



# Hickory Neck Nuggets



## February: Shortest Month, Packed with Action

The Reverend Michael L. Delk



Easter falls early this year, on March 31<sup>st</sup>, which means that Lent – everybody’s favorite season – launches early, too. Here’s a preview of what we have planned for you in February and beyond.

On Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, Hickory Neck will celebrate a Ministry Fair in the Narthex between the 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. Eucharist. Check out Henry’s notice on page 2 for more information. We hope you’ll participate, either as an advocate of a ministry in which you participate, and/or as someone curious about how you can get involved to help advance our mission as a parish.



A few days later, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, we’ll gather to celebrate Shrove Tuesday with a fabulous Mardi Gras party in the New Chapel. It’ll be flapjacks with all the fixings and plenty of warm fellowship and entertainment, as we crown a new King and Queen of Hickory Neck. I hope you can join the fun as we enjoy one final fling before Lent begins.



For, yes, that next day, February 13<sup>th</sup>, we observe Ash Wednesday, the official start of Lent. We will impose ashes – “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return” – and celebrate Eucharist at 7 a.m. and 12 noon in the Historic Chapel and at 7 p.m. in

the New Chapel. This experience is intended to help set the tone for a season of reflection and repentance. Some people shy away from this event, because it seems so depressing, but facing the truth about our mortality is the first step toward embracing the life everlasting promised to us through Jesus Christ.

February is the shortest month, but opportunities abound.

Every subsequent Wednesday, from February 20<sup>th</sup> through March 20<sup>th</sup>, we will enjoy a congregational evensong in the Historic Chapel at 6 p.m., followed by a potluck fellowship in the Wilkinson Center. Evensong is a brief, beautiful experience of worship – a good way to refocus our lives in the middle of the week between Sabbaths. Worship usually finishes up by 6:30, so dinner will probably end by 7:30 p.m.

Speaking of worship, on Sundays, starting February 17<sup>th</sup>, we will run a five-session series in the Nave entitled, “In Worship Assembled: How We Make Worship, and How Worship Makes Us.” If you appreciate our annual instructed Eucharist, which explains a little about why we worship the way we worship, then this course is for you. This will be a behind-the-scenes look at precisely how a

*(Continued on page 2)*

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liturgy is put together: from how we select lessons and music to which prayers we use and why.

Then there's the "How Worship Makes Us" part. Many people do not realize that the most powerful formative experience any Church can offer is worship. Episcopal worship is purposefully designed and structured to help shape peoples' faith. We'll talk about how that happens, ask you how that might be improved, and work together on designing an actual liturgy using what we learn in the course.

February is the shortest month, but opportunities abound. If you love to make music, or simply enjoy listening to it, our Wednesday evensongs will bless you. If you love

good food and fellowship, Shrove Tuesday Mardi Gras and our post-evensong potluck dinners are right for you. If you want to know more about our many ministries and which one might be a good fit for you, the Ministry Fair will give you what you want. If you'd like to learn more about how we worship and why, and help design an upcoming liturgy, our Sunday series "In Worship Assembled," will bring you knowledge, wisdom, and a place to share and play. If you hope for a meaningful Lent that might make your life better, an hour on Ash Wednesday is a good place to start. It's a short month, February, but much good will be done. I encourage you to be a part of it, because your presence makes it special. ❖



## MINISTRY FAIR

If you have ever wanted to attend a fair and not worry about the weather, you will have a chance to do so on **Sunday, February 10**, right here at Hickory Neck. Between the 9:00 and 11:15 services we will be holding a Ministry Fair in the Narthex.

This is your chance to stroll among the vendors, i.e. ministers, of the various ministries offered here by our parish. This is your chance to learn about how the flowers appear each Sunday, or what the kids experience in Children's Chapel or Church School. This is an opportunity to see how your Brothers and Sisters in Christ have found a way to serve the Lord. This is also an opportunity to see how your own gifts can be used to benefit others and to bring praises to the Lord. Like any good fair, there will be plenty of food, drink and fellowship. Please join us!

**Henry McQueen**

## Grants Awarded to Local Charities

Bill Teale

The Financial Grant Team of the Outreach Committee has awarded \$11,913 to local charities from money raised at the 2012 Fall Festival. Members of the team evaluated what each organization does for our community and what their volunteer and financial needs will be in the coming year. In addition to the funds they receive, most of the charities listed are supported by the time and talent of Hickory Neck parishioners. Financial grants were awarded as follows:

- **The Salvation Army Transitional Housing Program**, a program to provide housing, counseling and mentoring to help families and individuals get back on their feet. This will be the fifth year we have supported this program, formerly known as **HELP**.
- **Angels of Mercy**, a free clinic designed to help patients manage and treat their diseases. This is the twelfth year we have supported the clinic.
- **Williamsburg Faith in Action**, an organization that helps people to continue living in their homes. This is the seventh year we have supported WFIA financially and with over a dozen volunteers.
- **Avalon**, an organization which provides a 24-Hour Help Line, and helps women and children who are victims of abuse with emergency and transitional housing, counseling, life skills, legal advocacy, and other supportive services. This is the third year we have supported Avalon.
- **From His Hands** provides meals that Hickory Neck parishioners prepare and then serve at Grove. This is the sixth year we have supported From His Hands.
- **United Way of Greater Williamsburg Community Resource Center**, an organization, in partnership with the Faith Community, which provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, health services, employment/job resources and referrals to other services. This is the third year we have supported the CRC.
- **Williamsburg Walks the Talk**, a group of volunteers who provide counseling and assistance to clients who are being released from the county jail. This is the fifth year we have supported WWTT.
- **Eastern State Hospital Chapel**. This is the fourth year we have supported the chaplain at Eastern State Hospital.

**Grove** received the funds from the 50/50 raffle conducted by our youth group at the Fall Festival.

**\$1,345** has been held back for additional grants in 2013 to charities listed above or grants to other charities.

In addition, **\$1,000** has been set aside in a new fund, the **Parish Mission Discretionary Fund**. The money set aside in this fund is for parishioners who are involved in outreach efforts where a financial grant is needed to help them and their charity achieve their goals. Parishioners should make their request for grants from this fund directly to our clergy.

**Financial Grant Team:** Linda McGee; Tom Gee; Dave Hartsough; Henry McQueen; Mark Kintner; Bob Pringle; Bill Teale.



### MUTUAL BENEFIT

The IRA charitable rollover is back for 2012 and 2013. Donors age 70½ or older are once again eligible to transfer funds from their IRAs directly to qualified charities – including Hickory Neck Church – without having to pay income tax on the funds transferred. Consult your tax advisor to see how this may work to your personal advantage. As we continue to seek funding for the Minister of Music position at Hickory Neck, this opportunity could certainly be advantageous for us.

## “The Hint of an Explanation”

Jim Izzo

Words are inadequate to explain the massacre of children at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in December, as they are inadequate to comfort those who are suffering most from that tragedy, but, absent a physical presence to offer comfort and support, one has only words to offer.

“How can a just and loving God allow such evil to happen?” is the question most often asked after such tragedies. This is not to suggest, Fr. Michael offers, “that God desires such things to happen,” or is in any way responsible for them. “In fact, I believe God grieves with us over such tragedies and shares our rage at the senselessness of them.”

One of the twentieth century’s best writers illustrated his answer to this question in one of his short stories.

“The Hint of an Explanation,” by the English author Graham Greene, is actually a story within a story. The narrator recounts a tale from his youth to a stranger during a train ride. When he was an altar boy, the narrator was threatened by a man to steal the Eucharist and give it to him because he wanted to know “what your God tastes like.” Despite fearing for his life and eternal damnation if he desecrates the host, the boy defies the man, who does not carry out his threat. At the end of the story, the collar of a priest is revealed to the listener, as the narrator gets up from his seat.



The listener, an agnostic, asks the narrator, “If God exists, why does he allow such evil as the corruption of children?”

“Our view is limited,” the priest responds. “We can’t see the whole picture, but God sometimes gives us the hint of an explanation.” For the narrator, whose resistance to temptation led to his vocation, that is enough.

There is no comparison between the evil in Graham Greene’s story and the evil in the Newtown school, at least not in degree. One can hope, however, that the loss of those children and the adults who tried to protect them is only part of the whole picture, which we might not ever see, but perhaps a hint will be revealed some day, especially to those who need it most.

In his book *The Language of God*, Francis Collins asks essentially the same question – “Why would a loving God allow such suffering in the world?” This author’s answer, similar to that of Greene, is twofold: God’s plan for us is often different from our plan (there might be reasons for painful experiences we cannot see) and we learn more about ourselves through suffering than when things are going well.

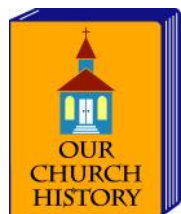
Both Greene and Collins were influenced by C.S. Lewis, who wrote, “Pain is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” We can only hope that our deaf world will be roused to take action to prevent such tragedies in the future. ❖

Photo from gallery.dralzheimer.stylesyndication.de

Beginning this month an electronic version of the **Nuggets** will be made available to all parishioners. Those who would also like to have a paper copy mailed to their home are asked to use the sign-up sheet in the Narthex or email or call the office to express this preference.

## A Lesser Known Part of Our History

Martha W. McCartney



Throughout the eighteenth century, Anglican Church officials promoted the religious conversion of Virginians of African descent. In fact, the missionary efforts of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (the SPG), founded in 1701, were directed in part toward the conversion of blacks. In 1724, when Edmund Gibson was Bishop of London, he sent a questionnaire to Virginia clergy, inquiring whether there were “any Infidels, bond or free, within your Parish?”

He also asked, “What means are used for their conversion?” Blisland Parish’s rector, the Rev. Daniel Taylor, whose territory included Hickory Neck, responded that the only “infidels” in his parish were the enslaved, many of whom were uneducable on account of their limited command of the English language. He qualified his statement by saying that he had had some success in converting young slaves.

Whenever clergy offered instruction to the enslaved, they seldom made an effort to adjust their teachings to the needs and understanding of their students. Slaves were expected to learn by listening to regular sermons and by memorizing the catechism, the same type of instruction that was offered to the children of white parishioners. Usually around the time a slave could recite the catechism, and perhaps the Apostles’ Creed and Lord’s Prayer, he would be baptized. Church scholars generally agree that only rarely were slaves admitted to the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Clergymen carefully avoided saying anything that could be interpreted as an attack upon slavery as an institution. In fact, they usually emphasized obedience and patience as Christian virtues. At one point in time, slave candidates for baptism were required to take an oath, declaring that they were not pursuing baptism as a means of achieving freedom. Although some Virginia planters declared their converted slaves “more trusty & more diligent in their service than they were before,” most slaveholders failed to have their slaves baptized. As a result, relatively little progress was made.

Blisland Parish’s colonial vestry records fail to disclose how many enslaved Africans and African Americans were baptized or perhaps attended worship services at Hickory Neck. However, it is safe to assume that some parishioners would have introduced their slaves to the Christian faith and presented them for baptism. Others may have been indifferent to their slaves’ spiritual needs or were fearful that they might take inspiration from Biblical stories of flight and rebellion. Thanks to the Great Awakening, which reached Virginia during the late 1730s, evangelical groups (such as the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians) began offering religious instruction to African Americans, whether enslaved or free, and welcomed them to their worship services.

## February Celebrations



### Birthdays

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Judy Hodges      | 11 Laura Kindley    |
| 1 Ted Ramsaur      | 14 Jean Jundt       |
| 2 Geraldine Kent   | 16 Coleman Ragsdale |
| 2 Jim McGee        | 19 Bruce Manning    |
| 2 Lucy Purse       | 22 Tara Best        |
| 2 Sara Seeterlin   | 22 Michael Christin |
| 3 Ron Kindley      | 25 Vic Shumaker     |
| 5 Emma Delk        | 26 Fred Boelt       |
| 7 Martha Connolly  | 27 Ann Lipp         |
| 7 Christine Hanlon | 29 Alan Zoellner    |
| 8 Abigail Hanlon   |                     |

### Anniversaries

- 1 Joan & Dave Forrest
- 8 Joanne & Jim Izzo
- 13 Patty Kipps & John Greenman
- 14 Terry & Chuck Hunter
- 14 Sharon & Dave Ware
- 15 Yvonne & Mark Milakovic
- 20 Nancye & Bill Morris

If your birthday or anniversary is this month and you are not listed above, please send the appropriate information to [nuggets@hickoryneck.org](mailto:nuggets@hickoryneck.org).

## An Invitation to Shared Stillness and Silence

Don Seeterlin

The room is quiet. The air is still. The candle's flame flickers ever so gently. Outside this Holy Sanctuary life goes on in its full vigor. Inside, for a very short period of time the hustle and bustle of everyday life is put on hold. Mental and spiritual energies which normally are focused on the basic necessities of earthly survival are redirected inward, and paradoxically outward, toward our God and Savior. The men and women within this sacred space are sharing this time together as each participates in one of life's simplest, yet most profound forms of prayer. This is a prayer time where we are called to forgo the familiar pattern of shared prayer and response in verbal form, and instead spend some quality time just "being" with God. Psalm 46:10 tells us, "*Be still, and know that I am God*". This is a time when each participant is given permission to sit, listen, and know that they are loved beyond measure by a God whose love is so



radical that He wants nothing more than to be in personal relationship with each of His children. This is a time for us to honor that relationship by taking a purposeful moment to stop, relax, and just be with God. There is no set hard and fast rule of what to say or not to say. The most important part of this is that we take time to just listen, just be, trusting in God. After 15 or 20 minutes of this shared silence we are called back to this side of reality by sharing in a recitation of the Lord's Prayer. We gather our thoughts as one does upon awakening. We may share some insight or thought which has gained some form of clarity as a result of our Centering. We may share a little about our day ahead, and then we go back out into the world, perhaps feeling a little less tense, or even experiencing a deepened

sense of personal calm. The world is still in full vigor. The noise of the traffic is still a constant drone. We still have our daily responsibilities to attend to. Yet it seems that each person who has experienced this calm and profound time of reflection has become a little stronger in their personal relationship with God. Each person has found a little more inner serenity to help them deal with the constant push and pull of their daily lives.

This time of quiet and peace is not for a certain chosen few; it is for everyone to experience. The more who participate together, the greater the sense of shared strength and presence. As time is shared together in this sacred listening, a trust develops. This is not the purpose of this time of Centering, but it seems to be a result which occurs. This is still a time of quiet and peace, and whether a person wishes to share or remain quiet afterwards is completely up to them.

I would like to formally invite everyone to join us at the Historic Chapel at 7:30 on Monday mornings for a time of quiet reflection and shared stillness. We usually begin with a reading of some devotional material to help us have something to focus on. We then begin quiet time, and are called back to togetherness with the Lord's Prayer at 8:00. Generally we are on our way to our normal routines soon after 8:00.

Psalm 62:6-7 of the Book of Common Prayer tells us: "*For God alone my soul in silence waits; truly my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.*" Please join us as we sit together in stillness and wait and hope in God. ❖

# Vestry Highlights



## Nugget Notes

The vestry met on January 8, 2013, in the Wilkinson Center.

Fred Boelt gave the treasurer’s report and announced that we paid \$13,500 toward the loan principal. This leaves a balance of \$ 305,114.00 on the loan. Fred also reported that December income was over budget by \$15,654.00, and YTD, we are under budget by \$13,952.00. Fred also noted that we received 99.92% of the pledges.

The minutes of the Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> Vestry meeting were approved as read.

Bob Pringle gave an Outreach Report detailing the recommendation for the distribution of almost \$12,000. Our next important Outreach effort will be participating in the community based shelter program.

Chris Casheros announced that the proposal for the repair of the walks and drainage is \$10,900. This will be taken out of the Davenport Fund.

Our next Vestry meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the Wilkinson Center.

### Jean Jundt, Register

I would like to thank the very generous 47 Hickory Neck families who contributed to the **Angel Tree** this past holiday season – special thanks to Gary Harvey who subbed for me while I was away on vacation in late November. The Salvation Army informed me there were well over 1000 “Angels” this year. I know our contributions were greatly appreciated and gave 47 children in the Williamsburg/Toano area a happier Christmas this year! Check out the bulletin board in the New Chapel Narthex for the certificate of thanks that we received from the Salvation Army for the Angel Tree donations. — **Nancy Snyder**

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 **Father Henry**. 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 effect 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.



As of 12/31/12

YTD Budget Income	\$407,246.96
YTD Actual Income	\$421,198.04
YTD Budget Expense	\$407,259.00
YTD Actual Expense	\$400,172.13

December was an exceptional month, financially speaking. Income for the month was over budget by \$15,654, and for the year by \$13,951. Expenses for the year were under budget by \$7,087, leaving the year in the black by \$21,026. In light of our 2013 budget dilemma, this may seem like a windfall. It should be remembered that this carryover will pay the mortgage principal portion (capital expense) of our regular monthly payments in 2013.

In December we made an extra principal payment in the amount of \$13,500 on our mortgage, bringing the balance to \$305,114 as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. For the year 2012, we received \$66,380 toward our Debt Reduction program. We give thanks for all of your assistance in making this happen.

Thinking back to our annual meeting and the unbalanced budget, we have now received enough pledges, coupled with other income, to barely balance this budget. Thank you to all parishioners who heard our plea and came to the assistance of our parish. It is certainly not an ideal budget, but one that we can improve on. Funding for a Minister of Music is a high priority.

While this report usually focuses on “treasure,” time and talent plays an equal role in making our Holy Hill special. Come to the Ministry Fair on Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> between the 9:00 and 11:15 services. You may discover new avenues for your gifts of time and talent, and all you need to do is sign up!

**Fred Boelt, Treasurer**



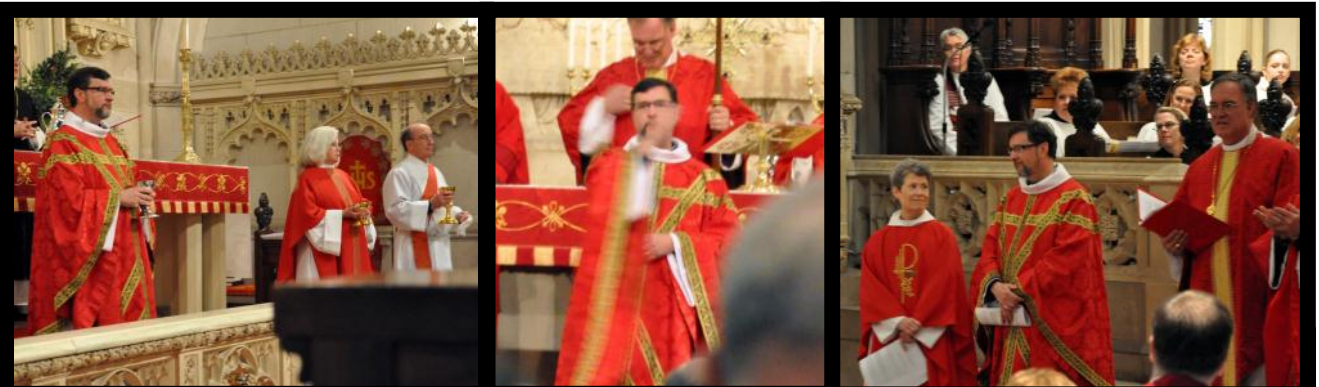
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## Hickory Neck Happenings



### ORDINATION

On December 15, 2012 The Right Reverend Holly Hollerith ordained Henry McQueen and Eve Gee to the Sacred Order of Priests. Hickory Neck parishioners filled a charter bus for the drive to Christ and St. Luke's, Norfolk, for this solemn and splendid occasion.

*Photos by Pete Haines*



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March Deadline – February 15<sup>th</sup>

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