

Church of Saint Clement

1701 N. Quaker Lane
Alexandria, VA 22302

The Rev. Robin Razzino, Rector

Annual Report 2023



Annual Parish Meeting
January 28, 2024

All are welcome at the Lord's Holy Table

Rector's Report



Earlier this week I was interviewing a seminarian who was interested in working at Saint Clement for her field ed requirement for next year. When it was her turn to ask me questions she began by asking me where I experienced joy in my congregation. My answer was “how much time do you have?”

I mean – where to begin? With one of our youngest members skipping through worship on the way to church school, or all the children gathered around the altar with arms lifted in praise and thanksgiving during the Easter service, with another youngster running to the table at coffee hour yelling “SUGAR!” with too much glee, with Mike Oliver playing with Christopher during coffee hour, with reflecting on the sanctuary beautifully decorated by the Altar Guild for Christmas, with the fact we have our own “three tenors” in the church choir, with Anne’s infectious laugh, with the way we found Bria at the moment we most needed a parish administrator (thanks to her connection with Virginia), with the way this congregation responded to an emergency call to raise (a lot of) money for our new HVAC, with the folks who gathered to remember loved ones and support one another at the funerals for Jim Kincheloe and Barbara Borden, with all the new people who have joined the community this year? I could go on and on.

My heart is so full and I am blessed to be able to serve God and God’s church in this very particular congregation.

Membership

In addition to about a dozen households who were frequent visitors, we have welcomed several new households into the church this year. Jim and Carole Puryear came to us from Florida after retirement (isn’t that supposed to be the other way around?); Katie and Coleman Bacon, with their daughters Avery and Blair, came to us after their oldest started attending the preschool; Sydney Young came this Spring and you will see her on Sundays when she is not working (shift work means she is often unable to come on Sundays); Virginia Pasley also came this Spring and immediately joined the choir; Edrenna Johnson and her son Evan came at Easter (they are a former preschool family) and have made it back several times since; and finally Ted and Susan Burkhalter joined after hearing about what a friendly congregation we were from former Clementine Rodney LeGrand (Ted and Rodney served together overseas in the State Department).

In June, newcomers gathered for a dinner at the Razzino home. Two weeks later the ever-expanding choir had a dinner there as well. New life and joy and growth are ever apparent in this community of faith. In fact our Sunday morning attendance this summer (between Memorial Day and Labor Day) was 827. That was a *40% increase* over the year before (and incidentally matched *exactly* the same amount of people we had worshiping with us the summer before the Pandemic).

There are many ways and many reasons folks come through our doors and get connected to our community. The preschool is a natural source for new families. And an invitation from a friend has been found time and again to be the main reason people find their way into a church. However, several of the folks here just came to check us out because they were new to the neighborhood.

How might we continue to open doors for folks to find us and “come and see” what we are about? And - then - how can we continue to invite these folks into deeper relationship – with us, each other and God?

Pastoral Care

One of the highlights of the year for me took place during Lent when most of the congregation took on the ministry of praying for others, through being connected with a prayer buddy. Each person who wanted to participate received the name of someone else in the congregation for whom to pray and that person in turn was prayed for by someone else. The person being prayed for did not know who was praying for them until the Easter season. We did not know specifically what was happening in the lives of the people for whom we prayed, but we trusted that God knew the needs of that person. Participating in this prayer chain encouraged a deepening of each person’s prayer life and also a deepening of the bonds within our community. We all stand in need of prayer and how wonderful that we could lift each other up in this way!

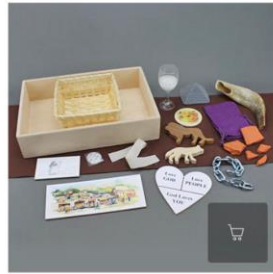
Though I had many pastoral care visits and conversations over the year, this is a community that really cares for one another. In the week after Easter three different members of the congregation has surgical procedures and each was cared for by a group of friends from St. Clement who drove to appointments, provided meals, took calls, prayed. We had funerals for two long-time members this past year: Jim Kincheloe and Barbara Borden. We also celebrated the marriage of Lisa Lundborg and Bonnie Dragotto.



Formation



Jacob



Jeremiah

Our Godly Play program for children ages 2.5 through about eight (2nd grade) continues to go well. We have about four to six kids who regularly participate. The class runs from September through May and is taught by Ben Brown, Jenny Darlington, Eleanor Patterson and Brian Razzino. In the Spring we ordered two new Godly Play lessons thanks to a

generous donation to the Rector's Discretionary Fund by Raymond Johnson (for his motorcycle blessing). Because it was so fun to see these new lessons and all of the materials that went along with them, we decided we needed seven more lessons (mostly from the Old Testament) to round out our set. We made a list of all the new materials needed and then asked the whole congregation to help us collect them over the summer. **Over 20 households stepped up to make, sew, construct or purchase all that was needed.** Not only are we generous, we are creative and crafty!

In September Claire volunteered to teach the older kids class (which had been suspended since COVID). We enlisted Joe Calizo and Tom Greco to help her with this class and they spent the Fall on the books of Genesis and Exodus. More importantly, they formed a tight knit community of kids and teachers. This class averages about 4 to 5 kids each week – roughly kids in 3rd through 6th grades. We really need a few members of the congregation to step up and teach this class next year. You won't be without help and there are a lot of curriculums out there that are really easy to use!

Adults also had several opportunities to learn and grow in their understanding of prayer and scripture over the year. Claire led a Lenten series on ordinary/sacred objects. In the Fall I lead a Bible Study on the Book of Exodus, and in Advent many of us spent those four weeks reflecting on art and scripture based on the theme *A Weary World Rejoices*. We look forward to offering even more formation opportunities in 2024.

Worship

We began the year with both 8:00 am and 10:00 am services, but we didn't have more than three to five people attending the early service. We suspended the service for the summer and have not yet returned to early morning worship. There are several reasons for this and this is not a permanent move. However, many of the folks who used to attend this service either moved away or now attend the 10:00 am service.

As the rector, I have to say that I love having the entire community gathered together for worship in one service. I am not the only one to feel this way – I know many of you have expressed the same sentiment and it is becoming normative for many churches throughout the country to forego the early service in the post COVID world which puts (rightly I think) a lot of value on being together as one Body.



We had several guest preachers this year – highlighted by welcoming the Rev. Rosemari Sullivan back to St Clement in the Spring. We also had Bishops Ted Gulick and Dansby Smith and Canon d’Rue Hazel with us from the Diocese of Virginia. Others who shared the gift of preaching with us this year included the Rev. Sarah Moses, the middle school chaplain at Saint Stephens Saint Agnes school; The Rev. Marybeth Sanders Wilson, a member of St Clement who we sent off to seminary but returned to preach after graduation; The Rev. Pearson Nhayo, a former seminarian who returned to preach while in town for his DMin studies; and finally the Rev. Allen Dayan, an international student at VTS from India who came to preach and share his story with us during Advent.

It is so important for a congregation to hear the Word of God preached from different perspectives and with different voices. We are so lucky to have had all these folks share their gift of time and talent with us. And I am ALWAYS so grateful for the help of the Rev. Tricia Lyons and our seminarians Claire Wang and Talley Banazek who preach so well and so often! I am grateful!



For a brief time, we had the Rev. Katie Hoyer serving with us as a Deacon, showing us what it is to have a Deacon in the worship service and teaching us about that particular ministry. We are so glad she shared her gifts of preaching and pastoral care with us for part of the year and wished her all the best as she returned home to New Jersey this past fall.

Due to the loss of heat in the sanctuary we worshipped in the Parish Hall for most of Advent. We are a flexible congregation and pivoting to this way of worship wasn’t hard for us (it helped that it wasn’t the first time!). Some even remarked how much they liked the intimacy of the service. However, it was also nice to have the heat fixed so we could be in the sanctuary to celebrate Christmas and welcome so many visitors at the end of the year.

Fellowship

We always have fun when we are together. We had a Pancake supper just before Lent and the turn out was near pre-covid numbers. The highlight of the night for me was when 3 year old Avery's mom pulled out some whipped cream from her purse (Avery's stash) and Avery went around to every table offering whipped cream to all the kids. Sharing is caring!!



Wendy Harper helped us get together over the summer with the first BINGO night we had had since I arrived. The older kids loved calling the numbers and after BINGO we all enjoyed a silly game of charades. In the fall, many of us gathered at Shrine Mont for a parish weekend which included a lot of searching for salamanders, art, games, fellowship around the fireplace, and Sunday worship in the Shrine.



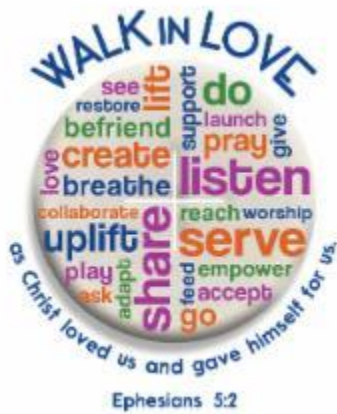
Mission and Outreach

We continue to serve our community in countless ways. Our Brown Bag Lunch program and Carpenter Shelter Dinners are currently the foundation of our outreach efforts. Both of these ministries meet real needs, they were born of longstanding relationships in the community, they allow for many folks to help, and provide opportunities for folks brand new to the church to help and serve and become connected to the parish. You can read more about these ministries in the reports which follow the Rector's report.

In addition to these two ministries we hosted a food drive for ALIVE! in July, a school supply drive in August, and a Christmas toy drive for Alexandrian children during November and December. A group from St Clement helped ALIVE! move furniture into a family's new home in August and in October a group also joined the ALIVE! Walkathon to raise money and awareness for this wonderful organization (founded in part by Harry Williams and other Clementines decades ago). In November we joined with neighboring congregation for a Thanksgiving walk for peace. The relationships with our neighboring congregations continue to grow and strengthen through these and other ministries.

I also met with Casa Chirilagua earlier in the year and I hope to continue to work with them over the next few years to seek ways our communities might draw closer together. Read more about them here: <https://casachirilagua.org/en/mission/>

Stewardship



This fall at Saint Clement, we focused our stewardship campaign on how we *Walk in Love*. These are words we hear frequently during worship. They are said before the offertory, and signal the transition between our praying and thinking about what is happening in our specific community, in our time and place, and our praying and thinking about the great inheritance we have received in the Eucharist, the memory of Christ’s sacrifice for us, and the life and hope he offers.

“Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us in offering and sacrifice to God,” is spoken to define the connection between how Jesus Christ offers himself to us, and how we in return offer ourselves to God and to God’s work

among us.

We know that the way Saint Clement “walks in love” together has profound impact both within and beyond the walls of our church. We hear from parishioners each week about the ways in which other members of this community support, encourage, accompany, console, and empower one another. This love that we show to one another, however, is not a closed circuit. The love we have for one another carries us out into the world to give, serve, and love.

During our fall pledge campaign, we asked everyone to consider how they might continue to support the work of the church through gifts of time, talent ... and treasure.

We invited 76 households to pledge and received 49 pledges. The total amount pledged was \$171,934; the average pledge was \$3490.

Two households pledged \$10,000 or more (total \$20,000)
Three households pledged between \$7501 and \$10,000 (total \$25,600)
Seven households pledged between \$5001 to \$7500 (total \$42,000)
Fourteen households pledged between \$2501 to \$5000 (total \$53,340)
Eleven households pledged between \$1001 to \$2500 (total \$17,524)
Five households pledged under \$1000 (total \$3070)

* seven pledges are not included in the breakdown above

This generosity has allowed us to have a balanced budget for 2024.

Finance

We brought in about \$345,467 in income for 2023. We spent about \$347,418. We ended the year only \$1,951 in the red. Considering that we had included \$35,000 in income in the budget

based on what we thought was coming in from the sale of Jim Kincheloe's land (and which didn't come), this is excellent.

As of December 31, 2023, we had a balance of \$162,209.72 in our checking account (however this number does not include what we spent on the new HVAC at the end of December (\$32,318) and what we owed the school for salaries at the end of the year (\$26,707). A more realistic picture would have the checking account be around \$103,183 at the end of the year (compared to \$96,380.89 on December 31, 2022).

We submitted 2022 audit materials to our accountant in October of 2023. He has not yet completed our audit for 2022. However the diocese is aware that our materials are in to the accountant and we are waiting for the final version to send to the diocese. We hope to submit our 2023 audit on time (August 2024).

Vestry and Staff

It has been a joy to work with the Saint Clement Vestry and Staff for a seventh year! For the vestry, we recruited two outstanding vestry members for three year terms beginning in 2023: Eleanor Patterson and Tom Greco. These two joined Ben Brown, Michael Gray (Junior Warden), Peggy Nigon (Secretary), Wendy Harper and Lee Dreyfus.



As of the 2024 Annual Meeting, Ben Brown, Michael Gray and Peggy Nigon will have completed their terms on the vestry. Over the past year, Ben has served as our Senior Warden and has helped us continue to live into the post covid landscape. His enthusiasm for this community and support for me as the rector has been unwavering. I don't think his life will get any easier by not being on the vestry as he will continue to help lead the Christmas Tree Sales (who wants to lead with him???), teach Godly Play, usher at Sunday services and flip pancakes at the Pancake Supper. You all know the warmth and smiles with which he greets all who come through our doors and I am so grateful for his spirit and leadership.

Over his three years on the vestry, Mike Gray has been a rock. As a trustee, he has always come at a moment's notice to help us sign paperwork, access websites, change passwords and otherwise function administratively as a church. He has to come so often to help it's almost like we just make up reasons for him and Dottie to come see us in the parish office. And maybe we

do - they both are always a welcome distraction from whatever is in front of us. I am so grateful for Mike always dropping what he is doing to come help us out. And of course he does all the other things as well – read, usher, acolyte, count....Thanks Mike!

Peggy and I spent a weekend together at the diocesan convention earlier in the year. In addition to serving on the vestry as our secretary, she was our delegate to convention this year. Conventions can sometimes be dry – but we had so much fun driving back and forth and just getting to know each other in the time we had. She was just a delight to be with and I am grateful she agreed to serve in this way. Peggy sings in the choir, participates in Bible study, helps lead art workshops at Shrine Mont, hang artwork in the parish hall. And she can always be counted on to help make brown bag lunches. She was always the first to join our zoom vestry meetings and I will miss seeing her every time I log into zoom vestry!

As you can see we are blessed with kind, talented and faithful leaders – who are reflections of all of you.

We will elect three more vestry members at the upcoming Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024: Joe Calizo, Bonnie Dragotto, and Amanda Fanning.

Joe Calizo has agreed to be our Senior Warden and Tom Greco has agreed to be our Junior Warden. Eleanor Patterson agreed to take on the role of vestry secretary. Chris Kent continues as our treasurer. I am so grateful for all who have answered the call to serve in this way.



Our staff continued to experience a lot of turnover in 2023. In March our longtime parish administrator, Virginia Insley, announced her resignation as she is pursuing a degree in nursing. We welcomed Katie Hoyer on board in June as a clergy assistant for administration. Unfortunately, Katie had to return to New Jersey in October and we had to hire a new administrator. On Virginia's recommendation, we hired Bria Fournier in early November and she has been a huge asset in the short time she has been with us. Having a full year with Jenny and Anne has been a blessing. I love coming in to the office and working with all of them.

Building and Grounds/Space Use

There is a lot of work that needs to be done to take care of our buildings and grounds. A lot of this work had been deferred for many years. This is not a situation unique to St Clement. It is difficult for small churches with large properties to raise and dedicate the necessary funds to care for what has been entrusted to us. Recently, the pandemic made it very hard to find resources to do this work. In 2023, outside of replacing one of the two HVAC units that serve the sanctuary, we spent very little on building maintenance. We will have to do much more in the years to come in order to stay on top of the issues.



Twice during the year parishioners came together to help care for the grounds – once in the Spring and again in the Fall. Efi Eyo and Raymond Johnson once again cleaned the carpets in the sanctuary and parish hall free of charge!

We had several small projects completed – replacing ceiling tiles in the sanctuary, fixing a gaping hole in the parish office ceiling, installing locks on some of the doors to the preschool, small plumbing fixes, installing a couple new window AC units.

And then do you remember how we worshipped in the dark for so long (or maybe only the folks who sat in the quadrant with no light remember!). We were able to fix those lights (and not have to spend the \$81,000 that was originally quoted to us to get them fixed (always get multiple quotes lol)).

As already mentioned, we unexpectedly had to replace one of the two large HVAC units for the sanctuary. This cost over \$30,000. The congregation came through in a big way to raise the money to have it fixed immediately – but we need to start setting aside money now so that we are better prepared for when this might happen again.



Preschool

I can't say enough what a delight it is to work with Jenny and dream alongside her about what the future of the preschool might hold – especially as it relates to the church and to reaching families that need a connection to a faith community – whether they join the church or not. In just over a year Jenny has hit the ground running, gotten a hold on the administrative parts of running a preschool, brought new ideas to the curriculum and new teachers to do enrichment with the children. Chapel remains one of the highlights of my week. If you ever want to feel like a rock star – become a priest and lead preschool chapel. The kids light up when they come to chapel and run to me with hugs and high fives. And it is not because I (!) am awesome – I stumble through stories and sing off key – it's that the children are just full of joy – they are happy and well cared for and just love being at school and being seen, recognized and known by all the staff.

The most exciting thing that happened this year was being invited by Virginia Seminary to participate in their "Faith Filled Families" initiative. I really believe that the school is a huge mission field for us – and this initiative helps us not only focus on school families – but ALL people in our congregation – young and old alike. We can do something really fresh and new here – and are able to do so because we are small(ish) and very agile. There is so much room for creativity here.

This from VTS:

Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) has been awarded a five-year grant by Lilly Endowment Inc. in their new Christian Parenting and Caregiving initiative. Our leadership team has chosen to focus our work on congregations with preschools, recognizing that many parents and guardians of the children may not be active parishioners and are open to strengthening the spiritual life of their household and that of their children.

Faith-Filled Families: Christian Practices for Abundant Parenting (FFP) will enrich religious education in church preschools and congregations by equipping teachers and parents/guardians with Christian practices for faithful living in daily life. By nurturing the spiritual formation of parents and families in an ecology of school, congregation, and home, Christian faith and traditions will be transmitted across generations forming disciples of all ages.

What Participants Can Expect from the Initiative:

1. Deep listening to your community – school staff, families, clergy, and members of the congregation – regarding needs and hopes for strengthening faith-formation with children and families

2. Collaboration to help your school and church community enrich the spiritual resources available - to children at school; for adults and children at home; and for all ages in the host congregation
3. Mentoring for preschool teachers - to model Christian practices when interacting with children and to further develop teachers' practice of including theologically and developmentally sound Christian teaching in their classroom
4. Assistance in strengthening the relationship between the host congregation and the preschool
5. A chance to network with other faith-based preschools in the region
6. Resources for parents and guardians to develop faith practices at home
7. Opportunity to share your strengths with others

We will have to wait a couple of years for a lot of these expectation to be met but it is exciting to be thinking about the relationship between the church and the school and how together we might serve the community which surrounds us in this way.

Faithfully submitted by Rev. Robin Razzino, Rector

Senior Warden's Report



2023 was a year of rebound for the Church of St. Clement as we had our first fully post-pandemic year. Our annual Sunday attendance numbers continue to grow and over the summer had begun to sustain pre-pandemic numbers.

We have brought back hallmark events that breathe life into our community such as our annual pancake supper that brings together the pre-school and congregation, our annual clean-up and barbeque where we take the extra hour we gain each fall and spend it cleaning up the grounds of the church.

Through the year we have also experienced change in our staff. We welcomed and continue to love our new Music Director Anne, who has grown our choir. Our long standing church administrator went to pursue future opportunities. We had interim administrators but have landed on a great new administrator in Bria. Robin has been extremely resilient throughout this, often taking on additional responsibilities throughout the transitions.

Lastly, Robin guided and inspired our congregation through the replacement of our HVAC which had been on its last legs for years and finally gave out. She called on the Lord and our congregation and within a week we were able to raise close to \$30,000 to cover the

replacement cost. Without Robin's leadership and the Lord's blessings this would not have been possible.

We are extremely excited to continue to grow our congregation in 2024.

Faithfully submitted by Ben Brown, Senior Warden

Music Director's Report



2023 was a robust year for music at Saint Clement. Maintenance began on the organ, dollies were fitted under our digital keyboards for ease of movement, and a new cover and rug were purchased for the beautiful Baldwin piano. Our choir increased to thirteen singers during the year. Sunday 9:00 am rehearsals were established and an anthem and rehearsal schedule was published to help singers plan their calendars. Twenty three anthems were offered during the Sunday services, some songs highlighting the individual voices of the choir. We also began Wednesday morning rehearsals for singers who wanted to come sing through the hymns for the following week. And new music was programmed, some from the traditional canon and others from more contemporary settings.

Big thanks go out to these faithful musicians: Susan Burkhalter, Joe Calizo, Martha Crawley, Linda Darlington, Lee Dreyfus, Anna Dvorchik, Betty Livingston, Nancy Marriner, Peggy Nigon, Virginia Pasley, Brian Razzino, John Sipple, and John Tyler. The ever ready Lee Dreyfus also doubled as the flute soloist and obbligato player on hymns and anthems.

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 was a wild year with the shelter's transition to housing only families. The increase in the number of kids at dinner service provided for a lot of laughter and challenged our assembly-line skills.

The Carpenter's Shelter supports families 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 families at the Carpenter's Shelter of the third Sunday of every month.

Many thanks to the following Clementines that shared their talent, time, and resources: Lauren Borden, Bonnie Dragotto and Lisa Lundborg, Deirdre Brou, Annette Foster, Rudy Garcia, Wendy Harper, Nancy Mariner, Eleanor Patterson, Joy Pochatila, Jim and Carole Puryear, Christina Sherlock, and Dan Ziegler. Your thoughtfulness, culinary talents, creative choices, and friendly spirits were well appreciated.

We did an all-homemade soups dinner in February that was a big hit, and a lasagna dinner and chicken casserole dinners that had kids returning over and over for seconds. Serving at Carpenter's continues to be a rewarding ministry for me, and I hope for all who participated this year. Our ministry provides a positive example for the kids regarding the importance and joy of looking out for each other and serving our community.

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 in the Parish Hall provides additional information. And if you feel called to take over leadership of this ministry, please come talk to me.

We will be serving on St. Patty's Day this year – an opportunity to have fun with green!

Faithfully submitted by Monica Rusk, CSD Coordinator

Brown Bag Lunches



The 2023 Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) program revealed a consistent need for providing these meals to the community. The average number of people receiving meals in the Fall/Winter was 50 but surged to the high 70s in the Spring/Summer months. Approximately a hundred people showed up to receive a meal during St Clement's rotation this summer.

The BBL program was situated at Meade Memorial Church on Alfred Street in Alexandria

from January – December 2023. Members of St Clement participated in bimonthly, three-days-a-week meal preparation, delivery, and serving meals.

The bag lunch meals contain at a minimum, a sandwich, cookie, fresh fruit, and chips. On most days assigned to St Clement, additional meat sandwiches, fruits, and dessert options are provided according to guest preferences or requests. On days when more than 40 Guests arrive for a BBL, alternate sandwiches and/or food are given to Guests as appropriate.

Young helpers and other parishioners under the guidance of Rev Robin take the opportunity to prepare and pack BBL meals in the church kitchen or Parish Hall when Mondays are assigned to St Clement. On other days, parishioners sign up to make forty sandwiches at private homes or in the church kitchen. Some parishioners share sandwich-making with other parishioners.

Saint Clement members who deliver BBL meals stay to assist and support by serving the meal. Serving the meal allows St Clement parishioners to get to know the guests and engage socially. During one such social interaction, guests talked about the “old days” when they could purchase a hotdog at a takeout window in the local community. Two months later, St Clement provided a Hot dog/Chili wagon which allowed guests to reminisce about childhood memories while enjoying a hotdog. This is an example of how participating in the BBL program provides activities that are mutually satisfying and meaningful for the St Clement parishioners as well as BBL guests.



The capable and dedicated Co-Coordinator, Joanne Scully relocated to Richmond, VA. Joanne’s contribution to the BBL program will be remembered. To that end, Lauren Borden has enthusiastically stepped up to participate as Co-Coordinator with Deborah Tatum-Johnson. The BBL program is especially thankful for three new parishioners who have been instrumental in making sandwiches, assembling bags, and delivering BBL to Meade Memorial Church. The BBL program appreciates all at St Clement (known and unknown) who volunteer and donate their talents and skills to make the BBL program meaningful and constructive.

Faithfully submitted by Debbie Tatum Johnson and Lauren Borden, BBL Coordinators

Christmas Tree Sales



This year we sold just over 500 trees along with almost 50 wreaths and garlands, this is up 100 items from last year. 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 pass on a nominal increase to our customers. We are still selling trees substantially cheaper than others around us, sometimes close to a 50% discount. Receiving the trees prior to

Thanksgiving. This year it was also an honor to bless our truck drivers 'maiden voyage' in his first truck as an owner/operator.

The increase in trees ordered extended our Christmas Tree sales by one weekend, this caused a challenge in recruiting volunteers the final weekend - it is something to consider in the future. In the coming year we also need to solidify and re-define processes and timelines, to have it to continue to run smoothly.

We sold almost \$50,000 worth of trees this year, with about \$22,000 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 Monday evening before Thanksgiving, selling the trees, trimming the trees, running the square machine, or helping with clean-up each day!

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

As I reflect on this past year, it is with joy and gratitude that I present the annual report for Saint Clement Episcopal School. Guided by our unwavering commitment to providing a nurturing and enriching environment, we are thrilled to share the highlights and accomplishments that have shaped the educational journey of our little ones over the past year.

At Saint Clement Episcopal School, our mission goes beyond traditional early education; we strive to cultivate a foundation of values, foster a love for learning, and create a warm community where each child feels seen and celebrated. This annual report serves as a testament to the dedication of our staff, the support of our parents, and the boundless enthusiasm of our students.



ENROLLMENT - The school currently has 58 students enrolled divided into 4 classrooms. We are currently enrolling for the 2024-2025 School Year and hope to enroll 62 students divided into 5 classrooms. Open Houses are scheduled for February 6 and prospective families are urged to reach out to me to schedule a tour.

Our summer camp program proved to be a success as we accepted families from other local preschools for the first time. We welcomed 60 children to our Safari Summer Camp and plan to invite outside families to summer camps in the future. Saint Clement Space Camp is scheduled for July and August 2024.

STAFFING - We started the year with 5 classroom teachers, 2 assistant teachers, an office administrator, enrichment teacher, and floating resource teacher. I taught in the youngest classroom most days until I was able to hire 2 assistant teachers. I remained in the classroom to help train the new hires until the winter break.

Bettina Timme joined the staff in September and quickly became a much-loved member of the community. She serves as the Family Engagement Coordinator, helping with volunteers, our PTO parent/ teacher organization, and she also teaches a Social Emotional Learning enrichment



twice a week. Bettina oversaw an update to our website and is helping with admissions and special events.

Stephanie Regler was hired in October as the office administrator. Stephanie brings a wealth of early childhood education knowledge and strong organization skills. She is efficient, friendly, and enthusiastically takes on challenges.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW - The school continues to recover from the pandemic and reduced enrollment. The PTO hosts monthly dining events and is planning a spring fundraising event. The PTO has also volunteered to help with grant writing efforts.

After a thorough analysis of local preschool tuition rates, we decided to raise tuition roughly 10% for the upcoming school year. We also restructured tuition rates for summer camp. It was discovered that our rates were far less than our competitors and rates had not

been consistently increased in recent years.

ENRICHMENTS - I continue to teach the weekly enrichment, Songs and Stories and Ms. Bettina teaches SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) to small groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The children also enjoy Chapel every Wednesday at 9:30am with Robin and Anne. I encourage you to attend a Chapel service if you are able. The school fills with joy and every child leaves with a full heart!

TRADITIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS - We love making memories! So far this year we have enjoyed a family picnic hosted in the parking lot, a Halloween parade, Thanksgiving luncheon, Feast of Saint Clement, and our Christmas program coupled with a Scholastic Book Fair and reception. Another highlight of the year was a field trip to Greenstreet Gardens Fall Festival in Lothian, MD. Parents and teachers drove to the pumpkin patch and enjoyed a day in the corn maze, on wagon rides, in the corn pits, and more! Family engagement and community building is a goal of mine this year and I could not be happier.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our passionate educators, committed parents, and the entire church community for their support. It is through collaborative efforts that we continue to thrive as a center of excellence in early childhood education.

Faithfully Submitted by Jenny Darlington, Director

