve meals for homeless individuals at Charlie's Place, an on-going outreach of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church ([www.stmargaretsdc.org/charliesplace](http://www.stmargaretsdc.org/charliesplace)). Brad Latham, a regular Charlie's Place volunteer, describes his experience as "an opportunity to serve and connect with members of our community who are really struggling."

"It's truly rewarding," Brad continues. "It's also great to get to know other volunteers from all over the District. Plus, the early morning commitment fits nicely into my busy schedule."

After their monthly service, the Spiritual Formation Through Service group meets to discuss their experience and how it impacts their own spiritual journey. The intimate setting of preparing and sharing a meal with strangers can be initially uncomfortable, but many have found that it is in those places of discomfort where we are most likely to encounter Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the lives of others.

What appears to be most evident in service to others is the realization that we all are indeed one. With so many people whose jobs, health insurance and even homes are in jeopardy these days, the line between "us" and "them" -- the "haves" and the "have-nots" -- isn't always so clear. It's easier to imagine ourselves as one of Christ's needy followers, with nothing to offer but blind faith and hope that there will be enough fish left in the basket for everyone.

"I think the experience evolves each month and it still feels like we're pretty much newcomers," says Jonathan Moore. "That said, I value the time we share with Christ House patients. Sharing a meal and relating at the most basic levels of faith and nourishment is pretty invigorating. Hearing some of their stories and learning about their circumstances reminds me that the world is characterized by uncertainty and that faith in God and each other are both necessary and a constant work in progress.

"I have not yet had a transformational experience at Christ House," Jonathan admits but adds that, "I realize the work we do and the small moments we share are all part of the journey toward a more complete fellowship and closer relationship with God. The more I understand others and their difficulties in life, the more I can understand the work God has for me to do and the vision of the world He intends."



## News from Samaritan Ministry

Juan Williams to Emcee Next Step Breakfast at National Press Club on May 5 Join us for Samaritan Ministry's Third Annual Next Step Breakfast at The National Press Club, 529 14th St., NW (metro accessible) on Tuesday May 5th from 8-9 am. With NPR's News Analyst Juan Williams as master of ceremonies and Next Step program participants sharing remarkable true-life stories, the event promises to be moving and inspiring. We'll also share our vision for addressing homelessness and poverty in our region and our commitment to helping people believe in their ability to transform their own lives. This is a complimentary fundraising event with no expectations for minimum or maximum giving. We're changing lives at Samaritan Ministry. Please join us to find out how. Visit [www.samaritanministry.org](http://www.samaritanministry.org) for more information. Please contact Diane Aten [daten@samaritanministry.org](mailto:daten@samaritanministry.org) or 202-722-2280 x304 to RSVP.

**Samaritan Ministry Wish List** Samaritan Ministry needs the following items for program participants. Bring your donations to 1516 Hamilton St., NW, 20011, 1345 U St, SE 20020 or 2207 Columbia Pike, Arlington 22204. For more information visit [www.samaritanministry.org](http://www.samaritanministry.org) or contact Dianne Lewis at 202-722-2280 x 319.

- \* \$10 gift cards to Target, grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops
- \* Reading glasses, all powers from +1.00 to +4.00
- \* White, button front dress shirts for men and women, all sizes
- \* Black or Khaki Chino pants for men
- \* New dress socks; new underwear for men and women
- \* Deodorant - regular sized; toothpaste; shaving cream
- \* Soft pack or canned ready-to-eat (pop-top) tuna or salmon
- \* Peanut butter and jelly in squeeze bottles
- \* Rice (1-2# bags) and dried beans
- \* Pasta, Canned spaghetti sauce and canned tomatoes
- \* Canned beans - kidney, pinto, black (no garbanzo beans)
- \* Small folding umbrellas
- \* Brief cases or portfolios for carrying papers, day planners Other needs
- \* Lawnmower for Southeast office
- \* Small step stool for Northern Virginia office
- \* Large clay flower pots for spring flowers for Northern Virginia office
- \* Working vacuum cleaner for Northwest office
- \* Office supplies: copy paper, color copy paper(all colors), post-it notes, two pocket folders, manila folders (letter size), envelopes (#10,6x9,9x12,10x13), ruled pads

Financial donations are always appreciated and accepted!

Be Inspired! Summer Volunteer Opportunities at Samaritan Ministry Make the most of your summer by volunteering at Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington. We need you because many regular weekly volunteers will be on vacation. We'll train rising high school juniors and seniors, college students at home on break, and teachers on summer vacation to help participants with computer applications, answer phones, sort mail, and more. It's also an opportunity for students to fulfill community service requirements. Four-hour shifts from 8:45 am - 1pm are available Monday-Friday at all three office locations. At Samaritan Ministry we work with homeless people and others who are trying to change their lives for the better. Through this work, our lives are also enriched. Come and be a part of our ministry. For more information on these and other volunteer opportunities, contact Dianne Lewis at [dlewis@samaritanministry.org](mailto:dlewis@samaritanministry.org) or 202-722-2280 x 319 or visit [www.samaritanministry.org](http://www.samaritanministry.org)

Make Money for Samaritan Ministry while Searching the Web and Shopping On Line. Don't Google it. GoodSearch it instead. Visit [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) to make GoodSearch your web browser. Designate Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington as your favorite charity and all of your web searches will start earning money. GoodSearch directs money generated from search engine advertisers to non profits like Samaritan Ministry. If you're an on line shopper, check out [igive.com](http://igive.com) where your purchases benefit your selected charity. Register and click on links to your favorite vendors like [priceline.com](http://priceline.com), Nordstrom's, Barnes and Noble and hundreds of others. You can save money with exclusive coupons and deals and benefit Samaritan Ministry at the same time. It's all free to the shopper. Visit [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com) and select Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington as your charity.

## Concert Benefit - May 9th!



A CONCERT to benefit Saint Thomas' Music will be held on Saturday, May 9 at 7 pm, featuring Diane Atherton, soprano, Natalie Conte, soprano, Bailey Whiteman, contralto, Scott Wilkens, countertenor, Kyle Burke, tenor, David Langan, bass, and the Saint Thomas' Choir, Timothy Hagy, director. Music of Purcell, Britten, Verdi, Debussy, Beethoven and African-American Spirituals. Champagne reception to follow. Suggested donation - \$25

## St. Thomas' Parish Gala

Mark your calendars for the annual St. Thomas Parish Gala on Saturday, June 20! It will be an evening of fine food, music, and fellowship with an auction you will not want to miss. More details to come.

## Sally Forth to Shrine Mont!



Come to Shrine Mont for a weekend of rest, revitalization and insight. St. Thomas' is conducting its fourth annual parish retreat at the Episcopal retreat center in the Shenandoah Valley known as Shrine Mont. There is ample time for discussion, reflection and playing. Shrine Mont is nestled at the foot of the mountain ridge separating Virginia from West Virginia and is about a 2.5 hour drive from D.C.

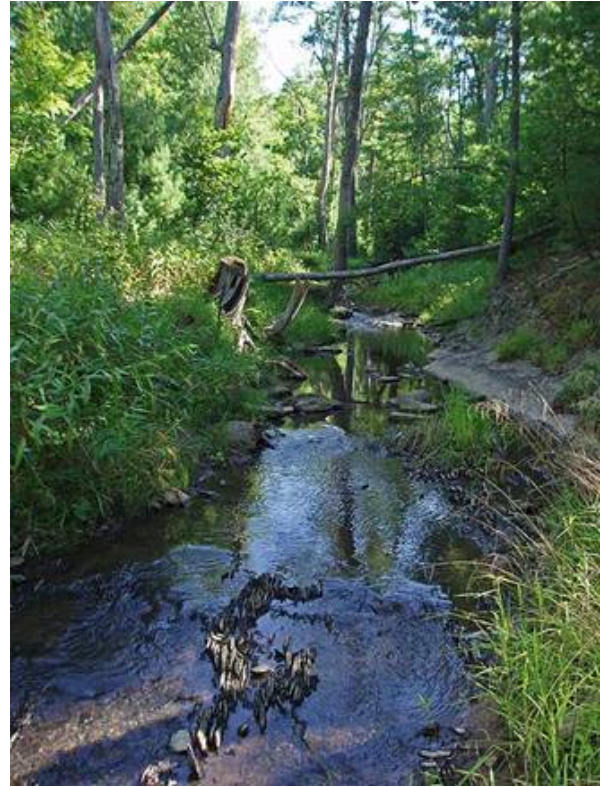
The retreat runs from Friday evening May 22 through Sunday morning May 24. Cost is \$170 per person and includes two nights stay plus all meals and materials. Contact John Carter or Kevin Montgomery to secure your place.

## St. Thomas' Spring Hike in the West Virginia Mountains



**\*SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2009\*** Come join us for a 9.5-mile circuit hike to White Rocks lookout in the Great North Mountain area of George Washington National Forest. Our route will encounter forested trails, streams, a wonderful view from White Rocks eastward, and perhaps a deer or two.

On a clear day one can see all the way to Shenandoah National Park.



This hike will cover approximately 1,840 vertical feet and take around 5 hours, including lunch and breaks. We will carpool from the church parking lot at 8:00 AM SHARP and drive to the trailhead on Waites Mill Road in Wardensville, WV, just over the Virginia state border.

Bring plenty of water, pack a lunch, dress in layers, and wear appropriate hiking boots/footwear (we may need to hop scotch across small streams at times). Clouds and sprinkles will not deter us! Have a favorite verse or poem on God's earth and the gift of



nature? Bring it to share at rest breaks. If time allows, we may reward ourselves with a trip to a vineyard or dinner on our return to DC, for those who are interested.

Please sign up at church on the door going into coffee hour and indicate if you can drive! For further information, call Jerry Donahoe at (202) 543-1339.

This is an electronics, cell phone and smoke-free event!



## Faces of St. Thomas' - Kevin Montgomery

Kevin was born in Montgomery, Alabama, but soon moved to the Birmingham area. He later moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where his family has its origins. He attended Emory University in Atlanta, GA, before spending about 4 1/2 years in Berkeley, CA, at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, an Episcopal seminary, getting his master's degrees in theology. He temporarily returned to Mississippi before

moving to this area to start doctoral work at Catholic University in 2007. Though he's fond of his Southern roots, he now considers the District of Columbia to be home.

Through an uncle who happened to be a close friend of Wayne & Nancy's, Kevin discovered St. Thomas. That's where the initial connection lay. I asked Kevin about his favorite aspects of St. Thomas' Parish and to reveal a bit about his educational background, interests and spiritual beliefs...

"What I enjoy about St. Thomas are the people, the excellent music, the fact that it's small enough so that I don't get lost in the crowd yet still has an enormous energy that encourages growth (both in numbers and in relationship to God).

Given that I'm a grad student, academic pursuits are my primary interest right now, particularly theology and liturgy. However, I've got a wide variety of side interests, such as politics, history, and science. I'm also a bit of a sci-fi geek (Star Wars, Star Trek, Babylon 5, Battlestar Galactica, Doctor Who, Torchwood) I'd like to be able to travel more. I've been to the United Kingdom (even spent a semester at St. Andrews in Scotland), France, and Italy; but one day I'd love to visit New Zealand, Australia, China, and a whole host of other places.

My Christian faith is absolutely vital in my life and has kept me going through some tough times. I'm totally nuts about good worship. Although my usual preference tends to be "smells-and-bells," I'm pretty "liturgi-flexible." I believe that liturgy should be done well but also in a way that fits the piety of the congregation. Another thing I like about St. Thomas' is that, in a sense, the liturgy doesn't end with the dismissal. Instead, we're propelled out into the world to shine the light of Christ on the injustices of the world."

*And that's a wrap on the May Phoenix! By the way, if you know of someone you would like to see featured in "Faces of St. T's" please email me a suggestion and I'll see if they'd like to share their story with us. I hope everyone has a glorious May Springtime. As you read this (hopefully) I'm stuffed into a Mini Cooper heading to Atlantic City with a group of good friends. Between us, I opted for Rehobeth but I was out-voted... anyway it will be nice to escape town for a few days and I'll certainly be in good company. Next month we have all the Pride festivities to look forward to, I can't wait! GM*

Updated Parish news can always be found online at [www.stthomasdc.org/news/index.html](http://www.stthomasdc.org/news/index.html)

Send Phoenix articles to  
[phoenix@stthomasdc.org](mailto:phoenix@stthomasdc.org)  
Send Parish announcements to  
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