

Time Together While We are Apart



Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Good day, dear church communities,

Our animal picture today comes from Will and Alison Towles (SMWC). Their yellow lab, Tucker, weighs 75 pounds, and Alison wrote that Tucker has a deep desire to be a lap dog! As Alison said of this picture: "This is all that actually fits in my lap, but we both find it a comfort." Many thanks to Will and Alison for sharing this picture of Tucker, and his soulful eyes!

I have received several other animal pics, but I'd love to have more for the weeks ahead. Please email or text me pics of the animals that are your companions through the pandemic. We all look forward to meeting them; they brighten all our days!

This past Sunday afternoon, seven of us from SMWC and Trinity gathered for what I had dubbed: "our Zoom gathering to share worries and blessings." Turns out that that means "virtual coffee hour!" The seven of us had a delightful visit for an hour, some talked, some listened, but we all laughed much! And we all received the joy of being together and hearing each other's voices, and sharing experiences in this oh so strange time. With folks from both churches, some met for the first time, others had known each other for years. We did end up sharing some worries and blessings, but they were mainly part of the overall conversation. Please know that if you want to attend, the offering of worries and blessings is purely voluntary.



So, if you are missing our communities, I invite you to join us this Sunday, April 26th at 3pm for the re-named: "Zooming Coffee Hour!" Text, call or email me if you want to join in the fun, and I'll send you the invitation on Sunday afternoon. And as always, if you need tech help in signing up for Zoom, Ellen Tracey and Richard and Sharon Gill are ready to help. So, grab your coffee, and Zoom on in and join us Sunday at 3pm!

Now, onward to a little more, "Time Together." Megan

Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Sunday Newsletter. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists. Notes for this week:

- Chuck McGrath remains in the hospital in Kilmarnock. Malena is now hoping they can get him home today, Wednesday. Please keep Chuck in your prayers, and prayers much needed too for Alexa and Malena.
- Lauren McCleery Valdez's mother, Cathy McCleery died on Tuesday morning, April 21st. Please keep Lauren and all her family in your prayers in this season of deep grief.
- Many folks at both churches knew Craig Smith, who served as pastor of Morattico Baptist Church for 21 years. Craig died April 20th after a lengthy illness. Please keep the Smith family in your hearts and prayers.
- Nancy Brandon saw her doctor Monday and is awaiting word as to whether she has more treatments ahead or whether she is done with treatments. Please continue your prayers for Nancy.
- Our healthcare workers are on all our hearts. Please keep them, and their families, in your prayers.

April and May Birthdays and Anniversaries

St. Mary's Whitechapel Birthdays: Charles Dwight Deale, April 4; Betty Thornton, April 23; Sue Ramsey, April 24; Sparky Marsh, April 25 ; Karen Woodruff, May 4; Jean DeFilippo, May 12; Ernie Greene, May 13; Chuck McGrath, May 17; Randy Romaine, May 25

Anniversaries: Bill & Jannine Pennell, April 5; Lucy & Warren Hottle, May 10

Trinity Birthdays: Nancy Chilton, April 7th; Madeline Withers, April 11th; Catherine Chilton Ford, April 15th; Meredith Brent, April 16th; Bill Hayden, April 20th; Diane Smith, April 21st; Sandra Walker, April 22nd; Emmett Christopher, April 23rd; Alexandra Cornwell, April 23rd; Carter Christopher, April 25th; Melissa Dunaway, April 25th; Elizabeth Anne Kellum, April 25th; Joanna Hyde, April 27th; Sarah Wells Pollard, May 2nd; Allen Cornwell, May 3rd; Karen Woodruff, May 4th; Jonathan Chilton, May 11th; Hope Hayden, May 11th; Milton Kingsbury, May 13th; Owen Christopher, May 22nd; Spencer Cammarata, May 24th; Jenny Dunaway, May 24th

Anniversaries: Janet & Michael Christopher, April 12th; Carter & Cheryl Christopher, May 19th; Janet & Jay Davenport, May 20th



Announcements

We start a new feature this week for our Newsletter, Thoughts from the Organ Bench, written by Glenn Courtney. I asked Glenn if he would be willing to write a feature about some of his favorite hymns and pieces of music, and he replied with a resounding yes! Many thanks, Glenn! Look for this new feature on the page ahead.

“Zooming Coffee Hour” will meet this Sunday, April 26th at 3pm. Text, call or email me if you want to join us, and I’ll send you the invitation on Sunday afternoon. (My cell number is 804-477-5515) And if you would like to join us, but are not signed up for Zoom, Ellen Tracey from Trinity and Sharon and Richard Gill from SMWC are willing to help anyone get on Zoom. Ellen can be contacted at: 804-436-2371 and The Gills can be reached at: 804-462-9939.

For the season of Easter, I will be posting a video each Sunday, focused on the Gospel for the week. The videos will be available on the Trinity website and on our Facebook pages. The first video for last Sunday is available now.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org

Please let me know if you are in need of help with getting groceries or other necessities. Call, text, or email and I’ll connect you with a volunteer.

Many thanks for continuing to pay your pledges as you are able in these difficult financial times. And many thanks to those who have been able to donate to the Rector’s Discretionary Funds.

You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector’s Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church
PO Box 208
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC
5940 Whitechapel Rd
Lancaster, VA 22503



Thoughts from the Organ Bench

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian is an African American spiritual. I learnt it as a young lad growing up in the Baptist church and a member of the “Sunbeams.” It was likely composed in 1750s Virginia by enslaved African-American persons exposed to the teaching of evangelist **Samuel Davies**. The music and lyrics were first printed in the 1907 *Folk Songs of the American Negro*, edited by Frederick Work.

Samuel Davies (November 3, 1723–February 4, 1761) was an evangelist and Presbyterian minister. Davies ministered in Hanover County from 1748 to 1759, followed by a term as the fourth president of Princeton University, then known as the College of New Jersey, from 1759 to 1761. Davies was one of the first non-Anglican preachers in Virginia, and one of earliest missionaries to enslaved persons in the British colonies. He was a strong advocate for religious freedom, and helped to institute significant religious reforms in the colony.^[2] Davies was also a prolific writer, authoring several hymns and publishing a book of poetry.

Commissioned as an evangelist to Virginia, on February 17, 1747, the 23-year-old traveled south to minister to religious dissenters against the Anglican Church. Virginia's colonial legislature in 1743 had licensed **Polegreen reading room** and three others in and near Hanover County, Virginia. Davies eventually led seven congregations in five counties.

Young Patrick Henry attended many of Davies' sermons with his mother and acknowledged that as the source of his own oratorical skills; others called Davies without peer in the pulpit during his lifetime.

As one of the first non-Anglican ministers licensed to preach in Virginia, Davies advanced the cause of religious and civil liberty in his era. Davies helped found the Presbytery of Hanover, encompassing all Presbyterian ministers in Virginia and North Carolina. He served as its first moderator and was considered the region's leading voice for religious dissenters. Davies also served as the first minister at Providence Presbyterian Church in Louisa County.

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Enslaved persons became a particular focus of his ministry, and several contemporaries noted how Davies converted them at unusually high numbers. Davies used the educational materials he received from his sponsors in Great Britain to instruct enslaved individuals, and also composed his own hymns. The classic spiritual "**Lord, I want to be a Christian**" reportedly originated at **Polegreen**. Rev. Davies eventually baptized hundreds of enslaved persons as Christians, and they joined other members of the congregation at the communion table. His congregations allowed them to preach in the Church. Davies estimated that he ministered to over a thousand African American people during his time in Virginia.

Historic Polegreen Church also has a very interesting history. You can learn more about this church by following this link:

<https://www.historicpolegreen.org/>

Also, you may want to learn more about Samuel Davies here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Davies_\(clergyman\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Davies_(clergyman))

Please enjoy "**Lord I Want to Be a Christian**" performed by The St. Cecelia Choir:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a14hbMd3L1U&t=38s>

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving...

Lord, I want to be more holy...

Lord, I want to be like Jesus...

Reference: Wikipedia.org

Reflection

As we move towards week six of this oh so strange and unfamiliar time of pandemic, I often hear folks say: "I just so look forward to getting back to normal, to the way things were." I can only nod in agreement...Being able to go to the grocery store and enjoy the social aspects of such an errand rather than rushing through with mask on and head low...Being able to look forward to our family reunion in Iowa this summer with certainty that we can travel...Being able to have normal Sunday mornings, in our church buildings, face to face and able to greet each other and hug!

But each time I think about getting back to how things were...I feel that nudge, that reminder from the Holy Spirit...don't get too attached to going back...remember God is always going forward. We see this all through scriptures, often in the prophet Isaiah's writings:

*"But the LORD says,
"Do not cling to events of the past
or dwell on what happened long ago.
Watch for the new thing I am going to do.
It is happening already—you can see it now!
I will make a road through the wilderness
and give you streams of water there." (Isaiah 43: 18-19)*

As often happens, The Message (Eugene Petersen's intriguing version of scripture in contemporary language) gives us even more to consider; listen to this same passage from Isaiah in The Message:

*"Forget about what's happened;
don't keep going over old history.
Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.
It's bursting out! Don't you see it?
There it is! I'm making a road through the desert,
rivers in the badlands."*

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And of course, on the night before he was crucified, Jesus did not say to his disciples: 'Now be sure to keep everything exactly as I have left it with you.' No, at the Last Supper, Jesus told his friends:

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

All this talk of new things, and letting go of old history, and all we want is for things to stay the same! We humans often find ourselves, especially as we grow older, yearning for "the good old days." We find comfort in what is familiar and seemingly predictable. But as we move forward in this oh so new territory of pandemic, our God who is always working in our world, reminds us..... look forward.... look for the new thing I am doing....

There will be a road through this current wilderness....Our call is to look for it, to share it and to go forward, not backwards, sharing God's hope and God's love in a world hurting so deeply.

Look for the sunrise, in this glorious season of Easter....for our God is there. Alleluia!!

Amen.

