

**Annual Parish Meeting  
November 22, 2009**

**Senior Warden's Report**

As the only elected member of the Vestry giving a report at this Annual Meeting, there is too much I could say about the work that has been accomplished in each ministry area throughout the year. However, to ensure that this report is not too long, I will do my best to address only the new initiatives and major accomplishments of 2009.

For the sake of organization, I will utilize the alphabet and begin with Buildings & Grounds. Under the leadership of Junior Warden, Gary Harvey, this committee is now organized into 3 sub-committees, with John Rothnie serving as Buildings Chairman, Mark Kintner as Sexton Chairman and George Margroum as Grounds Chairman. These four men spend an extraordinary amount of time on the property, and with the help of volunteers from time to time, the buildings and grounds have been kept in pristine condition all year. Might I suggest you read Gary's comprehensive annual report so you can better understand the scope of work that is done day in and day out, the special projects completed this year, problems addressed and solved, as well as the volunteer help needed to sustain this level of maintenance.

I couldn't be happier to report that the Children's & Youth Ministries, under the leadership of Vestry liaisons Paula Simmons and Brig Lampert, are seeing stable attendance in the nursery, Sunday School and Youth Group. As Brig reported at the August Vestry meeting, "VBS at Hickory Neck rocked." The curriculum "Under Construction: A Habitat for Humanity Vacation Bible School" ensured an enjoyable week for 47 children and over 70 teen and adult volunteers. A notable highlight for this ministry was the participation of the Youth Group in the November 1<sup>st</sup> evening baptism of one of their members who entered into a relationship with Christ through the Youth program. This seems to be the appropriate place to interject that a total of 9 people were baptized throughout the year. To become familiar with all the offerings and the volunteers dedicated to help our children and youth "grow in Christ's love," which is a quote from Paula Simmons, be sure to read the excellent report submitted by Paula and Brig.

Father Michael and Pastor Lauren have provided exceptional educational opportunities for adults, in addition to special services for the congregation. Monday night Bible study showed strong attendance and participation, even during the summer, through two long books, The Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John. The friendly debates in the Historic Chapel during the adult formation hour on Sunday mornings this Fall were a favorite of many. The Lenten Wednesday Evensongs in the Historic Chapel yielded a record turnout. We are fortunate we can participate in so many special offerings by Michael and Lauren, in addition to the inspirational worship services they conduct for us every Sunday morning throughout the year.

Another couple of interesting facts about our clergy: On July 1<sup>st</sup>, Pastor Lauren completed her first year of ministry at Hickory Neck. Also in July, Father Michael attended the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention in Anaheim, California, as a Deputy for the Diocese of Southern Virginia. This marks the first time in Hickory Neck's long history that a member or cleric has served in that capacity.

Communications, coordinated by Vestry liaison Melissa Casheros, is an integral part of the happenings for the Hickory Neck Community. The Nuggets, E-pistle and Website continue to serve our internal communications well, while Martha McCartney and Jim Izzo produce copy for local newspapers, radio stations and other media to inform the surrounding community of special events and services at Hickory Neck.

Working with the Stewardship committee, the Newcomers Ministry, lead by Jean Hancock, has set up a system that bridges the gap between our initial greeting of visitors to ultimately welcoming them as members of our parish family. However, as we continue to grow, one of our biggest challenges as a congregation is to always be cognizant of visitors, to welcome them warmly, and to ensure that they are integrated into the life of the parish as quickly as possible.

Ann Bartholomay hit the ground running as Vestry liaison for Parish Life. In addition to coordinating enjoyable coffee hours, special luncheons and beautiful receptions, the Parish Life ministry is now organized into 3 sub-committees; coffee hour, kitchen maintenance and special events. This new organization is especially helpful to potential volunteers when deciding where they can contribute their talents when helping with the social events that are so important to the cohesiveness of the parish. The Parish Life team has also extended our Hickory Neck hospitality to our friends throughout the Diocese, as our new Bishop Hollerith has used Hickory Neck as a Diocesan

hub for meetings, including the Dean's Council, the Diocesan Executive Board and the Interim Consultants' Team.

With care and concern, Gay Forloine has coordinated the Pastoral Care Ministries that reach out to Hickory Neck parishioners in need of visits, rides, meals, Eucharist, prayers, prayer shawls . . . the list is all but endless. The Health Ministry Team, established this year, has added another dimension to the care of members of our congregation by conducting blood pressure screenings, and seminars on end of life decisions and managing medications. The inclusion of the Healing Prayer Ministry during the 9:00 Sunday service has enhanced the spiritual experience of those in need of healing for themselves and for their loved ones.

This has been a year of discernment and reorganization for the Outreach committee. Vestry liaison Michael Smith, with the help of Pastor Lauren, has lead the restructuring of the Outreach committee into 3 teams. The Ministry Team supports the hands on activities of the charities with which Hickory Neck works. This team is in need of a chairman, and if you are interested in solving this problem, I feel certain Michael Smith or Pastor Lauren would love to hear from you. Norm Cooper is the chairman of the Mission Team, which is in the beginning stages of organizing a mission trip to El Hogar, Honduras, in October of 2010. The Financial Grant Team is chaired by Bill Teale and most recently decided how to disperse the Fall Festival funds.

Under the leadership of Mark Kintner, our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Festival was once again a phenomenal success. Significant funds were raised to support Angels of Mercy, Good News Jail and Prison Ministries, Grove Christian Outreach Center, the Housing Employment and Linkages Project, more commonly known as HELP, Spirit Works, Williamsburg Faith in Action, and Williamsburg Walks the Talk. Our biggest challenge with regard to the Fall Festival is the need for new leaders to step into chairmanship positions. Mark has skillfully served as Chairman of the Festival for the last 2 years and has agreed to continue in the position for one more year. The same people have chaired most of the sub-committees for the last 3 years, and some of these chairmen have expressed an interest in moving on to different ministries. With the money raised at the Fall Festival being the only source of funding for the charities we support, it is of utmost importance that fresh leadership emerges in 2010.

Stewardship Vestry liaison, Ed Joyner, working with the Stewardship Committee Chairman Bill Teale, conducted a second successful year of small group stewardship meetings. The Vestry is pleased nearly all of our new members attended a session, all of which were very well received. I'll let Fred go into the results of this year's campaign in terms of the budget, but Fred is going to have to echo me, and all the Vestry members, as we express our appreciation to you for your faithful giving in 2009. In a year of extreme economic uncertainty, your financial commitment to the mission and ministry of Hickory Neck Church is impressive indeed. You know, looking back, we should have realized that the burning of the bank note on the Wilkinson Center expansion at the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6<sup>th</sup> was a positive financial omen.

Two Vestry members slated to retire this year are participating in the discernment process to Holy Orders. Presently, Eve Gee is serving her internship at St. John's in Hampton, while Don Seeterlin is interning at Grace Church in Yorktown. Additionally, on May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Bishop, the Diocesan Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry granted candidacy status to Bob Gay in his process toward becoming a deacon.

Outside the realm of a particular Vestry committee, though responsible to the Vestry, the Endowment Board met monthly in 2009 until the details were worked out for receiving and investing gifts that donors contribute to the Hickory Neck Church Endowment Fund. At their next quarterly meeting in January, the Board will begin working on information that will help parishioners understand the various ways they can financially support Hickory Neck.

With great anticipation, we look forward to the first visit of our new Bishop on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Bishop Hollerith will have a new chair to sit in, designed and hewn by Tony Casanave, upholstered with images crafted by Hope Brans, and funded by memorial donations in honor of Norman Forde.

Well, I've obviously failed miserably at keeping my address short, so I'll refrain from making you listen to any more information. However, I do encourage you to read all the Annual Reports in the packet you received with a discerning eye. Please make an effort to involve yourself in the ministries that match your time and talents, and if a particular ministry of interest to you is in need of a leader, prayerfully consider offering up your gifts by stepping into that role.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to say that my membership on the Vestry has been an honor, a privilege and a pleasure. I have no doubt, I received far more during the last 3 years than I contributed. I thank all of you for the confidence you placed in me and for giving me the opportunity to serve in this most rewarding of ways.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauris Zeni