



Hickory Neck Nuggets

Hickory Neck Parish Episcopal Church

May 2010

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Where We Are

The Reverend Michael L. Delk



I've received so many kind compliments about how helpful you found the cover article on how our staff and parish prepares for worship, I thought I might write another in the same vein. (If you haven't read that first article and can't find your paper copy or deleted the e-mail, you can find it along with all the other back editions at our website, www.hickoryneck.org.) In this little glimpse into how the Church works, I thought I'd respond to an oft asked question, "Where are Michael and Lauren?" This question comes about when someone calls or drops by the office, only to discover that, somewhat like the angel at the empty tomb, Hope informs you that we are no longer there. Where have we gone?

Sometimes, we're at the hospital visiting sick parishioners. If a person is in Sentara, which is nearby, the visit, including travel time, can be relatively brief, maybe an hour or so. Some people are placed in one of the Newport News hospitals, a longer journey that makes these visits a two-hour task. When someone is seriously ill or needs certain types of specialists, they are often sent to a Richmond hospital, like the Medical College of Virginia, and less often to a

Norfolk hospital. At minimum these are three hour trips from door-to-door. However, this only holds true for relatively brief visits of a half-hour. Once I spent nine hours at a Richmond hospital to be with a family during a critical time.

We also visit people in their homes. A usual home visit lasts about an hour, but can take more or less, depending upon the parishioner's needs and their endurance, since some of the people we visit at home are quite frail. Our parish family lives all over: New Kent, throughout James City County, Williamsburg, and York County, so there can be considerable travel time involved in these visits, too.

We also hold meetings in people's homes. The tradition at Hickory Neck over the past several years is that the Rector and the Wardens meet once a month in the Senior Warden's home. These gatherings generally run about two hours. Frequently, we meet people in public for breakfast, lunch, or coffee to discuss issues of ministry or to get to know people new to Hickory Neck a bit better. These take anywhere from one to two hours. Lately, Lauren and I have been knocking on doors in the neighborhoods sprouting up around Hickory Neck. We usually do this for about an hour at a time, once or twice a week. (It's emotionally exhausting and exhilarating.)

Lauren and I also have diocesan commitments. Participation in something larger than just our parish is one of the great blessings of being an Episcopalian. Many of you remember that we

were able to acquire land only by the grace of God working through Bruton Parish, which gave us \$25,000 for a down payment. Most of you probably don't know that we receive an interest-subsidy check from the diocese each year that covers roughly one month of our mortgage.

For clergy, helping the broader Church beyond our parish is one of our ordination vows. Each month, the clergy of our convocation gathers for Clericus. Depending upon where on the peninsula this meeting happens, it can take up to three hours. Clericus is a great forum for sharing and learning new ideas for better ministry, and it serves as a support structure for clergy to offer mutual support. Our new bishop has made it quite clear that attendance at these gatherings is not optional.

Lauren serves on a subcommittee of The Commission on Ministry, which meets all day about once a month. She is also required to attend monthly day-long meetings of Fresh Start, held for new clergy like Lauren and for clergy new to our diocese. This offers a support system for clergy climbing a steep learning curve.

There are two diocesan clergy conferences each year. One takes one day, and one takes two. These are hosted by our diocesan camp and conference center, Chanco on the James, in Surry. Again, these are command performances and provide us with ideas and information that help us and the parish do ministry better.

Right now, by my own choice, I hold no office in the diocese, for the first time in seven years. Yet in the past my diocesan responsibilities have taken me as far as Farmville, which turned out to be a twelve-hour excursion. (No, I didn't get lost as part of that.) I also travel to our diocesan headquarters in Norfolk, Talbot Hall, on average about every other month for a variety of reasons, like meeting with our Bishop as he interviews Hickory Neck parishioners who are discerning vocations to Holy Orders. These trips can take anywhere from three to six hours, depending on the circumstances.

In my previous article, I referred to the process of creating a sermon. Lauren and I both prefer to do this at home, where there are fewer distractions. Preparing a sermon takes a great deal of concentration. Without a doubt, I do my best writing at home;

which benefits everyone on Sunday morning. In fact, as I write this now on a Monday morning at 9:30 a.m., I am upstairs in my study. Preparing classes and workshops also requires a high level of concentration, if it is to be done properly and efficiently. About half of my work for the Monday night Bible study takes place right here in my study at home.

And then there's the reality of flex-time. We are all familiar with this. Very few people work nine-to-five anymore, especially if you must work with people around their busy schedules. Most of our meetings and classes occur at night or on the weekends. It is not uncommon for Lauren or me to work six or seven days a week. At least one or two of those days is a 12 – 14 hour day. We don't mind this. We knew from the beginning that this is part of being a priest, and we both have good stamina.

However, we are also aware that tired people make bad decisions, and as priests our bad decisions can affect people in terribly devastating ways. So if she or I have pulled an intense stretch, we might elect to flex out some of that time by taking a morning or an afternoon off. If we have commitments in the morning and the evening, we might break it up by taking three or four hours in the afternoon, making what would otherwise be a 12 or 13 hour day more reasonable.

Then there are our weekday Sabbaths. Clergy don't have weekends. We work on Sunday, and usually on Saturday, too. Lauren takes Monday. I take Thursday or Friday, depending upon which day people need me and are able to meet. These days off allow us time to rest, reflect, and nurture ourselves physically and spiritually, so that we can continue to serve the parish effectively.

Let me emphasize, though, that despite the many ministry activities that take us out of the office, we are available and eager to spend time with you. It is very rare for someone to wait more than a few days to meet with me. If it is urgent, I can shuffle my schedule, and meet within twenty-four hours. We are here for you. That doesn't necessarily mean that we are in the office all the time waiting for you, but if we are at our desks, come on in. If the door is closed, ask Hope if we're with somebody else, and if not, knock. Most of the things we do, like preparing for worship or organizing events or planning programs or answering our e-mail or making phone calls can wait. You are not an interruption to this work. You are our work. You are welcome

to drop by to see us, but calling ahead is usually a good idea, because as you can see, on any given day, we could be in a half-dozen different places serving the parish, and we ourselves don't know when the alarm clock rings what any given day might bring us.

GoodSearch

Steve Snyder

Williamsburg Yorktown Daily (wydaily.com) recently published an article by staff writer Desiree Parker called "Good to Know: Click to Give." In the article Ms. Parker discussed an internet search engine called GoodSearch which Hickory Neck members, and friends of Hickory Neck, can use to raise money for our church.

Here's how it works. Go to GoodSearch.com and follow the directions to install the GoodSearch toolbar on your browser. Then each time you use it to search for something online, the charity of your choice (enter "Hickory" and select Hickory Neck Episcopal Church from the drop down list) will receive one penny. That may not seem like much, but pennies do add up.

According to Ms. Parker, GoodSearch has over 89,000 non-profits on its lists, including many local ones. Income ranges from a few hundred dollars (Greater Williamsburg United Way has raised \$300 over the past three years) to thousands of dollars for nationally known non-profits such as the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (\$13,000 so far).

Once you have the GoodSearch toolbar installed, you can also visit the GoodShop where a percentage of your purchase also goes to the charity of your choice. For example, I spend a fair amount of money buying computer supplies at Staples. In the future, if I use GoodShop to buy my supplies online at Staples, 2% of my purchase will be credited to Hickory Neck. If the value of my purchase is over \$50.00 (usually the case if I'm purchasing printer supplies) I'll get free shipping, and I'll actually end up spending less than if I had driven into Williamsburg and made my purchase at the local Staples. So it's a win-win situation. I pay a little less for

my supplies and Hickory neck gets 2% of the value of my order.

If you're into internet shopping, you need to check out GoodShop. There are over 1,300 stores listed and many of them give more than 2% to your favorite charity. Additionally, even if you don't want to buy anything, there are coupons for stores like Barnes & Noble, Home Depot, Best Buy and many, many others.

An article similar to this one appeared in the Epistle near the end of last month. It provided notice that GoodSearch was going to donate \$1 for each toolbar downloaded between April 6th at 9:00 a.m. and April 9th at 9:00 a.m. up to a total of \$5,000; and urged parishioners to mark their calendars and download the toolbar during that time period. Unfortunately, Hickory Neck only earned one of those bonus dollars. Either only one person from Hickory Neck downloaded the toolbar during that time slot, or the \$5,000 was given away before any other Hickory "Neckers" downloaded the toolbar. So, we didn't earn many bonus dollars, but Hickory Neck can still benefit by our use of the GoodSearch toolbar.

Nancy and I have been using it since the middle of March, and I've watched the amount Hickory Neck has earned on almost a daily basis. As of the end of March we had raised only \$0.63. However, thanks to a few others joining us, as of April 15th our earnings were \$2.90 and increasing steadily. Think about it – if we could get 50 parishioners regularly using GoodSearch and GoodShop (we have the potential for more than that), we could be raising significant money for our church.

If you have any questions about downloading the GoodSearch toolbar, please don't hesitate to call me at 804-577-3175.



Visit Hickory Neck on the web at www.hickoryneck.org

Williamsburg Faith in Action “Makes a Difference in People’s Lives”

Jim Izzo



**FAITH
IN ACTION**

Faith in Action is a national movement that brings together volunteers from many faiths and the local community. Started with a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Faith in Action* has had a Williamsburg chapter since 2002, according to Rita Smith, its executive director since 2008. *Faith in Action* fosters caring relationships between volunteers

and members of the greater Williamsburg area who are elderly, chronically ill, or disabled. “Our goal is to enable people to maintain their independence and remain in their own homes as long as possible,” Rita said, “before they need to live with a family member or go into a nursing home.”

Williamsburg Faith In Action (WFIA) has trained 350 volunteers, of whom 280 are now active, working with 392 people. There are currently 10 volunteers from Hickory Neck Church and a number of parishioners who receive care. Training sessions are available at the *WFIA* office at McLaws Circle (757-258-5890) on the last Tuesday and Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Volunteers can choose the type of service they would like to give to those in need, as well as the day(s) and time they are available to work.

Transportation to doctor and dental appointments, beauty salons or barber shops, church, the library, post office, and other errands, such as grocery shopping, is a major service provided by volunteers to the elderly, disabled, or chronically ill.

Respite care – temporary relief for family caregivers – is another important role played by volunteers in the lives of those in need. The quality companionship provided by volunteers serves both the caregivers and care receivers. Respite care does not involve hands-on personal care such as medicating, toileting, or

bathing.

Friendly visiting matches a volunteer and care receiver with similar interests, such as hobbies or work, or just to talk about life. Volunteers can choose to do light housekeeping or light yard work, or even work from their own home by making telephone calls on a daily or regular basis, depending on the request of the care receiver. “We can do almost anything that is needed as long as we have a volunteer willing and able to do it,” Rita Smith said. “I regret that we can’t do more for some people.”

Despite the corps of volunteers, *WFIA* has various expenses every month (telephone, internet, utilities, etc.) with only two paid part-time staff members to coordinate the efforts of approximately 280 volunteers; thus, the need for financial donations, such as that given by Hickory Neck Church. Rita Smith, who began as a volunteer herself with *WFIA*, says she misses the hands-on work, “but what we do from the office is also important and rewarding – knowing that we’re making a difference in peoples’ lives.”



Gay Forloine is shown presenting one of Hickory Neck’s monthly outreach checks to Rita Smith, Executive Director of Williamsburg Faith in Action.



Nugget Notes

At Hickory Neck, we welcome everyone to participate in everything freely, member or non-member. However, if you would like to become an official member of Hickory Neck, we want to make that happen for

you. Simply call our office, 566-0276, or speak to **Father Michael** or **Pastor Lauren**. There are several ways to join. If you have not yet been baptized, we would be overjoyed to speak with you about receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. If you are already baptized, we can transfer you in as a baptized member, and if your letter of membership resides in another congregation, we can write them and affect the transfer. Official membership entitles a person to vote and stand as a candidate in parish elections, but making the commitment of membership is also a good way to affirm your commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ in this place.

Gay Forloine (Pastoral Care) sends the following message to the Parish – What a blessing to be part of the Hickory Neck family. Such an incredible outpouring of caring parishioners who offer rides, meals, prayer shawls/lap robes, prayers, home or hospital visits, home communion, and health information. As always, we could use some help in all these ministries. If you would like to offer your time and energy please contact **Pam Maloof** for friendly visits, **Betty Somloi** for Eucharistic Visitors, **Pam Stromberg** for emergency meals, **Christine Hanlon** for new mom's meals, **Lynn Kelley** for prayer warriors and prayer shawls, **Carolyn Gaylord** for health ministry, and **Gay Forloine** for rides and hospital visits. Don't forget to contact **Father Michael, Pastor Lauren** or the parish office when you have a health issue, crisis or just need a little help. Do you know why there is so much truth in the saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? Well the Hickory Neck ministers know the answer – when you are giving in this community, you will receive back more blessings than you can count. If you are on the receiving end of a ministry at Hickory Neck, thank you for allowing us to serve you!

On Saturday, May 15th, from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. the Women's Spirituality Group will meet. Each meeting of the group includes a short Bible study or presentation on a saint or prayer practice, small group conversations, and time for prayer. You don't have to do anything to prepare, just come ready to participate in this community of women growing deeper in their lives in Christ. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact **Pastor Lauren**.

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May Celebrations



Birthdays

1 - Lily Dutro	15 - Margaret Sutton
2 - Mary Jo Smith	18 - Linda McGee
4 - Lynn Kelly	20 - Rebecca Smith
4 - Daniel Mills	20 - David Ware
5 - Neal Lensenmeyer	22 - Amanda Buckley
5 - Bob Pringle	22 - Diane Perry
7 - Suzi Blanchard	23 - Sherron Ware
7 - Ree Stone	24 - Chester Tantillo
7 - Jeanne Williams	24 - Steven Thomas
8 - Bob Byrd	26 - Trevor Simmons
9 - Bert Geddy	27 - Joan Izzo
9 - Gary Lensenmeyer	29 - Jamie Seeterlin
10 - Jennie McCray	30 - Paul Casanave
12 - Alita Small	30 - Kathryn Seeterlin
13 - Ben Field	30 - Lou Siegel
15 - Ruth Rowland	

Anniversaries

9 - Judy & Jessie Hodges
20 - Tanya & Chuck White
22 - Barbara & George Johnson
24 - Shannon & Ron Houser
24 - Barbara & Ray Laroche
27 - Tina & Noel Sinclair
30 - Jessica & Stuart Hughes
31 - Barbara & Brian Husted

If your birthday or anniversary is this month and you are not listed above, please send the appropriate information to nansteve13@cox.net or call us at (804) 557-3175.

Ridiculously Prolific

The Reverend Michael L. Delk



The world is yellow-green. Cars, deck chairs, sidewalks, awnings – all colored with that sickly hue. Perhaps your immune system is as offended as mine.

If Colonel Kurze of *Apocalypse Now* fame spent a spring in Southern Virginia, perhaps he would be whispering about “The pollen, the pollen,” instead of “The horror, the horror.”

OK, maybe that’s a bit of overkill, but when your sinuses are stuffed with cotton, your throat feels sandpapered (and not by that prissy fine-grained stuff), and your skin itches irrepressibly, one is tempted toward such exaggeration. For those of you who do not suffer from seasonal allergies, congratulations! And I hate you. (Just kidding.)

By the time you read this, hopefully by God’s mercy, the landscape will have returned to its natural color, the eyes of the allergic will tear up at more emotionally gratifying moments, and our sinuses will be happy again. But the other day it occurred to me what might happen should the dew of pollen disappear from our spring.

Pollen fertilizes almost every plant. Some somehow get by without it, but without it, the beauty of many flowers would never bloom. The fruit and vegetable aisle at the grocery would be sparse. So much that we desperately need yet so frequently take for granted would simply vanish were it not for those abundant tiny flecks of pollen.

Still, one wonders why nature feels the need to be so terribly prolific. Maybe it’s a safety mechanism to ensure that plants are properly pollinated, or perhaps pollen comes in such prodigious quantities simply to allow me the pleasure of abusing the rhetorical device of alliteration and use fun words like “prodigious.” (There’s a Scrabble winner there for

ya.) But I think the reason nature goes so super crazy-wacko-nutso with the pollen (are you trying to guess the antihistamine level in my bloodstream right now?) is that nature is just prolific, another Scrabble-daddy word that breaks down into the prefix “pro,” which means “for,” and the root word “life.”

Nature is literally “for life,” and it is in our nature as Christians to be for life, too. That is why we might acknowledge the necessity of some wars, but we are not allowed to enjoy or celebrate them. Celebrate the honor and nobility that war elicits from some? Absolutely. Gloat over the demise of our enemies, for whom Jesus specifically commanded us to pray in his Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew? Absolutely not.

Capital punishment is a more sensitive topic, but one in which Christians are likewise called to be “for life.” Killing a child of God who has done a terrible thing does nothing to rectify the situation. An execution is an act of vengeance, plain and simple, and for those who have extracted vengeance, though hopefully not through killing a defenseless person, we know that it is a hollow bitter meal, whether it is served hot or cold. Not to mention Romans 12:19, where the Apostle Paul wrote, “Beloved never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord,’” a quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35.

Of course, no reflection on the prolific nature of Christians would be complete without touching upon that most hazardous topic of all, abortion. To borrow a phrase from a former president, I believe abortion should be safe, legal, and rare. Abortions will happen. History proves this. The only real question is how: in a sterile clinical setting with adequate counseling, or in a back alley with a coat hanger under the threat of incarceration?

I know that many in the parish will disagree with me on this, from both sides of the issue. To those who think that life begins at conception, I would ask, “Have you ever practiced contraception?” The reason I ask is that

a four-week old zygote has the potential for life, but does not bear viability outside the womb. Your eggs and sperms also have the potential for life, and this is why the Roman Catholic Church mandates against contraception. It is also interesting that many pregnancies are never noticed, because approximately one-fourth spontaneously abort in the first trimester. If God is responsible for the miracle of life, does this
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Vacation Bible School Set For August 2 – 6

Paula Simmons

From 9:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday during the first week in August, St. Martin’s will be a busy place indeed. *ReNew: The Green VBS* will have children (age 3 through rising sixth graders) scurrying around their facilities, growing in faith, having fun, and changing the world as they practice the stewardship of creation. *ReNew* uses a modified rotation model. That means kids rotate through Self, Community, and World activity sites each day. At each site, they explore what the Bible story and creation-care mean for their everyday lives and for all creation around the globe. One of the best ways to grow in faith is to put faith into action and see the results. That’s why many of the *ReNew* activities have an outward focus toward service with and in our local community and the world. Kids will “think globally and act locally” every single day! This VBS focuses on one story, Jesus’ Parable of the Sower, so kids can explore this parable in-depth, rather than trying to learn multiple non-consecutive stories over a short period of time. Each day at *ReNew*, kids hear the entire Bible story, but then focus on one section of it to discover what the passage means for them and how it relates to caring for God’s creation.

As the third in a series of environmentally focused vacation Bible schools offered by the three area Episcopal churches (Bruton, Hickory Neck and St. Martin’s), the emphasis for *ReNew* will be “feeding God’s people.” Two years ago the co-operative VBS concentrated on “caring for God’s creation” by learning to recycle and reuse materials. Last year’s VBS spotlighted “sheltering God’s people” by learning about Habitat for Humanity. *ReNew* will support outreach efforts to feed God’s people both in the community and the

world as well as the VBS participants. In conjunction with the Parable of the Sower and St. Martin’s community garden, VBS participants will plant and take home daily the makings for a “pizza garden” for their family — tomatoes, basil, onions, oregano and peppers.

Please keep an eye out for the registration forms and volunteer opportunities for *ReNew*. Tell the parents of your children’s friends about *ReNew* and let them in on the excitement. Contact Paula Simmons at 564-7998 for more information.



Treasurer's Report

(as of 3/31/2010)

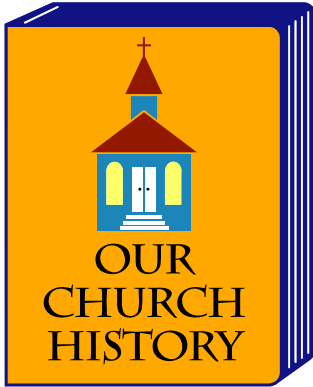
YTD Budget Income	\$110,569.77
YTD Actual Income	\$121,132.36
YTD Budget Expense	\$110,569.77
YTD Actual Expense	\$108,348.93

Fred Boelt writes that financially speaking, March was a break-even month. Income was down by \$2,200, largely due to a drop in pledge contributions. Contribution summaries for the first quarter have been mailed. We invite you to use these statements as an aid to keep pledges up to date. Expenses were also down by \$2,300, leaving us modestly in the black for March. The year-to-date totals remain favorable as we continue to operate in the black by about \$12,800. Additionally, we made an extra payment to the principal of our mortgage in the amount of \$2,000, bringing the balance to \$466,280 at the end of March.

Meteorologically speaking, March was a transitional month. The Vernal Equinox signaled the coming of spring, a time of new birth and a renewal of life. The opening line of a familiar hymn, “On a green hill far away...” could also apply to a hill nearby. Our own hill at Hickory Neck is greening up again with both new and renewed life, reminding us of all that we have to be thankful for. The thoughtful stewardship of all of our members and friends allows us to continue to maintain our “green hill,” and to provide comfort and assistance far and near.

Famous Last Words

Martha W. McCartney



During the colonial period, Hickory Neck, like Virginia's other Anglican churches, had a cemetery. But today, there is scant evidence of our colonial burial ground, just as there are few surviving grave markers in the churchyards of Hickory Neck's rural contemporaries. We know that in 1742 a 100 foot by 100 foot brick wall was

built around Hickory Neck Church, an enclosure for an area in which interments could be made. How many burials took place remains a mystery. The watercolor rendering of Hickory Neck, produced by Robert Knox Sneden in 1862, shows a brick walled yard studded with broken gravestones. In 1934 Mrs. Lucy James, who attended school at Hickory Neck between 1893 and 1896, recalled that during recess, children scampered among the old burial markers. Today, all that remains is a fragment of Lawrence Taliaferro's tabletop tombstone, which during the early 20th century was embedded in concrete in the porch of our historic church.

Sometimes, our forebearers, in anticipation of death, made wills in which they declared their faith, quoted from the Prayer Book, or apologized for their own shortcomings. And occasionally, they left a message for those who visited their graves. For instance, on October 27, 1663, when Richard Cole of Westmoreland County made his will, he specified that his tombstone bear the following inscription:

*Heere lies Dick Cole, a grievous sinner
That died a little before dinner
Yet hopes in heaven to find a place
To satiate his soule with grace.*

Cole, a merchant of ample means, lived until 1670. He distinguished himself by occasionally flying into drunken rages and making wild accusations against his neighbors. Perhaps the combustible Mr. Cole had something in common with this Englishman whose

tombstone inscription undoubtedly was drafted by others.

*Here Huntington's ashes long have lain
Whose loss is our eternal gain,
For while he exercised all his powers
Whatever he gained, the loss was ours.*

At Jamestown, merchant and attorney William Sherwood, who served several terms in the assembly, declared that he was *a great sinner awaiting a joyful resurrection*. Although full extent of Sherwood's transgressions remain a mystery, it is certain that he was a convicted felon. Last but not least was an Englishman named Hotten. His epitaph simply stated:

*Hotten
Rotten
Forgotten.*

Almost a Half-Dozen Things For the Second-Half of May

The Reverend Michael L. Delk

On Thursday, May 13th, we will celebrate Ascension Day, the event when forty-days after his resurrection Jesus rose bodily into heaven, with a Eucharist in the Historic Chapel at 7:00 p.m.

On Saturday, May 15th, from 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., at Hot Stacks in Lightfoot off Richmond Road, the men of the parish will gather for breakfast. The guest speaker will be yours truly, and we will also share a question and answer time afterwards, along with some great fellowship and prayer together.

On Sunday, May 16th, the youth group will hold a car wash to benefit Relay for Life, which supports cancer research. So go play in your favorite mud puddle that weekend, bring your car in, hand over your keys with fearless faith to a sixteen-year-old, and then go to worship. Once you're done, your car should be ready, too.

On Sunday, May 23rd, we celebrate The Great Feast of Pentecost, well-known as the "birthday" of the Church. Pentecost is one of only five great feasts in

our Church calendar, the others being All Saints' Day, Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. You can read all about it in the first few chapters of The Acts of the Apostles. We hope you'll make a special effort to worship on this day, and wear red to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit, our constant companion.

On Sunday, May 30th, we will pause for a moment of silence to honor those who paid the ultimate price in the defense of our freedoms. Our worship will also feature patriotic hymns and prayers.

Outreach Update

The Reverend Lauren McDonald

Community



Outreach

On April 13th a group of about 25 people gathered in the Wilkinson Center for a celebration of Outreach. We had some refreshments and fellowship, received an update on outreach activities in 2010 and heard witness talks from Jan Brown and Laurie

Brown about their ministries. It was an informative and meaningful evening. We'll plan to have another one coming up later in the year. Hickory Neck is making great strides in becoming more involved in hands on outreach this year. Of course there's always more to be done, but it's important to step back periodically and celebrate the ways we are reaching out to others.

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, May is the month we are featuring our Outreach partner, Williamsburg Faith in Action. During May, we will also be collecting items to be sent to some of our troops in Afghanistan. These items will include things like pocket crosses, baby wipes, small pack of Kleenex, toothpaste, dental floss, etc. Keep your eyes open for a flyer with more detailed information. We will be collecting these items through Memorial Day weekend.

Nugget Notes

(continued from page 5)

The Nuggets is seeking a new Spotlight Reporter, or two writers to "share the spotlight" duties. If interested, please call **Nancy Snyder** at (804) 557-3175 or email her at nansteve13@cox.net.

There is a box under the kiosk in the Narthex to collect old eyeglasses and hearing aids for the Lion's Club Recycling Program. The Lion's Club uses these to help people in need of these items. Please see **Margene Hartsough** with questions.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation/Automated External Defibrillator training will be held in the Narthex on Saturday, May 15th and 22nd, at 10:00 a.m. If interested, contact Bert Geddy at 566-0234.

Hickory Neck Church is now on Facebook. Check us out online.

Become a Charter Member

Bill Teale

Two years ago the Vestry of Hickory Neck Church passed a resolution establishing the Hickory Neck Church Covenant Fund and appointed a five person Endowment Board. The purpose of the fund is to provide perpetual financial resources to support the long term vision of our church and its members. It will enable Hickory Neck Church to expand its ministry to our community. Since the Endowment Board was established, it has developed guidelines for the operation of the Covenant Fund and encouraged parishioners to include Hickory Neck Church in their will or trust.

What the Covenant Fund does not have is any money. The current members of the Board, Penny Orth, Coleman Ragsdale, Alyson Ross, Bill Small and Bill Teale addressed this problem at their March meeting by suggesting that Charter Membership Certificates be issued to any member of Hickory Neck Church who makes a gift to the fund in the charter period.

Won't you help launch the fund by making a contribution to the Hickory Neck Church Covenant Fund, and earn your own Charter Member Certificate?



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Ridiculously Prolific (continued from page 7)

make God an abortionist?

To those who defend the rights of the pregnant woman, I point out the remarkable developments in neo-natal care that afford positive outcomes for fetuses born at 24 or even 22 weeks gestation. Viability is a word that literally means "there can be a way," and to me a fetus viable for life outside the womb is a child.

In a more general sense, what we learn from nature – that astonishing, prolific, exquisite, exuberant assembly of creatures – is that we, being a part of nature and not above it, are meant to be equally astonishing, prolific, exquisite, and exuberant in our lives. This does not necessarily mean make as many babies as biologically possible. Instead, it is a call to live fully and to share ourselves in such a way that allows others to blossom and flourish and bear fruit. This is particularly true for those who follow Jesus Christ.

How we do that is largely up to us. God has endowed each of us with spiritual gifts for ministry, which needs to occur both within the aegis of the community called Church and outside of it in the world at large. Yet there are two conditions. We are meant to spread the life we share in Jesus indiscriminately and without a desire for control.

When a plant disgorges its pollen, there is no designated recipient, and the plant depends upon insects and other animals, the wind and the rain, to deliver its precious gift of possibility. Too often we get caught up with worry about whether our gift to the world will be understood and appreciated or used the way we want. We wish our gifts to go only to the

most worthy, but the truth is that nobody is worthy or unworthy on their own merits when it comes to the gift of life. Even the most faithful Christian is unworthy for the everlasting life offered through Jesus Christ. We are made worthy solely by grace, which is the epitome of a gift.

So embrace the blessing of pollen, despite the discomfort or inconvenience it may cause. Embrace as well your own spiritual fecundity, but not too tightly. Spread it around with reckless abandon. Together, we might just turn the world a brighter hue.



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