

## Church of Saint Clement

1701 N. Quaker Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22302

The Rev. Robin Razzino, Rector

### Annual Report 2022



Annual Parish Meeting  
January 29, 2023

*All are welcome at the Lord's Holy Table*

## Rector's Report

I feel like 2022 was a very important year in the life of our parish as we emerged from the COVID wilderness, came together in worship and community and lived into new ways of being the Body of Christ. For me, there was one very important event in the life of our parish and two very important personnel decisions. All were reasons to celebrate!



First, my sabbatical gave me and my family the time and space to be together, have some adventures and ...just rest in the arms of God. The first three weeks were rough as COVID made its way through our household, but by the end of it I had reached many of the goals I had set for myself – I was able to get away to Alaska and North Carolina for rejuvenating sabbath time with friends and family; I took a photography class and practiced my favorite form of artmaking; I focused on my physical health and worked to strengthen my core through regular exercise and weight training; and I finally carved time out of my busy sabbatical schedule for a silent retreat at my parents' farm just outside of DC. And

the sabbatical worked! When I returned I was so excited to be back with you all, to hear about your summer and to begin our work together again. And I felt held by a God who valued my spiritual, mental and physical health.

I wasn't afraid that the church would stop its work and worship while I was away, but still it was nice to glimpse what was happening as I checked out some facebook posts over the course of the summer and wonderful to hear all about your experience of our time apart once I returned. I loved having dinner with so many of you and seeing the art you created when we gathered for the parish art show this fall. I am grateful for David and Chrissy Crosby leading you all in worship and workshops and providing the space for you to reflect on the biblical stories of wilderness, your own experience with wilderness, and your understanding of home - while you came together in community to make beautiful art. I am so impressed by all of your work and was so happy to see the many ways God is working through each of you – and your gifts!

Right before I left for sabbatical we offered the position of Preschool Director to Jenny Darlington, our parishioner of just over a year. This has been one of the best decisions we have made as a church! Jenny began in July and helped oversee a successful summer camp.

When the school year began in September she hit the ground running. I am so pleased to have her as a partner in ministry. We talk and dream and work together and I cant wait to see what

God has in store for the church and school and the relationship between both as we seek to serve God in all people (including the littlest among us).

While I was on sabbatical I learned the hard news that Rob has resigned and taken a position at a neighboring parish. At first I was in shock and then sad and then realized that I knew someone who I could contact about the position. Her name was Anne Tyler and the rest is history!!



I knew Anne because she used to come into Saint Clement weekly to lead a youth choir. And, as a teacher at St Patrick's school in DC, near where I used to work, we also have some mutual friends in common. Needless to say it has been better than I could have imagined having Anne with us.

In the short time she has been here, she has tripled the size of the choir, made chapel with the preschoolers extra special, learned all the names of the kids (how???) and has been instrumental (Ha!) in our outreach to the school. Like Jenny, she is a delight to work with.

## Membership

Over the course of 2022 we continued to welcome visitors and newcomers into our parish. Some had come right at the end of 2021 – Gabrielle and John O'Neil; Joe Calizo and Sara Kirwin; and Nancy Marriner - and some were new in 2022. In April we had a newcomers' gathering at Robin's house with several families (some of whom had been here for a while but had not had the opportunity to attend a newcomer reception due to COVID) and vestry members.

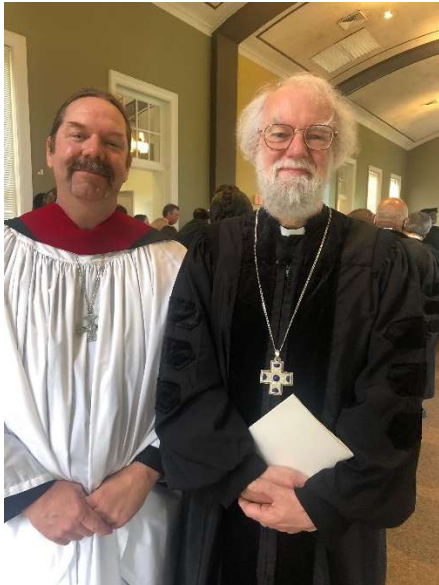
In addition to the folks mentioned above it was fun to see the Fanning (Amanda, Peter, Zack and Ethan (Natalie was not yet born!!) and Fundakowski (Claire, Dan, Landon, and Wyatt) families together – especially the four boys under four!

Throughout the fall we have continued to welcome visitors into our parish and look forward to welcoming





them further into the mission and ministry of Saint Clement over the coming months.



We said goodbye to our Seminarian William Yagel (now a priest in Radford, Va) and Rodney, Gina and Marcella LeGrand. While Marcella continues her college studies, Rodney and Gina relocated to El Paso for the next stop in their State Department journey.

### **Pastoral Care**

It was nice to be able to visit folks again and bring communion into the homes of parishioners we have not seen in a while. Sadly, we lost several long time members of our community this year: Caroline Johnston, Jim Kincheloe, Jan Taylor and Ann Williams. Each of these parishioners have had a lasting impact on our community and they will be missed dearly.

### **Worship**

In 2022, we slowly made our way back to a more normal routine on Sunday mornings. In March we returned to having two services and an in-person Bible Study at 9:00 am; masks were still required and communion was in one kind only. On Easter morning we finally had wine during communion. It was amazing to taste and be transported via all of our senses to the time prior to March 2020 - Indeed, as the hymn says, "to taste and see the goodness of the Lord."

The same practice continued through the summer as every week we put out the teeny tiny individual wine glasses. As cute as they were, it was still better to return to the Common Cup in the fall – as many other churches had done. Because there are several ways to receive the wine (to sip, to intinct, to receive by intention), we feel it is safe to continue the Common Cup for the foreseeable future.

During the summer - as we looked toward the sabbatical and having a supply priest - we suspended the 8am service. In the fall we decided to continue offering only one service so that we could have as many people as possible gathered together to worship . This lasted until the beginning of 2023 when we once again started the 8 am service.

With a more robust communion (with the Common Cup), more people returning, and the need to pass around the offering bags, it was apparent that we would have to recruit more ushers. The call went out and was answered by 13 folks. We now are well set up for Sunday mornings and also have given five of the children a new role to play in the church.



We are averaging about 50 -55 people on Sundays now between both services. We were only getting a few people for noonday prayer so we suspended that until Lent. During Lent 2023 we will offer Noonday Prayer again on Fridays. Tuesday evening Compline is still going strong with between 6 and 8 folks each week.

We had a couple of special services in 2022 including an instructed Eucharist on October 16 and a guest preacher, the Rev. Dr. Mark Jefferson, on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Our somewhat normal year ended with us having a well attended Christmas eve service – with nearly 130 people it was the largest service we have had since I have been rector!

## Formation

Once we returned to having two services, we incorporated a Bible Study in between the services. Bible Study began on March 6 and focused on the Gospel of Luke, using a curriculum provided by Forward Day by Day. We met on Sundays (in person) and Tuesday evenings (online). Once I went on sabbatical, Joe Calizo continued the Bible Study, focusing on the Book of Acts. I had hoped to start a more comprehensive Bible Study in the fall, but that idea has been pushed further into our future as I have worked to help bring Jenny and Anne on board.

During the spring we also started Church School again for the first time in two years! I am so grateful for Brian Razzino, Ben Brown, Savannah Ferster, Meaghan Kent, Tom Greco and Dave Evans for teaching church school this spring.

I am also grateful for the folks who attended the Godly Play training in August with Rosemary Beales. Some of the folks who attended did so to learn more about the program and what we do for the kids of our parish. Others I think just wanted to experience this really cool program and hear the biblical stories told in this way! Some were ready to be trained to teach!

Happily we have two new Godly Play teachers in Jenny D and Eleanor Patterson. This fall and winter they have joined Brian and Ben in teaching our youngest kids. Next year we will need





many more teachers to volunteer so that we can again have two classes – one for younger kids and one for older kids.

A big focus for our formation program were the sabbatical grant funded art and storytelling workshops, led by Chrissy Crosby. Each of these two-day workshops covered Biblical stories of wilderness and related these stories to our lives -all while providing the opportunity to reflect through different art mediums – such as drawing and painting. Participants were also invited to use cement

and natural materials to make garden stepping stones for the church.

After these two workshops, there were still many materials left over. Parishioners who were not able to make it to the workshops were given the opportunity to use these materials and make their own art. They were directed to the biblical stories as found in Exodus 14 and Numbers 13 and given the following prompts:

- How does wilderness feel to you? How does wilderness look or sound, taste or smell?
- What does wilderness inspire within you? What do you fear – or love - about wilderness? What do you AVOID about wilderness?
- How does the difference between night and day feel in the wilderness? Where is God in night and day? What about NIGHT means wilderness to you? What about DAY?
- How do you see yourself in the wilderness? What images come to you from the pandemic?
- What happens when your wandering in the wilderness is over and you are coming (going) home? The Israelites were promised a homeland by God but didn't know about what they were getting into. What is home to you? What is scary – what is comforting – about going home?
- How does all this come together in how you feel about church? Does the church feel like home after the pandemic? What invitation do you hear from God to “come home?”



## Fellowship

With the exception of the Shrine Mont Retreat, our fellowship consisted mostly of getting together and eating!! We had outside coffee less coffee hours in the Summer and returned to having them inside once we all came back from our summer vacations (and the diocese gave us the green light). There were two opportunities to attend sabbatical workshops over the summer and these included Friday night dinners. Many people attended the Parish Art Show and Dinner (which also followed an hour of “fall” clean up!). The latter was catered by Mindy’s Catering thanks to the sabbatical grant from the Lily foundation. In the Spring newcomers and vestry members gathered at the Razzino home for a picnic.



## Mission and Outreach



In addition to our continued ministry with ALIVE!, the Carpenters Shelter and the Brown Bag Lunch program administered by Meade Memorial Church, our parish gathered school supplies for Charles Barrett Elementary for the beginning of the school year and toys for children in the City of Alexandria during the holiday season.

To support ALIVE!, The Church of Saint Clement raised \$550.00 during the Spring2Action campaign (Alexandria's annual day of giving).

Our contributions helped ALIVE! raise over \$93,000. We also provided a van-load of materials from the closed Saint Clement Thrift Shop to the ALIVE! House Sidewalk Sale on April 23, 2022. In October, Saint Clement parishioners (including the Thursday walkers) formed a congregational team for the 41st annual Step ALIVE! Walkathon. The Church of Saint Clement Team reached its \$1,000 financial goal with \$1,108 in donations from congregation members. 14 parishioners walked in the walkathon.

Please see the contributions provided by Monica (Carpenters Shelter) and Debbie (Brown Bag Lunches) later in this report for further information on outreach efforts in our community.

## Stewardship

Our Fall Stewardship campaign was a great success with nearly all of our parishioners making a pledge to support the life and ministry of the church – and to pay for the staff and upkeep of our building and grounds. It is always heartening to see the pledges come in – often with notes regarding how much this parish means to the people who give.

This year's campaign was focused on the theme of Do Not Be Afraid. In the letter that was sent out to each of you, I included the following reflection:

*"In the fall before the pandemic, we were averaging about 75 people on a Sunday and were welcoming new families almost every week. Three years later we are averaging about 50 people on a Sunday. Families have retired, moved away, and /or took assignments overseas. Some of our most regular attendees prior to the pandemic now have other engagements and activities that require their time and presence on Sunday mornings. Sadly, we have also lost a handful of our most beloved and dedicated parishioners to illness and death. We feel the absence of these folks acutely.*

*Our finances too have taken a hit, and paralleling the decline in attendance, we see a decline in giving. In this sense, it is a difficult time in the life of our parish as it is a difficult time in the lives of most parishes these days. But this isn't our whole story. It's not even a big part of who we are.*

*Instead, ours is a story of abundance. We have so much for which to be grateful. God reminds us we are never alone. And God continues to send blessings our way – over and over again.*

*We can live into the holy invitation: Do Not Be Afraid....*

*There is no denying when you come on Sunday morning that we are a small parish. There is also no denying how vibrant we are; there are so many gifts being a small church brings to the Kingdom of God. We can - and must - do things differently, creatively, intergenerationally, more casually, more openly.*

*We can know each other more deeply.  
Always we work together.*

*There are plenty of other wonderful - and bigger - Episcopal churches nearby; but each of you chose to be part of this community – just as I chose to be your rector. I love being part of you all. And I am so glad God called me and each of you to Saint Clement.*





*Giving our fear of our financial situation over to God, I look forward to the ways we will walk into our future together.”*

As we begin the year, we now have 45 pledges for a total of \$158,000 (for an average pledge of just about \$3500). This is about \$20,000 less than what was pledged in 2022. If you have not made a pledge to the church you are certainly welcomed and invited to make one at any point in the year. To make a pledge to the church, just send Virginia an email ([office@saintclement.org](mailto:office@saintclement.org)) with the total amount you plan to give for the year. You can pay the full amount at any time.

## **Finance**

In an effort to modernize our bookkeeping efforts, we contracted with an outside company to handle our accounting needs beginning in March 2022. We were able to move away from the Shepherd's Staff software and get everything on QuickBooks. This was a necessary move. However, our regular monthly work with this new company proved to be more expensive than we could ultimately afford. We decided to cut ties with them before the end of the year. They have been very cooperative and helpful as we have moved once again to working with an individual bookkeeper, rather than a large company.

The final Statement of Income and Expenses by Account for 2022 will not be completed until the end of January, as all billing for expenses for 2022 have not been received and paid.

However, a preliminary summary of Saint Clement's financial picture is below:

We brought in nearly \$300,500 and spent just over \$345,000 in 2022.

We ended 2022 nearly \$44,00 in the red. Which is about \$17,000 more than we had anticipated with the deficit budget we had passed for 2022. Part of the reason it is this much higher is that we had to catch up with the Rector's Pension Payments and Health Insurance (\$6000) and paid more than we had anticipated in Bookkeeping fees (\$13,700).

As of December 31, 2022, we had a balance of \$96,380.89 in our checking account.

Going into 2023, as a direct result of the generosity of the Saint Clement congregation, a planned giving gift of property from Jim Kincheloe, and the new rental agreement with Bethel Evangelical Church, the vestry has passed a budget that continues to show growth and solid financial stewardship despite the pandemic.

We submitted a compilation with Disclosure to the Diocese for 2021 on December 1, 2022. This satisfies our Audit requirement.

## Vestry and Staff

It has been a joy to work with the Saint Clement Vestry and Staff for a sixth year! For the vestry, we recruited two outstanding vestry members for three year terms beginning in 2022: Wendy Harper and Lee Dreyfus. These two joined Ben Brown, Michael Gray (Junior Warden) and Peggy Nigon (Secretary) who completed the second of their three year terms. Kathy Keenoy and Christopher Kent continued as Senior Warden and Treasurer respectively for their third year.

As of the Annual Meeting, Kathy Keenoy and Christopher Kent have completed their vestry terms. I am so grateful for all they have done for the church over the last three years. I am especially grateful for Christopher who has agreed to continue on as our treasurer in a non vestry capacity, which is allowed by our parish bylaws. Kathy, the Quiet Ministry award recipient from January 2022, continued to help whenever and wherever the church needed her to. She took the reigns when I went on sabbatical and led the parish and vestry with skill and grace. She continued to be a rock for the preschool as Jenny came on board as our new director. I cant wait to invite her to serve on the vestry again in 2024 (I kid, Kathy!!).

We will elect two more vestry members at the upcoming Annual Meeting on January 29, 2023: Eleanor Patterson and Tom Greco.

Our staff experienced a lot of turnover in 2022. Virginia remained as our Parish Administrator and did an incredible job as always. Gina Legrand, our bookkeeper, moved to El Paso and we contracted with an outside company (Chazin) to manage our finances. This proved more expensive and cumbersome than we had hoped and we hired a new bookkeeper, Eve Cope, at the end of the year. Eve will work remotely which is possible because through our work with Chazin we were able to get all of our financial information out of Shepherds Staff (an obscure and antiquated software) and into QuickBooks (as described in the Finance portion of this report above).



While I was on sabbatical, our music Director of two years, Rob Passow, took another job at a larger parish. We are so grateful for Rob's ministry among us for two years and were sad to see him go. However, we didn't miss a beat and hired Anne Tyler in early October. Anne is an absolute blessing and she and her husband, John, have seamlessly fit into the life of our community. Anne brings a wealth of experience leading choirs and music programs – and teaching folks to sing! Her demeanor draws people in and we are growing as a musical community of faith through her ministry.



## Building and Grounds/Space Use

With a \$5000 matching grant from the diocese we were able to renovate the thrift shop rooms and clean up the downstairs hallway. We clean and painted each room and set out new carpet. We painted the entire hallway – including all of the baseboards (some of which needed repair). We also replaced the lights in those two rooms as well as all of the lights in the downstairs hallway. They are now much brighter (and with LED bulbs will last a long time).

Once the downstairs updates were finished, we reached out to Bethel Evangelical Church after another congregation had approached us about renting space. We went to Bethel to see about their needs before we responded to the new congregation (preferring to work with a congregation with whom we already had a relationship). It turned out that they were growing and in need of more space to worship. And, in addition to the sanctuary they wanted to rent office space. We came to an agreement at the end of the year and they began their new lease in January 2023. We are so excited to share space with them and so grateful that the diocese was able to help us get these rooms fixed up.

## Preschool

Last year (2021) was a difficult year for the Saint Clement Preschool as the new Director we hired to run the preschool didn't work out and we parted ways in October 2021. Thank God that Dory came back and led the school again through the first half of 2022. At the time, I would not have guessed that having to move on from a new Director in less than three months would have been a blessing, but now I am sure God was at work through all of that and has brought Jenny Darlington into the life of Saint Clement Church and School. Jenny has been wonderful and I look forward to working with her for many years. She has a great instinct for teaching, building relationships with families, recruiting new students and working with the staff; she is also a joy to be around. Lynne Gravina, our school administrator has been very helpful over the last year plus as well. She too is a delight to be around and brings a smiling presence to the school every day. She always makes herself available to help out in any way that is needed.

2021 was difficult. 2022 has been a delight.

*Faithfully submitted by Rev. Robin Razzino, Rector*



## Senior Warden's Report



The most significant thing that happened in 2022 is that Robin was on sabbatical for 3 months and we survived! David Crosby came each Sunday and celebrated Eucharist with us.

We felt like he had become part of our Clementine family. Since we were all still adjusting to returning to in-person worship, it was easy for us to adjust to each other!

Also, with the sabbatical, we had two dinners. The first dinner was our first time to come together as a congregation for a meal and fellowship since the pandemic and we loved it.

I don't think we realized how much we had missed each other until we all sat down to dinner together. Both dinners were well attended with adults and kids all having a great time. We also had a day for making art with Chrissie Crosby on the Saturday after each dinner. Again, adults and kids had a nice time thinking and talking about our time in the pandemic wilderness. Members of the congregation made some fabulous artwork – both at the sessions on Saturday and at home.

While Robin was in Alaska, our wonderful music director, Rob Passow, told us that he would be leaving Saint Clement. We thought this would be a disaster, but Rob stayed to welcome Robin back and we had a couple great subs for a month. Then, the Holy Spirit and Robin found Anne! Somehow, our little church always finds a way in the end.

*Faithfully submitted by Kathy Keenoy, Senior Warden (pictured on the right)*

## Building and Grounds Report

Throughout 2022, Saint Clement completed both routine and innovative projects throughout our building and grounds. We continued our working relationship with our groundkeepers, EnviroGrow, who are responsible for mowing, gutter and leaf cleaning services. EnviroGrow also completed Saint Clement's annual spring-cleaning project in April: their team mulched; carried away leaves and debris that had accumulated during fall and winter; and ensured our plants could thrive during growing season. Saint Clement also worked, once again, with Green Vista arborists. In July, they addressed a broken oak tree limb on the Day School playground; their team both cleared the debris and pruned branches to optimize the longevity of the tree. In November, Green Vista provided comprehensive pruning services to ready all trees on the property for winter. Their arborist noted



that Saint Clement's largest oak tree, which is closest to Oakcrest, is aging and declining rapidly. To date, they are able to manage the decline with routine pruning but recommended tree removal within 3-5 years.

Within Saint Clement's building, our community also experienced a combination of routine and innovative projects during 2022. HomeTeam Pest Defense continued to provide routine pest and rodent control services. Jani-King completed another year of cleaning services for the Church and Day School. In June, Saint Clement worked with Michael & Sons Electrical Services to complete the Sanctuary skylight replacement above the altar. Our lights now shine brightly on the Cross. In July, general contractor Ricardo Arias and team completed a renovation of the former Thrift & Gift Shop room in the basement. This enabled the Day School to use the space as a classroom and nap space during the beginning of the School year. It also enabled the Church to rent to the space (effective January 2023) to our newly returned facility users, Bethel Evangelical Church.

Finally, after a wonderful and successful artistic journey during Robin's sabbatical (Saint Clement's Home from the Wilderness Art installations in MR Hall), Saint Clement invested in minor repairs of MR Hall: our handyman, Harry Lambert, touched up paint and dry wall where art work hung during the summer and fall. Harry also installed beautiful new bulletin boards along the MR Hall walls, which will be used to present parish news, information, educational materials, art and more! As of November 2022, the expenditures for building maintenance (including cleaning and pest services) were approximately \$21,668. Facility improvements (including the basement renovations) totaled \$12,295. Grounds maintenance was approximately \$6,650.

*Faithfully submitted by Virginia Insley, Parish Administrator*

## Music Director's Report



A new minister of music began in October, 2022. As the Rector and I began planning the music for worship, many wonderful ideas and compositions from the former music minister, Rob Passow, were kept in place. Service music written by Rob and Taize songs continued to be incorporated during the service. The ever ready Lee Dreyfus doubled as the flute soloist and obbligato player on hymns and anthems.

After discussion with the Rector, a plan was developed to try to increase singers in the choir from the faithful four sopranos and altos. Weekly choir rehearsals, formerly held on Thursday nights

from 7:30-9:00 pm, transformed into Sunday rehearsals for a period of a few weeks to prepare anthems. These rehearsals were held at 9:00 am, before the 10:00 am service. The first choir, known as the Saint Clement Holiday Choir, swelled to ten mighty singers, three tenors and basses, three altos, and four sopranos. Two Advent Sundays and the Christmas eve service were filled with choral anthems sung by this new choir. Plans to continue this periodic singing group will continue through the church seasons of Epiphany, Lent/Easter, and Pentecost.

Big thanks go out to these faithful musicians: Joe Calizo, Martha Crawley, Linda Darlington, Lee Dreyfus, Anna Dvorchik, Betty Livingston (Anna's mother), Nancy Marriner, Peggy Nigon, Brian Razzino, and John Tyler. And thank you to the entire congregation of Saint Clement for your support. You have made me feel so welcome. I look forward to continuing to serve as music minister.

*Faithfully submitted by Anne Tyler, Director of Music*

## **Carpenter's Shelter Dinner Program**

Thank you Clementines for another year of thoughtful ministry to the Carpenter's Shelter. It's such a pleasure to share in this ministry with so many of you.

The Carpenter's Shelter supports people experiencing homelessness and those at-risk, to achieve sustainable independence through shelter and housing placement, guidance, education, and advocacy. St. Clement continues to partner with the Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church to provide hot and healthy dinner to guests of the Carpenter's Shelter of the third Sunday of every month.



We were fully back in the kitchen this year preparing and serving fresh meals for 30-50 fellow Alexandrians each month. Many thanks to the following Clementines that shared their talent, time, and resources: Lauren Borden, Joe Calizo, Bonnie Dragotto, Lee Dreyfus, Annette Foster, Tom Greco, Wendy Harper, Raymond Johnson, John Sipple, Kate Anania, Nancy Marriner, Peggy Nigon, Gabriele O'Neil, Eleanor Patterson, Ellen Raynor, Christina Sherlock, Deborah Tatum, Claire Wang, and Dan Ziegler. Your thoughtfulness, culinary talents, creative choices, and friendly spirits were well appreciated and garnered regular accolades.

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Our Easter meal service was festive and indulgent with fresh salmon fillets cooked on site, perfectly steamed asparagus, flavorful and abundant scalloped potatoes, and hot bread. It was such a treasure to celebrate the special day with our brethren at Carpenter's.



Serving at Carpenter's remains one of my favorite ministries in the community. I am reminded regularly that the line between financial stability and struggle is a thin one and that care, respect, and a helping hand go a long way toward buoying someone's spirit, capacity, and faith.

If you would like to learn more about the Carpenter's Shelter, our dinner service ministry, or other ways you can support the Carpenter's Shelter (specific donations, tutoring services, job counseling, etc), you can speak to me (or many of the above mentioned individuals) or check out <https://carpentersshelter.org>. A ministry FAQ will be posted in the Parish Hall.

*Faithfully submitted by Monica Rusk, CSD Coordinator*

## Brown Bag Lunches



Many members of St Clement participated in the bimonthly, three-days-a-week, Meade Memorial Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) program from January – December 2022. Each day for which we were responsible we provided FORTY OR MORE lunches - which included sandwiches, cookies, chips, and fresh fruit. These were delivered to Meade Memorial Church and shared with Thirty TO FORTY PEOPLE who had showed up to receive the BBLs.

The sandwich making happened in private homes, the CHURCH KITCHEN or in the parish hall (where many new – and young helpers worked under the guidance of Rev Robin following the 10:00 am service).

4-5 CHURCH MEMBERS delivered the meals to Meade and handed them out directly to lunch guests. The personal interactions with lunch guests afforded members the opportunity to engage in mutual interesting conversations and learn about the needs of the Alexandria community. Thank you to everyone who participated in this ministry – either by making sandwiches, assembling bags, or delivering meals. We especially appreciate those who worked behind the scenes to make these lunches. We see you and we are grateful.

*Faithfully submitted by Debbie Tatum Johnson and Joanne Scully, BBL Coordinators*

## Christmas Tree Sales

St. Clement has sold Christmas trees for over 30 years. It is one of the most joyful and inclusive community ministries we engage in. Though we rely on a profit that supports our annual budget, the financial goals are far less important than serving the community, radiating the spirit of St. Clement outside our front doors, and providing the opportunity for all Clementines – young and old alike – to minister together and bring the Christmas joy to all in our area.

This year we sold just over 400 trees this year along with almost 50 wreaths and garlands. We purchased trees from Cardinal Tree Farm in North Carolina - they really are spectacular Frazier firs. As the price of the trees increased from last year, we chose to have a nominal increase. However we are still selling trees substantially cheaper than others around us. We also inquired with other tree farms in the area to evaluate our options, however after a few conversations all the other farms said that very few farms were taking on new customers, and if we had a good supplier to stick with them.



We continued some of the streamlining adopted during Covid-times - selling by size class vs. measured size, offering (and promoting) credit card transactions, and limiting other activities (e.g., cheer day, bake sale, sock and toy drive). Given the number of trees and price-point, we sold out in two weekends yet again. We sold over \$35,000 of trees this year, with about \$13,000 in profit after procuring the trees, transport, and square fees. Thank you everyone that joined this ministry, whether it was unloading the truck on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, selling the trees, trimming the trees, running the square machine, or helping with clean-up each day! A special thanks to Virginia who once again coordinated with Cardinal Tree farm around pricing, discounts, and delivery!

One of our key take-aways from this year is that we need more larger trees (yellow, green, and white) and fewer of the smaller (blue and red) trees. While we ordered the fewest of the blue trees they were by far the slowest to sell.

We will be looking for captains again for this year's tree sales to finalize in March. If you would like more information to assist in your discernment, feel free to ask myself, or Rev. Robin. Thank you again everyone for your commitment to this wonderful ministry.

*Faithfully submitted by, Ben Brown, Tree Co-Captain*

## Preschool Director's Report

It is a very exciting time to be at Saint Clement Episcopal School. Parents are grateful for the stellar care and education offered to their children, the children love the special classes and traditions making a comeback since the pandemic, and the staff remains enthusiastic and appreciative for this community.

Since taking over in July, I have learned so much! It is a joy to work alongside Lynne Gravina, our school administrator, and Robin, Virginia, and Anne.

I feel so blessed to work for a thriving ministry at my own church.



### Class Size and Structure



Our current enrollment total is 54 students. They are divided into 5 classrooms with 5 teachers, 5 assistants, and a resource teacher to help with enrichments and substitute when needed. We begin welcoming children at 8:00am and dismissal varies between 12:45, 3:00, 4:00, and 5:30.

A main goal moving forward is to grow the school and enroll no less than 60 students for the 2023- 2024 School Year.

We are permitted for up to 75 students. Two Open Houses for prospective families were held in January. The evening event invited children to experience the magic of our school. Teachers, staff, and parents joined me, Robin, and Kathy to offer tours and information about the school. The events were very successful and almost all families who attended sent in applications!



## Enrichment Activities

I'm doing my best to learn about special classes and events from before the pandemic, how they were altered during the pandemic, and how to mesh the two. The return of weekly Chapel with Robin and Anne has been a highlight of the year. The entire school comes together to sing, praise, and learn every Wednesday.

It is not yet in the budget to hire a librarian, cooking teacher, and music teacher. The classes instead come to the Children's Chapel once a week for Songs and Stories with me. We focus on seasonal stories, accompanied by songs, and social lessons from my many puppets. Ms. Lynne also seizes the occasional opportunity to lead a cooking class in the kitchen.

Special events held already this year included the Fall Family Picnic, Halloween Trick or Treat and Parade, a group Thanksgiving meal, the Feast of Saint Clement, and Christmas program. Parents are thrilled to return to the building to volunteer!



## Fundraising and Grants

The PTO (our parent led organization) has returned! Garry Stone and Elizabeth Kaknes volunteered to co-chair this group and lead monthly meetings. The PTO held a Scholastic Book Fair in December, a restaurant night at Los Tios in January, and look forward to the return on the auction in May.

Grants received include \$2,000 from the Alexandria Rotary in June, and two Early Childhood grants totaling \$27,918 in July and August.

*Faithfully Submitted by Jenny Darlington, Director*

