

**Annual Parish Meeting
November 16, 2008**

Senior Warden's Presentation

Last December, when we closed our Annual Meeting, I was feeling relieved. Fred had given a speech which clearly discussed difficult topics, my Junior Warden Presentation was over, and I was looking forward to a good night's sleep.

On my way out of the church that day, several people came up to me and said, "2008 is going to be a tough year to be the Senior Warden..." There went my good night's sleep. I awoke early the next morning, went to my desk and wrote my final Junior Warden report for the 2007 December Vestry meeting, my last before assuming the Senior Warden position. The report began as follows:

"People have said that 2008 is going to be a difficult and challenging year. I disagree. 2008, if we do our job well, will be a great year...! The challenges will be easy compared to what others face. What would make 2008 a real challenge?"

1. If we had a poor rector who was not leading and inspiring the congregation, now that would be a challenge

But we have a fine rector and an excellent assistant rector in Ann. Together they make a great team. (Remember, this was what I said last December.)

2. It would be difficult if we did not have a positive culture and spirit and had to build them up, which is not easy.

But we have a wonderful spirit and a great culture.

3. It would be hard if we lived in an area where the population was declining so that no matter how good we were or how hard we tried, our church was losing parishioners. Williamsburg is attracting many new residents, we will continue to grow.

I finished by saying that I believe that 2008 will be a great year to be the Senior Warden!"

So, how has 2008 gone so far? It started out very well!

- First, a number of people stepped up and committed to covering our mortgage for the year.
- We reopened our beautiful Historic Chapel after a major renovation. Many people worked hard to make it turn out as well as it did, but special thanks should be given to Martha McCartney for her efforts and attention to detail, Fred Boelt for trying to keep the project on time and actually keeping it on budget, and Don Seeterlin and his helpers for their skilled work.
- Then 2008 became challenging with Ann's departure to the Church of the Holy Comforter in Illinois. It may have been the right time for her, but it sure was hard for us to say goodbye. How could we ever find anyone to replace her? Then, we found Lauren and were fortunate to have her say “yes” to Hickory Neck. Again we have a talented and capable Associate Rector who works so well with Father Michael.

Other positive events in 2008 include:

- The work of the Day Care/Pre-school and Phase 2 Building teams which are working on plans for the future so that we will be ready when we can turn the plans into action.
- The passage of Bylaws and a Resolution creating an Endowment Board and Fund.
- Another great Fall Festival!
- The Hickory Neck Cook Book. Now in it's second printing!
- Recently we began a new method of Stewardship which removes it from the Sunday services, and we are told by those who attended the sessions, provided a clear understanding of where HNC is, and where we are trying to go when it comes to Time, Talent and Treasure.
- We seem to be experiencing a new growth spurt.

In addition to having a Vestry that has worked hard to do what is best for Hickory Neck, all of you, the wonderful members of Hickory Neck, step up and help the church every time you are asked. In these troubling times, Hickory Neck people come together in these buildings and are surrounded by other talented supportive friends that help to make our church, the community and the world a more livable place.

In closing, I have two more things to say.

First, six qualified people are standing for election to the Vestry. All have much to offer and the potential to do great things to help HNC. To the two of you who will not be elected, it is not that you would not be a great member of the Vestry; it is because the people in this room do not know you as well as the four who are selected. Get involved in a ministry, there are many ways to serve Hickory Neck, and run again next year, being on the Vestry is worth the effort.... which brings me to the last thing I want to say.

It has been an honor and pleasure serving on the Vestry the past three years. Between the Navy, IBM and the training business, my working life was spent trying to sell somebody something, working in or leading teams. My last 25 years of work was also spent trying to help others to be better salespeople, team members, managers or leaders. It has turned out that those skills were very usable as a member of the Vestry. The joy of applying them to help HNC has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. To those who voted for me 3 years ago, THANK YOU!