

The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia



WORKS

"God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does." (Martin Luther; Wingren [translator], Luther on Vocation, 2004). This year marks the 506th anniversary of the Reformation. Perhaps not as fun an anniversary as the 500th back in 2017, but we still have a lot to learn from the lessons Luther, and the Reformation, taught us. This lesson, regarding our action and responsibility towards our neighbors, bears frequent repetition.

Lutherans get nervous about works righteousness, and rightly so. However, we need to remember that we are still called to do works of justice and love for, and on behalf of, our neighbors. We just understand that these actions do nothing to earn or win our salvation. God's actions are all that are necessary for our salvation. That being said, since we are saved by God's actions, it is natural for us to want to join in what God is already doing in the world around us.

So, what is God up to in the world around us? Scripture tells us that God is primarily concerned with love and justice. Time and again in the Hebrew Bible, God calls on the people of Israel to take care of (in the words of the Law and numerous prophets) the widow, the orphan, and the resident alien (cf. Exodus 22:22, Deut. 10:18, 24:17-21, 26:12, Isaiah 1:17, 23, Jeremiah 7:6, 22:3, Ezekiel 22:6-8, Zechariah 7:10, Malachi 3:5). The New Testament shows us, in the example of Jesus Christ, God's concern for those who are marginalized and oppressed. God loves all people and God wants all people to know peace, justice, and freedom.

There is an intricate connection between our faith in the saving work of God through Jesus Christ, and our

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participation in God's love for the world. Luther sums this up by saying, "We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise, he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor." (Freedom of a Christian, LW 31:371)

Loving our neighbor and participating in the work of God can take on many forms and St. Stephen is already engaged in this holy work. Through ongoing ministries like our home communion ministers, Stephen Ministers, Caring Cooks, banner and prayer-shawl makers, the work of our Social Ministries Coordinating Committee, our helping with Motel Ministry and From His Hands, our support for groups like FISH, Inc. and Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission, along with our involvement in numerous other local service organizations; we serve the needs of people around us.

We continue this work as individuals as well: speaking and acting in kind and caring ways in our daily conduct, helping others when we see them in need, being respectful and welcoming to those different from us, and living out the Way of Christ wherever we find ourselves. This holy work also requires honest and authentic self-reflection: examining the ways in which we participate in systems that oppress widows, orphans, and resident aliens (to use the language of the prophets) and calling for those systems to be reformed and changed into the loving and just systems that God wills for the world. What sacred work we get to be involved in! And all out of gratitude for God's grace and love towards us!

In Christ, Pastor Jon

GREETINGS, SSLC

Grace and peace to you through our savior, Jesus Christ! I am thrilled to have started working with you all. I thought I'd take this opportunity to introduce myself.

I have been with Our Saviour's since November of 2018 - my first call after seminary. I have developed a deep love of biblical studies since my undergraduate time at the University of Richmond. That followed me into seminary, and I graduated from seminary with a certificate in Biblical Studies. My favorite image for biblical studies is the image of Jacob wrestling with the man/God/angel figure at the Jabbok. We wrestle with scripture, refusing to let go, demanding a blessing. Demanding for God to be made a little more real for you, for me. Demanding that this cradle for Christ (to borrow from Luther) do its work and point to him, as the Word made Flesh, as the love of God embodied in flesh and bones. Not everything in the pages does that particularly well. And so, we wrestle. Until we're left with a blessing (and sometimes a limp!).

It brings me so much joy seeing all of the various artwork from Tanzania. A formative experience in my life was my own trip to Tanzania in 2007. While I deeply grieve that I may never get to go back due to the shape my family has taken (same-sex relations are criminalized in Tanzania), I have a deep love for all of the people I have met there – many of those relationships continue today. Their faith, their love, their kindness will forever be a part of who I am and who I try to be. Seeing the pieces that this congregation has, warms my heart and brings to my mind's eye the faces and the stories of the people I have met and crossed paths with over the years.

Campus Ministry was formative for me in school. I was part of both Lutheran Campus Ministry and the Chaplaincy on campus at University of Richmond. I very much enjoyed my time with both of these groups; it was one that deepened my faith and solidified my call toward ministry. I look forward to working with our students – and I hope that it can be a safe place for students to live and grow in faith, trusting in the love of God through Jesus that encompasses us all.

I married last December. My wife, Caitlin, currently is a paramedic, though with her recent injury, that may be shifting. I brought to our marriage our beloved 10-year-old dog, Ginger, who brings all sorts of laughs and joy

into our lives. Y'all, this pup HAS a personality and sometimes a bit of an attitude. We enjoy video games (especially Zelda & Mario Kart), card and board games, hiking, kayaking, etc. We enjoy wineries and breweries. I love to learn and to read. I'm currently teaching myself Python (a computer language) with significant help from a friend (yup... I'm a bit of a nerd), and I'm relearning how to knit by working on a square panel blanket and a bunny for my beloved Tanzanian niece. We're both close to our families, with Caitlin's family in Tampa, Florida, and my family mainly in York, Pennsylvania.

I look forward to getting to know you all and to serving alongside you all!

Peace, Pastor Alex

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our August meeting was held on August 8, 2023.

In attendance: Pastor

Nelson, Pastor Sheppard-Witt, J.R. Lyons, Nancy Egloff, Pam Buckley, Paul Reier, Jeffery Berry, Julie Meeks, Sandy Croushore, Alison Carney, Corey Knestrick, Lou Rossiter

- Shared Ministry: Pastor Alex has been going on visits with Pastor Jon to meet folks. There are additional meet and greets planned. She has jumped right into Campus Ministry, while still trying to figure out what the "normal" schedule will look like. Currently Pastor Alex is here Monday All Day, Tuesday PM, Thursday AM.
- Our new security system is up and running! With key fobs, Council Members and Staff have access to the building 24/7. Congregation members and others that need access to the building will have a more limited access that will also accommodate their needs. See Hollie Jones at the Church Office if you need a key fob.
- We have requested an additional quote to put locks on the inside doors and also make the front door of our church ADA compliant by installing a push button.

- New Church Council Officers have been elected. Each new term is one year, with the ability to run for a second consecutive term. Our new officers are: President – Julie Meeks; Vice President – J.R. Lyons; Secretary – Alison Carney. Also appointed at the council meeting were: Pete Davis – Treasurer and Karen Nester – Financial Secretary
- A Shared Ministry Committee has been created; members are Sandy Croushore, Brian Agor and J.R. Lyons. As part of our shared agreement, members of both Saint Stephen and Our Saviour's will meet monthly to touch base on all the shared ministry "happenings."
- On Sunday, September 3, 2023 we will be at Chickahominy Riverfront Park where we will share Outdoor Worship with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and enjoy a potluck picnic after worship. Please check the bulletin for details.
- The Property Committee is looking for an HVAC Engineer that we can hire to help plan the project of replacing and upgrading our HVAC system.

Julie Meeks, Secretary, Congregation Council



MUSIC NOTES

Handbell Retreat(s)

Our dedicated handbell ringers participated in not one, but two retreats in August.

The first took place on Sunday afternoon, August 13. Nine brave souls attended our "home grown" retreat for two hours of ringing, plucking, thumb damping, malleting, and other assorted techniques that handbell choirs are expected to do. Alum ringers included **George Martin, Jennifer Dabel, Paul Reier, Lori Harms, Sandy Reed-Bryant, Jeanne Garrison**, and **Marj Gottschalk-Trone**. Two new brave souls were **Sandy Johnson** and **Corey Knestrick** who are now officially members of the St. Stephen Ringers. Congratulations! Our second retreat was an all-day affair hosted by the Virginia Handbell Consort and held at First Presbyterian Church in Hampton. Everyone participated in classes that ranged from *Back to Basics, Stop the Sound!* (a very good thing to learn), *Four in Hand* (that's right, two bells in each hand), and finally *Drum Circle* - probably the most fun class of all. All eight of us were in the same drum class which made for a hilarious time: **Paul Reier**, **Jane deSolms, Lori Harms, Jeanne Garrison, Marj Gottschalk-Trone, Sandy Reed-Bryant, George Martin**, and **Karen Ives**, who was a whiz on the cow bell!

Karen Ives, Music Director

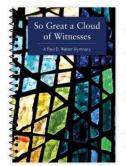






YOU ARE INVITED TO A "HYMN SING!"

The Reverend Dr. Paul Weber and his wife, Organist Florence Jowers, will lead a Hymn Sing on Sunday, September 24, from 3-4:30pm, at St. Stephen Lutheran Church (612 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg, VA) for lay people, parish and area musicians, clergy, and all who love to sing hymns. Dr. Weber will introduce songs from his expansive hymn collection, *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses*, published by Augsburg Fortress. Participants will enjoy hearing the background of the hymns before singing them and will affirm the importance of congregational song for faith and life. Dr. Weber's original music beautifully portrays his own texts and those of prominent hymn writers such as Brian Wren, Carl Daw, Gracia Grindal, and Jaroslav Vajda.



So Great a Cloud of Witnesses A Paul D. Weber Hymnary

A new collection of 91 texts and tunes patterned after Luther's understanding of the importance of congregational song for faith and worship.

Visit **augsburgfortress.org/PaulWeber** to see samples and order!

Weber is a pastor of the North Carolina Synod (ELCA) with twenty years of parish experience. He is also Prof. Emeritus of Church Music at Lenoir-Rhyne University and Conductor of the Lenoir-Rhyne University A Cappella Choir. His hymn *Founded on Faith* appears in *All Creation Sings*, and his tune for Routley's *All Who Love and Serve Your City* is found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Accompanist for the Hymn Sing will be Florence Jowers, a Deacon of the Virginia Synod (ELCA) who served as Lenoir-Rhyne University Organist and Conductor of the Lenoir-Rhyne Youth Chorus for many years. Ms. Jowers has performed organ recitals worldwide and has served as a church musician since the age of fourteen. During the 2022-2023 academic year Florence and Paul were Visiting Professors of Church Music in the School of Theology of The University of the South, Sewanee, TN. Married for forty-five years, they have retired to Staunton, VA, and travel often to visit their three children and six grandchildren.

This Hymn Sing is underwritten in part by a grant from the Michael Peeler Fund of the North Carolina Synod (ELCA). Permission for use of the hymn texts may be secured at <u>onelicense.net</u> and graphics will be available at <u>sundaysandseasons.com</u> or from the composer at <u>pauldweber.com</u>. Copies of the collection will be provided for workshop participants and will also be available for purchase.



STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

Spiritual Gifts

Blessings to you, my fellow Stewards and beloved Children of God! So here we are at the end of relaxed schedules and summer vacations. We are once again living in a world ordered by school calendars routines. In another month this column will once again deal with that overly narrow dimension of stewardship as how we support the church through our financial gifts. But as you know by now, I do not buy into that narrow definition. And this month I would like to look at a very different aspect of Stewardship – the gifts we already have received from God (sometimes called "spiritual gifts").

There is no one place in the Bible that lists for us the various gifts God imparts to us. I suppose that is understandable. In fact, my view of Stewardship as a faithful response to God's grace is based on my understanding that everything I have is a gift from God. Nevertheless, Paul does remind his readers/hearers of some of these gifts. In Ephesians he is focused on how God provides for the needs of the church:

The gifts [God] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

In Romans he begins with prophecy and ministry, and then he moves on to such everyday qualities as teaching, exhortation, generosity, compassion, respect, perseverance and humility. With lists like these, it seems that any quality we may possess can and should be considered to be a gift of God – a gift which can and should be used to make God's Spirit more present in our lives and in the world around us.

So, with all this having been said, I wonder – have you ever tried to take inventory of the gifts you have received from God? It can be quite a daunting task. In fact, it is best undertaken with the aid of someone who knows you well; someone you deeply trust. Otherwise, it is a normal tendency to sell ourselves short rather than declare how richly blessed we have been by God's grace. But once we begin to see the extent of God's goodness in our lives, we are better equipped to share in God's continuing work of blessing the world. For as with Abraham in the book of Genesis, we truly are blessed in order to be a blessing to others.

Your brother in Christ, Jim Larsen

OUTDOOR WORSHIP AT CHICKAHOMINY PARK

Given the fun we had at our start of summer picnic at Freedom Park we decided to do it again, this time with worship! We will have an outdoor worship service on Sunday, September 3 at 10:30 AM in the shelter between the playground and pool at Chickahominy Park. We have invited Our Saviour's Lutheran Church to join us. Hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, buns, water, lemonade, plates, cups, and silverware will be provided; please bring a side dish or dessert to share, and your own lawn chairs. **RSVP** so we can plan an appropriate amount of food. You can let us know you're coming (and your numbers) by either marking the bulletin sign-up sheet or contacting the SSLC office.





Thank you very much for your gift to Avalon of \$1,500. We appreciate your continuing support and would like to welcome you to the Caretaker level of giving for 2023. Your support is important.

For over 43 years, Avalon has been there to answer the calls for help and offered comprehensive services for many thousands of survivors and their children. We have been there, only because of the generosity of our community and people like you. At Avalon, we envision an aware and engaged community that works together to promote healthy relationships and to end domestic and sexual violence. Thank you for being a part of that vision.

Thank you again for your support.

Mary Hard, Development Coordinator



Just a short note to thank you for your partnership and commitment to 3e! Your investment has made it possible for 3e to touch so many lives! In addition to our Restoration Place Emergency Shelter, we have been able to launch the following programs:

- Williamsburg Home First (Pilot with City of Williamsburg and Sentara Hospital)
- Footprints Youth Collaborative with York County
- 3e Cornerstone with York County & James City County

So far this year, we have touched eight families in the Williamsburg Home First program moving them from houselessness into permanent housing!

In addition, our Cornerstone program has obtained vouchers for permanent supportive housing for 20 families!

We are launching the Footprints Collaborative in September working with youth ages 18-24.

You ARE making a HUGE impact.

Lori Poley, Director of Operations



Thank you for your gift of \$3,000 to ELCA World Hunger.

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).

As a church, we believe that God's grace is freely given to us. This brings us peace and hope. It makes a difference in our lives. Through your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA you share this amazing grace with others and help people around the world feel the transformational power of God's love.

Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries, including the United States. It provides access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock, education, and peace and justice. Through your gifts you join the whole church in working toward a just world where all are fed.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. The glory of God shines through you.

Amanda White, Director, Congregational Generosity



The Knestrick Family wishes to express our thanks to the St Stephen Church Community, especially Pastor Jon, for their outpouring of Love and Support during our time of need. While Lynn was not a member of the church, she loved this church community because of its caring and hospitality.

Peace, Corey Knestrick

AT ST. STEPHEN



What is Grief?

Grief is a journey. The beginning is sometimes ambiguous because we don't know we are starting the journey. Sometimes it is very clear and very quick. It is a disruption of our normal. Dr. Kenneth Haugk and his wife Joan, founded the Stephen Ministries. He describes the three N's of grief. Grief is **normal** for us to experience. It is a response to a significant personal loss. Grief is **natural**. It is a built-in response to losing someone we love. Grief is **necessary**. It provides a healthy way to express the loss we feel.

Grief does not have to be solely the loss of a loved one. It can be the loss of a way of life. The loss of a job, a relationship, a pet, or even the loss of being single. It is the loss of your normal. It is difficult. Grief affects the entire person. It affects the psychological or emotional self as we lose the support we once experienced. It affects us socially. People respond differently to those who are grieving. That can cause withdrawal so that we are not reminded of our loss. It affects us spiritually. We may begin to question why this would happen to us. It certainly affects us physically. Eating and sleeping patterns may be disrupted causing medical conditions to arise. When we are experiencing grief, we may not be as alert mentally as we usually would feel. Everyone experiences grief differently.

The phases of grief are shock, recoil and rebuilding. We first experience the shock of the loss. Part of shock may be disbelief or denial. We may feel as if we are in a fog and that this is not happening. Recoil is the stage when it feels like the rest of the world has moved on but we are still grieving. We have very intense feelings and feel an intense loneliness. We may experience guilt that we caused the loss or did not prevent it as we should have done. These feelings are often irrational and rise out of unrealistic expectations. Guilt tends to distort the truth. We may feel anger at ourselves or the deceased. Lastly, we begin to rebuild. Rebuilding begins when we we have worked through the anger, guilt and other feelings to find the strength to move forward. We begin to reconnect to those around us and see grief as a natural process.

These things are hard. And sometimes we get stuck in the mire that is grief. Others may think it is time to move on when you are just not ready to let go of the grief. The good news is that you don't have to figure this out and go on by yourself. There are people who are trained to help you navigate the strange and scary thing feelings of grief. Those people are Stephen Ministers. They are trained to help you understand and work through grief in your own way. All of this is completely confidential. You will not be pushed to move any quicker than you are able. You will have someone who will actively listen to what you are saying.

If you are experiencing grief of any type, if you just need someone who will listen and understand, please reach out. There are Stephen Ministers at our church who will make time for you and give you space to work through hard feelings. You may contact either **Pastor Jon Nelson** or **Bill Dichtel, Stephen Leader** and they will get the process started. Even when you think you are doing well, it is helpful to have someone who understands. Do not go through grief alone.

Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Stephen Minister



A NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Look for your updated Giving Statement in mid-September. Exact dates will be in the Sunday bulletin. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, at 757-869-2949 or email finsec@saintstephenlutheran.net.

Karen Nester, Financial Secretary



JR (Griff) Griffin Erika & Peter Geier



SEPTEMBER

1	John Gregoire	Arnie Janot
2	Anne Schone	
3	Zachary Meermans	
5	Brian Bergh	P.J. McAteer
	Jim Ogborn	
6	Jennifer Voigt	
7	Diana Lyons	
8	Joe Beene	
9	Ailene Bartlett	
10	David Allen	Erika Cave
11	Ed Brown	
13	Kendall Delehanty	
14	Bob Achenbach	Jonathan Hallman
	Karen Ives	Jim Ogborn, Jr.
16	Brian VanRosendale	Stan York
17	Mallory Spencer	
19	Daniel Owens	
20	Charlene Smith	Rushton White
22	Joe Philipoom	Karl Zimbauer
23	Katie Harms	George Martin
	Philip McKenna	
24	Phyllis Spencer	
26	Sandy Croushore	Bob Harman
	Hunter Ogborn	
28	Hannah Wiers	Alyssa Martin
30	Mark Hinders	



THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR SEPTEMBER

Emergency Preparedness Month

September is observed as Emergency Preparedness month. I will always try to remind you to be sure you have what you need in case of an emergency. There are some emergencies for which we simply cannot prepare. We should however keep our emergency boxes up to date. September is a good time to pull out your kit and make sure it is up to date. You should change the batteries in flashlights, check medication lists for changes that have occurred throughout the year. Look at insurance card copies to make sure they are still good. You should have some non-perishable food that you can replace. Look at items in your first aid kit and replace any that have damaged packaging or are outdated. Make sure you have appropriate chargers and cords for cell phones and other essential electronics. Also include some masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes. https://www.ready.gov/kit

Back to School Month

September is back to school month. Be sure to keep your eyes open and your mind on the road at all times but especially during school hours and around school areas and playgrounds. Children and college students are not always looking at the road or paying close attention to their surroundings. And, we all know this, do not text and drive.

Healthy Aging Month

September is also healthy aging month. Healthy aging is defined as a continuous process of optimizing opportunities to maintain and improve physical and mental health, independence, and quality of life throughout the life course. The focus of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) is to improve the quality of life of people as they age. Some of the areas of focus are decreased falls, improved mental health, decreased dementia, and elimination of elder abuse.

Atrial Fibrillation Month

Also, September is designated Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month. One of the most common causes of irregular heartbeat, atrial fibrillation is characterized by heart palpitations, dizziness and shortness of breath. It also increases the risk of stroke by as much as 500 percent. It can lead to heart failure and dementia. The actual toll is physical, emotional and financial for the patient, family and caregivers if left untreated. https://www.stopafib.org/

As always, if you have any questions, please let me know.

Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Parish Nurse



SEPTEMBER BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

George Vonderheide

Forrest Fenstermaker

The significance of baptism, Luther teaches in the *Small Catechism*, is "that the old creature in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily contrition and repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

Your baptismal anniversary is an opportunity to light a baptismal candle and to give some prayer time to reflecting on your experiences during the past year on your journey in faith!

Pastor Jon Nelson

- 2 Heidi Flatin
- 6 Christine Drake
- 11 Karen Schlicht
- 12 Jeane Moore
- 14 Thom Recktenwald
- 16 Jack Harris
- 18 Susan Britcher
- 20 Ann McAteer
- 21 Josiah Hallman
- 23 Erika Cave

Others who were baptized in September:

Marcie Clark

Were you baptized in September but your name isn't on the list above? Let us know!



Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Johnson, Evelyn Kernan, Jim Mayfield, and Linda Reuben.

<u>Pray for those unable to come to worship</u>: Martin Bleck, Ed Brown, Birdie Burton, York Doerr, Bob and Angie Groom, Edith Haecker, Pat Janot, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Dawn Allen, Donald and Carol Baum, Rose Baumgarten, Sally Blackburn, Nelson Blish, Mary Bloom, Ann Bunn Jerry & Elijah Connor, Judy Craun, Doug Crinklaw, Judy Drezek,Derald Edwards, Joan and Frank Goodhart, Catherine Harbison, Deanna Harbison, Tom Hay, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Char Henry, Zac and Jen Holtzman and family, Linda Jackson, Brian Johnson, Mason Jones, Sean Kelley, Connie Kendrick ,The Kennedy family, Bob Lamoureux, Ron Luchetti, Julia Mahony, Marnah Lund, Doug Mayes, Laura Mcgolin, Detra Michaels, Bob Myers, Lori Ogborn, Gina Peterson, Paula Rega, Betty Roth, Kylen Saunders, Inge Seiter, David Shoberg, Kelsey Slay, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, and Caleb Winig.



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- September 12 Women are invited to join together for breakfast the <u>second</u> Tuesday of this month.
- September 14 Men are invited to join together for breakfast the <u>second</u> Thursday of this month.

Please note that we are meeting the second week of September as Colonial Pancake House is closed the week of Labor Day to give their staff some time off.

Both gatherings take place at **8:00 am** at the Colonial Pancake House, at the corner of Page Street and Penniman Road, Williamsburg, VA. The get-togethers promote conversation and friendship in a casual setting.



St. Stephen Lutheran Church 612 Jamestown Road Williamsburg, VA 23185

The Quill www.saintstephenlutheran.net

September 2023

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	email	Pastorin@		
	Alex Sheppard-Witt	717-434-5037		
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Director of Music	Karen Ives	MusicDir@		
Parish Nurse Preschool Director	Diana Tiller-Dichtel Holly Ready	Parishnurse@ Preschool@		

Article deadline: <u>Fifteenth of the previous</u> <u>month.</u>

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Nancy Egloff	757-293-8547
Susan Kauffman	757-903-2669
Corey Knestrick	757-367-9904
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