



Hickory Neck Nuggets

Hickory Neck Parish Episcopal Church

October 2007

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Bishop Buchanan to Visit Hickory Neck for Confirmation, Naming of Parish House

The Very Reverend Michael L. Delk

On Sunday, November 4th, the Right Reverend John C. Buchanan, Interim Bishop of Southern Virginia, will visit Hickory Neck. Our 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Eucharist that Sunday will be consolidated into a single celebration at 9:30 a.m. in the New Chapel. The 8:00 a.m. Eucharist will be held in the Historic Chapel that Sunday, to better facilitate the preparations down the hill.

During his visit, Bishop Buchanan will confirm several parishioners, who are currently undergoing or have already undergone preparatory classes. Bishop Buchanan will also preside over the re-dedication and naming of our Parish House.

In March 2007, the Vestry considered my suggestion that the Parish House be given a commemorative name, as a way of recognizing someone who has served Hickory Neck with great diligence. This is not an uncommon practice. St. Martin's recently named its parish hall after retired rector, Pickett Miles. Long ago, Bruton named its parish hall after a former rector. Of course, we're not doing this just because everybody else does it. But it's important to realize how deep the tradition runs in the Episcopal Church of naming non-worship facilities after

people, both living and departed.

The sole candidate the Vestry considered for this signal honor was not a priest, but a lay person -- Colonel (retired) Richard F. Wilkinson, though those who know him call him Dick. The Vestry voted with enthusiastic unanimity to name our Parish House the Wilkinson Christian Leadership Center. This wording was chosen in part for the great example of Christian leadership

Dick has shown throughout his life, but also because the staff offices are housed in the Parish House, and someday, the entire building will likely be occupied with staff offices, as we continue to grow.

Currently serving as one of three parish Trustees, a post he has held since 1975, Dick has amassed an astonishing record since returning to Wil-

liamsburg after retirement from the Army. Elected to Vestry in 1973, Dick was elected Junior Warden by his colleagues in 1974, and rose to Senior Warden in 1975. During that time, he enhanced Hickory Neck's fiscal transparency and stability by introducing a revised budget format. Dick also helped to negotiate a gift of one acre of land from the Hankins' family, in preparation for the construction of the congregation's first parish house.

"When I was about ten years old -- 1931 or so -- Mrs. Snead, the doctor's wife, got eight or ten little boys to sing in the choir at Hickory Neck Church. It was the only service we had. No electricity, a candlelight service on Sunday night, Evening Prayer." With tears in his eyes, he said, "It was [among] the most wonderful moments of my life"

During this period, Dick was also active in the councils of the Diocese, serving as a lay delegate for Hickory Neck in 1973 and 1974. In 1975, he was nominated to serve a three year term on the Standing Committee, the senior post available for a layperson at the diocesan level. Simultaneously, Hickory Neck appointed Dick to be chair of the building committee, which was tasked with designing and completing Hickory Neck's first parish house.

Rolling off Vestry in 1976, Dick accepted appointment as Treasurer. He was re-elected to Vestry in 1977, became Junior Warden again in 1978, and was Senior Warden in 1979 – a big year in the life of our faith family. Parish House construction began that year, and during the annual parish meeting, Dick, as part of his Senior Warden's report, announced to the diocese that Hickory Neck would move from mission to parish status within ten years. Goals were set for stewardship and evangelism, with plans underway to occupy the Parish House in 1980.

Dick served as Stewardship Chairman in 1980 and 1983, on the Audit Committee in 1982, and returned to Vestry in 1986. He was a member of the Search Committee that brought the The Reverend Jim Kellett from Vermont to Hickory Neck. In 1987, as Senior Warden, he signed a petition requesting Hickory Neck's elevation from mission to parish status. On account of our growth, we had become able to sustain ourselves financially without diocesan support. This petition was duly received and parish status granted. In 1997, when it was time to expand and renovate the existing Parish House, Dick worked as the Advance Gifts Chairman of the capital campaign, helping raise over \$300,000.

However, perhaps the most moving reason to rename this facility after Dick Wilkinson comes from a reflection he offered at a Men's Breakfast in 2004. After having spoken for over an hour about his service as an infantry captain in North Africa and Italy during World War II, after sharing his memories of over 500 days of life-or-death combat, Dick started talking about his childhood in Toano. Fortunately, we were filming his presentation. What he shared with us truly touches the heart.

“When I was about ten years old – 1931 or so – Mrs. Sneed, the doctor's wife, got eight or ten little boys to sing in the choir at Hickory Neck Church. It was the only service we had. No electricity; a candlelight

service on Sunday night, Evening Prayer.” With tears in his eyes, he said, “It was to me [among] the most wonderful moments of my life.”

The boy chorister who went off to war, served his country for 30 years, and returned home to worship in Toano. As a child he sang; as a man, he served his parish – in every conceivable way – over a span of decades. At a critical juncture in Hickory Neck's history, Dick Wilkinson provided the leadership that brought our congregation from dependency on the diocese to independence and thriving growth.

He didn't do it alone. No one ever does it alone. But he has shown imagination, courage, and determination to aid Hickory Neck in its mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of James City County and beyond. I hope you will join us on Sunday, November 4th, as we celebrate the presence of our Bishop; as we congratulate our newly confirmed members on their commitment to Christ; and as we give a name to our Parish House – a name that belongs to a solid servant and leader who has given so much to Hickory Neck.

Unplug the Christmas Machine

The Reverend Ann Dieterle

On Saturday, October 27th Father Michael and Pastor Ann are presenting a workshop titled “Unplug the Christmas Machine” from 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon. The workshop is based on the popular book of the same title by Jo Robinson and Jean Staeheli. It helps participants reduce their stress and increase their enjoyment of this holy season by making simple changes in the celebration. Participants will be given a chance to examine current practices, define their values, create a fantasy Christmas and then to combine all insights into a workable plan for the coming holiday season.

We held this workshop last year and it was very meaningful to all who participated. We invite you to join us again or for the first time. Child care will be provided during the workshop. Please sign-up on the poster at the kiosk. There is a maximum of 30 people, so sign-up early!



Spotlight on the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group

Carol Goff



From left to right: members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group – Carol Smith, Linda Wever, Kathy Ramsaur, Lynn Kelley and Gay Forloine.

This month the spotlight shines on another of Hickory Neck's service organizations, The Prayer Shawl Group, founded and shepherded by Kathy Ramsaur. After a serious illness, Kathy herself received a handmade shawl from a church group. Its warmth and comfort, along with the inspiring note that accompanied it, helped strengthen her during a troubling time. She decided such a gift merited sharing with others going through fearful experiences. Started just last October, the group has already grown to 25, and meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month in the Parish House to knit or crochet lap robes for men or shawls for women.

Each member brings her lunch, participates in a short prayer service, and then the knitting needles, crochet hooks, and yarn come out as they settle in for an hour of work and fellowship. Of course, between meetings, the robes and shawls are worked on at home. As any dedicated needle worker will tell you, it is a most relaxing, satisfying pastime, and additionally, for the

members of the Prayer Shawl Group, they know they are providing a "comfort in crisis" gift for someone in need of the healing provided by the shawl or lap robe. One member shared a story from a neighbor who had received a lap robe from the group and was facing an extended recuperation. He told her that every afternoon when it was time for his doctor-ordered nap, he settled right down and fell asleep quickly because of his "blankie".

Father Michael or Pastor Ann provides the reference for each recipient who, along with the shawl or lap robe, receives a personal note from the maker, which reads, in part, "This gift was crafted with prayers for your healing in body, mind, and spirit. As you use it, may you feel the warm embrace of the ultimate comforter and healer, our heavenly Father." Each gift is also blessed by Father Michael or Pastor Ann during a Sunday morning service.

The Prayer Shawl Group made 36 gifts last year and distributed 22 of them to those suffering illness or grief, but others were given as remembrances for farewells or special celebrations. The group shares their gifts not only with Hickory Neck members but with anyone who needs "wings" to take them above troubles. However, since each member provides the yarn herself, the group asks for a \$15 donation to cover the expense for someone outside the Hickory Neck family.

Kathy and her group extend a warm welcome to anyone regardless of skill level. Even if you have never knitted or crocheted, you can count on someone in the group to be your teacher and mentor, and soon you'll be wrapped in a group that offers gifts to "cradle the receiver in hope and grace them with peace." This month we salute the Prayer Shawl Group for their handiworks of love.



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

October Celebrations



Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 - Krissy Sherman | 22 - Linda Wever |
| 4 - Madeline Hanlon | 22 - Alex Kelly |
| 5 - Robert Harcourt | 26 - Lesley Henderson |
| 6 - Christine Barnes | 27 - Lynn Geddy |
| 7 - Penny Orth | 27 - Chris Benham |
| 8 - John Greenman | 28 - James Izzo |
| 8 - Joanna Parsons | 28 - JuJu McCabe |
| 11 - Mary Teale | 28 - Patty Rankin |
| 15 - Karen Dutro | 28 - Anna Stone |
| 16 - Ray Laroche | 30 - Randy Tanner |
| 17 - Linda Becker | 30 - Dave Goff |
| 17 - Sue Dugan | 30 - Ron Houser |
| 17 - Abigail Best | 31 - Jean Hancock |
| 18 - Donna Dodd | 31 - Joan Forrest |
| 19 - Tina Sinclair | 31 - Rachel Harcourt |
| 19 - Roland Todd | |

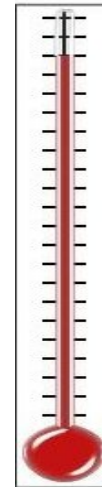
Anniversaries

- 2 - Martha & Ward Burian
- 4 - Christine & Steve Barnes
- 13 - Janice & Leonard Wagner
- 14 - Rebecca & Michael Smith
- 20 - Chris & Dave Benham
- 21 - Cheryl & Mayes Mathews
- 27 - Terri & Gary Lensenmeyer

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.

Close the Gap

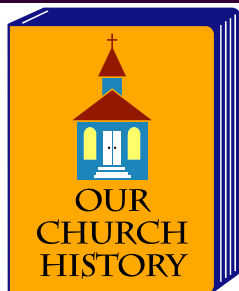
Mayes Mathews Capital Campaign Follow Up Chairman



Sometimes the most difficult part of anything is that last little bit of effort that separates the good enough from the very best. When refinishing a chair, just a little more sanding may produce spectacular results. When washing the car, wringing out the chamois skin one more time may eliminate all the water spots. When balancing the checkbook, one last look may find the errant ten dollars.

So it is with our Capital Campaign. The pledge payments to date are about 97% of the pledges made for the new sanctuary. For the many who have so generously participated, those gifts have represented truly sacrificial giving. A few gifts remain as pledges only. Meanwhile, the Capital Campaign will wrap up in a few months so it is time to close the gap and make this the most successful fund drive in the history of Hickory Neck Church. If you are uncertain as to the status of your pledge, you may contact Fred Boelt or me for assistance. Finally, please remember that your gifts must be presented by the end of the year to qualify as contributions for 2007.

For a variety of reasons, some may never be able to fulfill their pledge. If you missed the opportunity to pledge at the beginning of the campaign, it still isn't too late. Jump in and help us close the gap.



Our French Connection

Martha W. McCartney

Diaries kept during the American Revolution by some of the officers in Rochambeau's Army reveal that French troops and their baggage trains passed by Hickory Neck Church in autumn 1781, enroute to Yorktown and the war's conclusive battle. On October 6, 1781, when Colonel Alexander Berthier went by Hickory Neck, he identified the church as "a meetinghouse." He also noted in his journal that when he had gone another mile, he saw "two old chimneys" in the fork of the roads to Coles Ferry and Williamsburg: the intersection that became known as Burnt Ordinary and later, Toano. Today, part of the road to Coles Ferry is known as Old Forge Road and the road to Williamsburg, as Route 60 or Richmond Road.

The French Army typically marched several miles a day, pausing along the way at pre-determined camp sites. When heading east toward Williamsburg, the French encamped at Doncastle's or Byrd's Ordinary (near the entrance to the Stonehouse community) and at the Drinking Spring (between Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Olive Branch Church), sites that were between five and six miles apart. Although no written records have come to light suggesting that the French pitched camp at Hickory Neck Church, it is likely that some soldiers paused to refresh themselves at the spring near Hickory Neck or to rest in the shade of the churchyard's large walnut trees, which in 1781 would have been around 40 years old. A colorful map produced in 1781-1782 by Major Michael Captaine, a French cartographer, identifies Hickory Neck Church and other local landmarks. *We honor our Allies in the Revolutionary War by placing a French flag in historic Hickory Neck Church.*



Nugget Notes

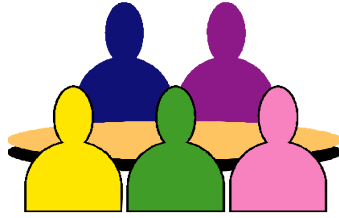
At Hickory Neck, we welcome everyone to participate in everything freely, member or non-member. How-

ever, 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 Ann**. 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.

At our Annual Parish Meeting on December 9th, we will be electing four new Vestry members for the 2008-2010 term and one member for a one year term for 2008. Additionally, we will elect four delegates to represent Hickory Neck at the 2009 Diocesan Council meeting. This will be the Council that elects our new Bishop! Nomination forms are available at the Parish Office for all those interested in being a candidate for these offices. Delegates to Council must be voting members of the Parish as outlined in section 5.2 of the Bylaws, and Vestry members must meet the qualifications outlined in section 6.2 of the Bylaws. The Bylaws are available on the Hickory Neck web page, www.hickoryneck.org/vestry.

Some of you will recall that James City County sponsored a study of the Toano Community Character Corridor in 2005. Recommendations were made to enhance the general appearance of the Toano village area. As early as this fall, we will see signs and landscaping begin to appear in the medians coming into Toano. A group of area citizens has been formed to assist the county in expediting improvements. Currently, the group is applying for a VDOT grant to have new sidewalks, benches and landscaping done between Depot Street and Toano Drive. As part of the process to gain the support of the Board of Supervisors for this project, a petition is being circulated to show citizens' support. This was discussed at our September Vestry meeting and it was felt that if our parishioners signed this petition, it would lend our support to improving our neighborhood. The petition has been posted in the Narthex on the Kiosk and we ask for your support by signing it.

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Vestry Highlights

Eve Butler-Gee, Registrar

The Vestry of Hickory Neck Church was assembled in regular session on Tuesday, September 11, 2007, in the Parish House. The minutes of the August, 2007 Vestry meeting and the Treasurer's report were both approved. The Junior Warden reported that the Time and Talent forms are now on the Hickory Neck Church website in writeable PDF format for those who may be more accustomed to filling in forms that way. The Senior Warden reported the beginning of the nominating process for the election of four new Vestry members to replace the four outgoing members whose terms expire at the end of this year. The Associate Rector reported that the Fall Education for Ministry (EFM) begins on September 19th with the course very close to full again this year; confirmation class began on September 10th; new mid-week Christian Formation classes begin September 16th to include: A Brief History of American Evangelism, taught by Maria Kane; a lecture series on Democracy in America, taught by Gay Forloine; and Exploring the Richness of the Prayer Book, taught by Tom Gee; Youth Kick-Off was September 9th with a strong showing of youth, split this year almost evenly between junior and senior high schoolers; and the second of two sessions (Phase II) of the Pastoral Care "Ministering to the Ministers" retreat was held on September 6th and 8th. The Rector reported that the new Hickory Neck Church pictorial directories will be available for distribution on Sunday, September 23rd; and that Bishop Buchanan's visitation is scheduled for November 4th and it is likely that there will be a consolidation on that Sunday of the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services so that a maximum number of parishioners can be on hand to greet the Bishop. The Vestry received reports from the Newcomers', Outreach and Stewardship Committees and approved the date of Sunday, December 9, 2007 as the date for the Annual Parish meeting. The Vestry discussed and approved the new Hickory Neck

Church mission statement, engendered by the compilation of the work of the visioning groups held late this spring. The next regular meeting of the Vestry meeting will be on Tuesday, October 9, 2007.

Please note that the official minutes of the September Vestry Meeting will be approved at the October meeting and published on the church web page following that meeting.

The Choral Scholars are Back

Ed Godshall
Organist/Choirmaster

By now the Choral Scholars have returned to singing at the 11:15 a.m. service; however, Fred Boelt and I thought that the parishioners who attend that service would like to know why they are returning so late this year.

When the budget funds for this year were allocated, there was not enough money to assure paying the Choral Scholars for both semesters of 2007. It was decided that Hickory Neck could fund them for one semester and that it would be best to maintain continuity by having them singing through the spring semester. We hoped that the financial situation at Hickory Neck would change at some point during the year, enabling us to reinstate them in the fall.

At a recent Vestry meeting, the Vestry's approved a special allocation of funds to have the Choral Scholars return this fall. We have cut back on the number of Sundays they will sing in order not to overspend the operating budget of the church this year.

Hickory Neck has been paying the students \$25 each for the past several years. For this amount of money they have a rehearsal of the music on their own at some time during the week at the College; they drive out to Toano on Sunday morning; they have a half hour rehearsal with me before the service; and then they sing for the service. It is important to keep in mind the possibility that the William and Mary students can sing in many local churches to which they can walk. The other local churches pay them \$50 for a Wednesday or Thursday night rehearsal and for a Sunday morning church service. We are very fortunate to have the dedication of these students since they have these other venues open to them.

If we want to continue this music program in the future, the Choral Scholars need to be supported through the Hickory Neck budget. Another way we are hoping to support them is by establishing a new initiative whereby folks who attend the 11:15 a.m. service *adopt* a student and take him or her to Sunday lunch from time to time. If you are interested in doing this, please let me know.

Nugget Notes

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Two members of Hickory Neck Church will be participating in a medical mission to Belize in October. In addition to personal luggage they will each carry an extra suitcase. One will contain medical supplies for the mission, the other school supplies for St. Mary's Anglican School in Belize City. The empty suitcases will be placed in the Narthex during Sunday services with lists of requested items. Please help fill these suitcases by Sunday, October 7th – for additional information contact **Bunky** or **Rick Garfield** at 566-3538.

We at Hickory Neck have said that we want to be involved in good works in our community. Here are three opportunities: 1. Vibrant Life Ministries – Hickory Neck has adopted a house that will house three homeless men. Furniture and supplies are needed. If interested, please contact **Bob Gay** at 253-0391. 2. From His Hands – The Outreach Council recommended approval of our participation in this program. It will use the Salvation Army's disaster relief canteen truck to provide about 80 evening meals in the Grove area of Williamsburg. Hickory Neck would be required to provide and prepare the meals and then drive the truck to Grove and deliver the meals. We would do this once a quarter and the cost would be less than \$100 each time. We must have sufficient volunteers before we can go forward with this program. If interested, call **Coleman Ragsdale** at 565-2490 or **Chuck Jundt** at 220-5529. 3. FISH – It has been recommended that we restructure our collection of food for the FISH program. Starting in October on the second Sunday of the month parishioners can pick up a fish from the FISH pond that will identify specific items needed at the FISH food bank. These items should then be brought in the next Sunday. They will be collected and then delivered the following day. Items for



Marriages

Lisa Ryan & Dave Swaney

Burials

Bettie Guntherberg

New Members by Letter of Transfer

Michael, Cathleen, Madeleine, Lauriel & Nicholas Hobert

Transfers Out of the Parish

Shirley & Woody Lake (St. Martin's, Williamsburg)
Barbara & Mark Paul (destination unknown)

FISH will also be accepted at the Fall Festival.

Calling all (or at least some) Chefs! Many times in the Gospels we find Jesus sharing a meal with someone. He eats with his disciples, he eats with Pharisees and respected Jewish leaders, and he eats with sinners and tax collectors. Sharing a meal is an important occasion. It builds community and trust, and provides the space for conversation and fellowship. Last year the youth group began sharing meals together when they met on Sunday nights and it proved to be a real gift to them and the adult leaders. We are looking for "chefs" to share in this gift – and by "chefs" we mean anyone who might be able to bring us food – from a homemade creation to a frozen pizza (we are not picky eaters). If you would like to help us in this way, please call **Pastor Ann** at 566-0276 or send her an e-mail at adieterle@hickoryneck.org.

New Relay for Life Captains are needed. If you are interested in heading up next year's Relay for Life teams, please contact the church office. Our youth have been very involved in this effort for the last five years, raising more than \$15,000 for the fight against cancer! It's a fun and very worthwhile event!

The Hickory Neck Family Church Directory is here! Black & white copies are available in the Parish House. It is also available as .pdf file of about 1.8MB that Hope can email to you. Let her know if you'd

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The Top Ten Books I Read on Sabbatical (Continued)

The Very Reverend Michael L. Delk

6. Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*

This slim volume provides a helpful introduction to Campbell's more involved tomes. It focuses on the identity of metaphor and symbol and their role in both creating and conveying human meaning. Campbell helps demonstrate how different religious and philosophical systems, separated over vast spans of time and geography, have common roots. This, in Campbell's view, does not diminish the true claims of various traditions; quite the contrary. However, recognizing cognates among the various religions fosters great understanding of others, and perhaps a bit more tolerance.

7. Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come, An Evangelical's Lament: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*

Balmer critiques the religious right, particularly the Baptist component of it, which betrays their own traditions by requiring doctrinal uniformity in denominations where local congregational rule was the founding principle and the norm for centuries.

Balmer also addresses how religious right has manipulated a variety of issues in order to acquire and exert political power. He sees the religious right as a serious threat to democracy, not because the Church should remain outside the public square, but because the inherent authoritarianism of the religious right is fundamentally incompatible with a free society based on the Bill of Rights.

8. Walter Isaacson, *Einstein: His Life and Universe*

Relatively accessible, as biographies of Einstein go, this book strikes a nice balance between explicating his most important contributions to physics and giving us an up-close look at the intriguing man behind the incomprehensible theories. Of particular interest, once Einstein

achieved fame and respect from the academic community, he became increasingly conservative in his outlook. Having promulgated the theories largely responsible for the emergence of what is now known as quantum physics, he resisted its implications, insisting until his death that "God does not play dice" with the universe. It almost seems as if Einstein, once he had something to lose, got guarded and lost a little bit of what made him so special in the first place.

9. Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving & Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*

Volf begins by revisiting what it means to say that God loves us. He concludes that God's love is pure gift, and he spends considerable time differentiating true gifts from the kind that human beings more often give – those with strings attached. Once Volf establishes that God's essential identity is love, and that love involves pure unconditional gift, he goes on to discuss how we can receive that gift and serve as channels of God's love for others. This naturally leads into a consideration of forgiveness – what it is and what it isn't; how we can receive it, and the role repentance plays in the gift of forgiveness between God and humanity and among human beings.

10. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *Revolutionary Wealth*

From the authors of *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave* comes another "gaze-into-the-crystal-ball" book about how current trends will eventually develop to transform the landscape of life in North America and perhaps the world. Theirs is an optimistic forecast that gives hope and soothes worry during an era of lightning-fast change – technologically, economically, politically, and culturally.

Note: The top five books on Father Michael's list were reviewed last month. More complete reviews of all ten books are available on the web at www.hickoryneck.org.

Nugget Notes

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like to receive yours in that form: hbrans@hickoryneck.org. Special thanks to all our photographers and to **Ridge Kemp** for the cover photos. If you have corrections or want to add your picture let Hope know that as well.

If you are interested in becoming a Lay Chalice Bearer at the 8:00 a.m. service, please call **Cleve Corlett** at 258-9241. No experience required.

Do you like to cook? Do you like to eat? If you answered "yes" to either of these questions, then you are just the person to share your favorite recipes for the creation of a Hickory Neck Church cookbook. Recipes are now being collected, and submission forms are available in the Parish House and in New Chapel narthex. You may request a form via email at cookbook@hickoryneck.org. Submit as many recipes as you want by November 1, 2007, either in the collection box in the narthex, by mail to the church, or by email at cookbook@hickoryneck.org. Look for future announcements about cookbook titles, artwork, and the many other ways you can become involved in this new project.

There will be a Talbot Hall Open House on Saturday, November 3, 2007, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is an opportunity for you and your family, friends, and fellow parishioners to visit the Episcopal Residence, Manor House, Gunn Conference Center, Diocesan Center and Grounds on the banks of the Lafayette River. Stay for lunch (Reservations required). More details to follow. Talbot Hall is located at 600 Talbot Hall Road, Norfolk, VA 23505.

The Reverend and Mrs. Fielder Israel (Fielder and

Gretchen) will be hosting a pilgrimage to the Holy Land May 4-15, 2008. Mauro Travel of Boca Raton, Florida is in charge of the arrangements and a local guide will lead the group to all the main historic sites. Some of the highlights are: a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, renewing of baptismal vows at the Jordan River, a cable car ride to the heights of Masada which was King Herod's winter palace, Stations of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, a private Eucharist in the Garden Tomb and an overnight stay at the Dead Sea. Fielder and Gretchen made this same pilgrimage in March 2007 and found it a life-changing experience. They will be visiting Hickory Neck on Sunday, October 14th to share a slide presentation and tell of their first-hand experiences in this most Holy Land. The presentation will be held in the historic Church after the 9:00 a.m. service.

Join some of your diocesan family for an Advent retreat as we *Explore Benedictine Spirituality*. Spend a few days during one of the most hectic times of the year in silence, prayer, and fellowship. Sponsored by the Commission on Prayer and Healing, this year's retreat will take place at Chanco on the James beginning with dinner on Friday, December 7th, and ending with lunch on Sunday, December 9th. Retreat leaders are the Reverend Dale Custer, the Reverend Charles Joy, and the Reverend Gary Barker. Cost for meals, program and lodging is \$175 for a double room or \$205 for a single. Registration forms and further information are available through the church office or call Gary Barker at Christ Church, Smithfield: (757) 357-2826. Some scholarship help is available. Deadline for applications is November 19th.

Fall Foyer groups have been formed. If you did not sign up, but would like to participate, you can still join a group. Contact Shirley Forde or Louanne Martin (Daytime Foyer), Betty Somloi or Mary Jo Smith (Evening Foyer) Sue Dugan (Singles Foyer), or Suzi



(as of 8/31/2007)

YTD Budget Income	\$227,504.64
YTD Actual Income	\$220,233.71
YTD Budget Expenses	\$227,504.64
YTD Actual Expenses	\$227,038.96
Loan Balances	\$598,728.64
(as of 9-1-07)	



Hickory Neck Parish Episcopal Church
8300 Richmond Road
Toano, VA 23168

Tel (757) 566-0276 Fax (757) 566-0081

"Rooted in history and embracing the future, through Christ"

Blanchard (Family Foyer).

A Tri-diocesan fall camp will be held October 22nd to 25th at Shrine Mont, Orkney Springs, Virginia. Registration begins at 3:30 p.m. October 22nd. Total cost is \$195 per person. This includes three meals a day plus private room with bath. The Keynote speakers are: The Right Reverend Carol Joy Walkingstick Theobald Gallagher; The Right Reverend F. Neff Powell, Bishop, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia; and Folk Theologian Ed Kilbourne, musician, singer, songwriter and story teller. Don't miss this opportunity to spend time in the mountains of Virginia with other seniors from across the Commonwealth. For more information, contact **Doug** and **Mary Jo Smith** or **Dave** and **Joan Forrest** or go to: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqe39k/dovcoa/fallcamp.html>



**The Very
 Reverend
 Michael L. Delk**

Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*

I must frankly confess my disappointment in this much-hyped assault on religious faith, an assault especially targeted on Christianity. Compared with his English predecessor Bertrand Russell and Hitchens' own contemporaries, including Sam Harris of "End of Faith" fame, Christopher has served us up a batch of weak tea. He lacks the sophistication and complexity of other militant atheists, which may in the end make him a more dangerous lure to those of weak faith.

Hitchens' argument follows familiar lines. The hubris of reason – particularly the scientific, technological variety – is on full display; coupled with pathetically hollow straw men attacks. While emphasizing the role religion has played in the propagation of world's worst tragedies, Hitchens cavalierly tosses aside the very real contribution of faith by insisting that the faithless do the same thing, only better and without all the superstitious nonsense. How patently unfair to smear believers with their worst excesses, but ignore the best successes of the same. It fascinates me how, at the same time, the brutality of the Soviet regime under Stalin or China during Mao's revolution don't merit a mention. I suppose these intentionally atheistical systems get a pass, even as Hitchens vents his rage against Christian involvement in the Rwandan genocide, a tragedy which Jared Diamond's "Collapse" convincingly attributes to overpopulation and land scarcity.

In short, this book is neither great nor does it even approach mediocrity. Sorry to be so brutal, but save your money, and pass on the hardcover, and wait for the paperback edition to appear in the cut-rate section of your local bookstore, should you bother to buy this one at all. As well as he writes, it's simply not worth it.



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