



THE TRUMPET

Trinity Episcopal
Church

Volume XL, Issue III

March 2011

Our Mission Statement

*As it has for more than two centuries,
Trinity continues to be a community of the faithful,
reaching out joyfully in Christ's name to share God's love and compassion,
ministering to one another, our neighbors, and all creation.*

*We pray that the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit
will bring new generations to know, love, and serve Him.*



LENT

AT TRINITY

The Lenten season begins with repentance and commitment with Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes. This year, we offer **three** opportunities for your attendance and participation:



- | | |
|------------|---|
| 7:00 a.m. | Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist,
Chapel |
| 12:05 p.m. | Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist,
Church |
| 7:00 p.m. | Imposition of Ashes and Eucharist,
Church (with music) |

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. (BCP, p. 265)



SHROVE TUESDAY

Mardi Gras & Pancake Supper March 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Everyone is welcome at our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. The men of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew will cook the pancakes, sausage and apples; we will make Mardi Gras masks, create and decorate an Alleluia banner, and have lots of fun! There are lots of activities for children, so bring your friends, neighbors, grandchildren--there's room, and pancakes, for everyone!

Tickets, \$5 for children age 4-10 and \$7 for adults & children age 11 & older, will be available at the door. Children age 3 and under are free. Don't miss it!

Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman Trinity Women's Study Continues

Facing heavyweights bent on her destruction, Esther trusted God and landed a blow that saved her people. Her destiny can be yours as you know more deeply the God who is in your corner.

Women from Trinity and other churches have begun the Beth Moore study of Esther. Though our number is large, an intimate feeling prevails as we learn from Beth Moore via lectures on DVD and share our feelings and experiences through our homework.

Drop-in participants are always welcome if only to view the video and join in the discussion. Please join us on **Monday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**. (No class on the second Monday of every month or during Holy Week.) The course will continue throughout the month of May. Please contact Cindy Ford, ford_cindy_j@yahoo, if you have any questions.



Find us on
Facebook

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

500 Court Street,
Portsmouth, VA 23704
Telephone: 757-393-0431
Facsimile: 757-397-1403
E-mail:
admin@trinity-portsmouth.org
Web site:
www.trinity-portsmouth.org

WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
(breakfast follows)

9:30 a.m. Christian Formation
(September-May)

10:30 a.m. Choral Eucharist

Tuesday

12:05 Eucharist & Healing
(All Saints' Chapel)

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
2:00 pm-5:00 pm

CLERGY & STAFF

The Rev. Dr. John R. Throop
Priest-in-Charge

Charles D. Porter, Jr.,
Parish Administrator

Stephen Kolb,
Director of Music Ministry

Matthew Grizzle,
Director of Youth & Young Adult
Ministries

Julia Burgess Ballinger,
Director of Child Care Ministries

Tony M. Macklin, Sexton

VESTRY & OFFICERS

Gene DeNardi, Senior Warden

Sue Jordan, Junior Warden

Malcolm Fortson, Treasurer

Virginia Vail Kolb, Register

Barbara Davis

Sue Everett

Fran Gill

Anna Fay Grayson

Jean Hanbury

Rita Hedgespeth

Elizabeth Hudgins

Irv Lindley

Ron Weiss



Wednesday Evenings in Lent at Trinity

Trinity Church has planned a wonderful Wednesday gathering time for people of all ages and stages in life! Starting on **March 16th**, we'll gather in the Parish Hall for **shared supper and fellowship**, and then a learning time for adults and for children. And we'll close with Compline for all ages in All Saints Chapel. Here's the schedule:

- 6:00 p.m. Shared supper and conversation.
Please bring a dish to pass.
- 6:45 p.m. Adult session in Parish Hall/Child Sessions in Child Ministry area.
- 8:00 p.m. Compline and close (All Saints Chapel)

Children's Sessions: Child Ministry Director Julia Burgess will feature a creative lesson including learning and playing.

Adult Sessions: The Power of Praying Twice.

Saint Augustine, a learned bishop in the fourth and fifth centuries, once said, "He who sings prays twice." Father John and Steve Kolb will lead sessions on the meaning being our favorite hymns, exploring both words and music. There's so much more than we read in a good hymn. Here's the schedule

- March 16: *Sounds of the Soul* Father John introduces us to the meaning and purpose of hymns, how they have changed over the centuries—and yet still mean so much.
- March 23: *Left Behind Hymns: Music of the Apocalypse* Steve Kolb, will share some of the music in our hymnal with text drawn from *The Revelation to John*.
- March 30: To be announced.

Lenten Sermon Series

Lent is a season of reflection and repentance. As we move through the Sundays in Len, we hear the focus of Sunday readings to be on the need for eac of us, and for us as a church, to deal with life as we know it, and to bring its challenges before God in Christ to find challenge, action, and restoration to the hope we have as persons of faith.

This Lenten season, Father John will preach on the theme, **Coming to Terms with Life**. Each Sunday, we'll handle a different aspect of God's call.

- March 13th:** *Coming to Terms With Sin*
- March 20th:** *Coming to Terms With Calls*
- March 27th** *Coming to Terms With Challenges*

Lenten Wednesdays Downtown Liturgy and Lunch



Looking for a great opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the Lenten season? Come join your friends and neighbors for *Liturgy and Lunch* on any or all Wednesdays during

the Lenten season, beginning on March 16, here at Trinity. Each service begins at 12 noon with a Lenten liturgy of that particular church, and continues at 12:30 p.m. with a simple lunch provided by the church. Here's a wonderful way to grow spiritually across denominational borders during the Lenten season!

Here's the rest of the schedule:

- | | |
|----------|----------------------|
| March 23 | St. Christopher's |
| March 30 | St. John's Baptist |
| April 6 | St. John's Episcopal |
| April 13 | First Presbyterian |
| April 20 | Ebenezer Baptist |

Reconciliation of a Penitent

During the season of Lent, we reflect on our lives. In doing so, we may confront things in life that we need to place before God and others to seek forgiveness and to ensure repentance. Your journey may lead you to seek an opportunity to confess your sins to God through the work of your priest. There is a service in the *Book of Common Prayer* called The Reconciliation of a Penitent. The priest hears your words, prays for you, offers counsel, and then prays God's forgiveness in your life. The priest also can give some counsel on repentance and restoration.

For more details, see Father John. All such sessions are held in strictest confidence and by appointment. Be assured that a good priest suffers "spiritual amnesia" in any confession and does not remember it or carry it forward.

May God bless you and help you to live a Holy Lent.



KID'S CORNER

Spring is almost here and the kids are already thinking about warm weather fun! We are looking for volunteers to join us for this year's

Vacation Bible School

Travel back in time with us on August 1st to the Gold Rush! We will meet every evening for a week for dinner, lessons and fun. Help us find gold in God's message to us!

Don't forget about Shrove Tuesday. In addition to the Pancake Dinner, there will be kids activities and a Mardi Gras parade.

We are also looking for volunteers to help stuff Easter Eggs. Check the Kid's Corner for our up-coming fund-raisers to benefit

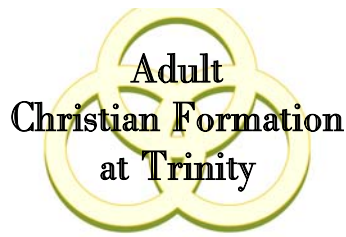
Chanco Family Weekend.

Lemon-aide Stands, Bake Sales, Art Shows and more!
Sign up lists are in the Nursery.
Saddle up for a summer of fun!

Mark Your Calendars!

Get Ready! April 8th – 10th

The Youth and Young Adults of Trinity will get to learn about and experience how cultures around the world manage to survive a world without supermarkets. More information to come in the next few weeks. Want to learn more, contact the church office.



All sessions on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the Commons Room

March 6th: *Internet and Faith: Impact on Life and Community*

Our series, *Internet and Faith*, has been very well received. Our closing session is, “**The Future of Faith in a Virtual World**.” Father John will summarize all we have learned in these weeks and ask participants to reflect on the opportunities and challenges for faithful persons, and for a church like Trinity Church, to move forward into the 21st century while retaining the essentials of an historic faith. All are welcome!

Sunday Morning Adult Formation for Lent:

Do You Want to Be Healed?

A mighty challenge in this life is to deal with our mortal bodies and spirits in a fallen world. In the healing prayers during the Tuesday Eucharist, we hear these words: *I anoint you with this oil in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, beseeching the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of your pain of sickness in body and soul and spirit being put to flight, the blessing of health and peace may dwell with you, now and evermore. Amen*

But do you really want to be healed? And what does healing mean, anyway?

On Sunday mornings in Lent, we’ll explore healing in many dimensions, and what that impact can have on one’s own life, the lives of loved ones, and the work of the Church. Come hear important aspects of God’s healing grace and the Church’s healing ministry:

March 13th *The Biblical Basis for Healing*

Father John walks us through Old and New Testa-

ment understandings of healing and, in particular, Jesus’ ministry of healing.

March 20th: *Healing in Body as Doctor and Christian*

Hear Paul Littell, M.D., an oncologist based at Norfolk General Hospital, and a devout member of Church of the Good Shepherd, help us to understand physical healing from a Christian doctor’s perspective.

March 27th: *Healing in Mind in Many Dimensions*

Come hear Greg Caron, M.D., the director of psychology at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, as he describes, as a Christian, his challenges and graces as a psychologist.

April 3rd: *Healing in Spirit: Prayer and Counsel in Faith and Proactive*

Hear the Rev. Sue Deets, a presbyter in the Reformed Episcopal Church, discuss her work in pastoral counseling and the development of chaplaincy ministries at the Careplex in Newport News.

April 10th: *The Ministry of Healing I*

Father John will discuss how churches such as Trinity, Portsmouth can engage in a ministry of healing as part of worship and congregational life—based in particular on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

April 17th: *The Ministry of Healing II*

Father John concludes the series with a view to outreach ministry in healing to further the parish’s mission and have an impact in Portsmouth and in Hampton Roads.



The Words We Say, and Don't Say

One of the obvious changes in our services during Lent is the absence of Alleluias. I smile as I think of the number of times that I and other church music directors I know have had an "Oops" moment in the midst of a Lenten worship service, as we realized that our otherwise perfectly chosen anthem or congregational hymn had the "A-word" in it. Recently, I've taken to marking my planning document in bold letters with "NO ALLELUIAS," written over the entire season!

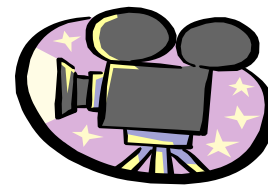
Like all religious observances, saying/singing or not saying/singing some specific words could simply be a slavish observance of a ritual, devoid of any meaning other than "we did it right." Of course, in opposition to this thinking, we have the words of Jesus, reminding us of the utter meaninglessness of religious practice, unless it reflects a spiritual reality, a willingness to have our lives transformed by the Spirit of God.

Of course, our hope is that religious observance, in addition to reflecting spiritual desire, can be our teacher, nudging us along towards transformation. I'm reminded of a contemporary songwriter who says of the Creed, "I did not make it, no it is making me." This is not to say that simple repetition (or in the case of Alleluias during Lent, non-repetition!) necessarily changes us; but is there the potential for a supple and willing heart to be drawn closer to God through the words we choose in our worship?

For those of us in the Episcopal and other liturgical denominations, that is a hope we hold, week by week. As we refrain from Alleluias during the coming weeks, may we be reminded of our need for penitence and preparation for the important messages we will hear again during Holy Week.

Stephen Kolb

Trinity Winter Film Series 2011



The theme this year is "our Episcopal Heritage" and we begin with a great historical epic.

Here's the remaining schedule:

Sunday March 6th at 3pm

Lady Jane Gray (1985 PG-13) starring *Helena Bonham Carter, Cary Elwes, Sara Kestelman, Michael Hordern, Joss Acland, Richard Johnson, Patrick Stewart*, directed by *Trevor Nunn*. A wonderful film for non-history buffs, this is an accurate and moving account of the life of 15 year old Lady Jane Grey, who secured the throne of England for nine days in 1553 as a result of political maneuvers concerning the Church of England.

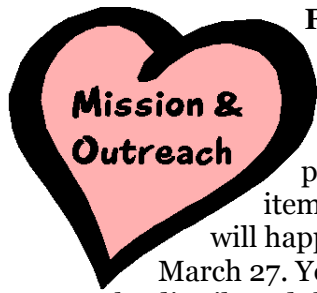
Sunday March 13th at 3pm

Shadowlands .C.S. Lewis through the *Shadowlands*.(1985 NR) Less well known version of this great story directed by my friend Norman Stone. "A look at the later life of bachelor-scholar C.S. Lewis (author of the Narnia books and films). A sincere Anglican, Lewis when middle-aged fell in love and married Joy Gresham,, a divorced American poet with two young sons, Joy was diagnosed with cancer and her illness provided Lewis with the clearest test of his faith." *Wonderful performances by Joss Acland and Claire Bloom*.

Descriptions from *Videohound*; notes and questions provided for our discussions after the films. Notes by Andrew Quicke.

Take note!

The deadline for the April issue of "The Trumpet" is March 15.



Food Basket Sunday

Our monthly collection of non-perishable food items for the hungry will happen on Sunday,

March 27. Your donations will be distributed through the Food

Pantry at the Wesley Community Center. The baskets are available every Sunday for your donations. We thank you for your gifts of non-perishable items!

Serving Breakfast at Oasis: May 4

The first Wednesday of every other month, Trinity takes a turn preparing and serving breakfast for the hungry through the work of Oasis Social Ministry. Our next date is on **May 4, at 6 a.m.** We're out by 8 a.m. If you can help, tell Father John or call the church office. Thanks for your help and godly heart. **Please note the new location:** 802 Williamsburg Avenue, across the street from the Portsmouth Social Services Building.

Clergy discretionary Fund

There have been challenging requests for uses of the Clergy Discretionary Fund. Your giving has helped to:

- Help a marginally homeless family find financial support for a place to live as well as financial counseling to help prevent another financial crisis.
- Helped a woman deal with a past due utility bill resulting from a recent illness.
- Assisted a man recently laid off from his work so that he could pay past due utility bills so that he could maintain phone service and a home address so that potential employers could locate him.

Thanks again for your financial giving, either through the envelopes you have if you pledge, and through the loose offering in the collection plate on **Sunday, March 20th.**

Stewardship at Trinity

Most people think that, when we talk about stewardship, we mean only the fund-raising drive in the fall of each year to raise money to support the budget for the following year. But there is so much more to stewardship.

Stewardship is a year-round part of Christian life. Along with financial giving, stewardship includes one's time and talent as a return of thanks to God. When the Bible makes reference to our debt of gratitude to God, we hear a consistent call that involves all of our life, not just a part of it. As we grow in faith, we discover that stewardship is a never-ending journey of growth and discovery.

We now have formed a stewardship team to work through the year on educating and inspiring the members of Trinity church. If you would like to learn more or feel called to this work please contact Ron Weiss or Father John on or before March 19.

A Message from the Bookkeeper

Contribution statements will in the mail to you shortly. In light of the confusion with envelope numbers this year, please take a good look at your statements to make sure that they are accurate. If you find any issues, please let me know.

Remember, if you use an on-line bill paying system, feel free to add Trinity to the list and save yourself postage and save the church a set of envelopes.

Gale Nicholson



Daylight Saving Time Is Coming!

Just a reminder that Daylight Saving Time begins on early Sunday morning, March 13. So, don't forget to set your clocks forward an hour before you turn in Saturday night; you don't want to be late for church!

Episcopal Church Women

On February 8th, we hosted a reception for Tom Morgan's Family and friends following his funeral at our church. We would like to thank everyone at Trinity who helped donate food and help during the reception. Tom was a friend to many in our community and loved by all at Trinity. We will miss his friendly smile and generous heart.

During Lent we are joining with other downtown churches to host a Wednesday Lenten noonday service with a lunch afterwards. Our date is March 16th and we hope many are able to attend. If you can volunteer to help prepare the food or help serve, please call any ECW member.

The Trinity Bunnies will be busy very soon making candy eggs for "The Palm Sunday Bake & Candy Sale". Look for our Sign-up Sheet in the Parrish House to order your eggs. We also need baked goods for the Bake Sale.

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 10:30 in the Common Room. All are welcome.

With Love!
Mary K. Andrews
President

A New Form of Confession of Sin

Every Sunday, as part of our worship, we use a form of Confession of Sin. This has been the tradition of Anglicanism from time immemorial, especially during penitential season such as Lent.

As the Episcopal Church continues to develop theologically and explore deeper spirituality, a new form of the Confession has been offered. It possesses great depth and personal impact. The text comes from *Enriching Our Worship*, a supplemental worship resource that expands the language that we use to praise and glorify God. Beginning on March 13, at both services, we will begin use of this form for this Lenten Season. We will adapt the language of the confession at the 8:00 am service to work well with the Rite I language.

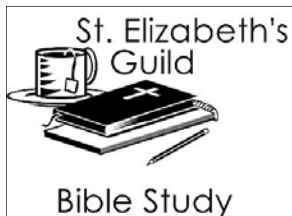
Please let Father John know how this Confession form has an impact on your spiritual life:

*God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.*

Bishop's Address to Annual Council

The following is excerpted from the Bishop's address to Council on February 11. Copies of the complete address are available in the church office or online at <http://diosova119.blogspot.com/p/bishops-address-to-council.html>

When I was a youngster back in the 60's the Episcopal Church was experiencing rapid growth. Being an Episcopalian had a certain kind of social power about it within the culture. It was, as Garrison Keillor once described "the Church of wingtips and scotch and soda." All a church had to do was simply open its doors and people would come streaming in. Well, that generation and that time in history are long gone now and will never ever return. We are no longer a destination church and we certainly no longer enjoy the magnetism of social prominence.



Saint Elizabeth's Guild will next meet March 8, Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. in the Common Room.

We will continue our study of "The Really Bad Girls of the Bible." This

month we will discuss Chapter 8: "Tears of a Clown: The Bleeding Woman"; the Bible verses are Mark 5:22-43. Father John will lead the discussion. All women of the church are invited.

Jean Colonna
484-7691



Welcome to New Members of Trinity Church!

Trinity is growing again! We have members who are completely new to us, as well as long-time members who are returning. And there are more to come in the issue of the *Trumpet*.

Welcome back to **Joe and Joyce Seveika!** Joe and Joyce were active in the 1990s and at the start of the past decade. They are faithful attenders at the 10:30 a.m Eucharist.

Welcome back to **Doug and Sue Deets** Doug and Sue were active into the middle of the past decade! Sue is ordained as a presbyter in the Reformed Episcopal Church and is active as a hospital chaplain and as a trainer of lay and clergy chaplains. Doug is an active Navy officer. They have transferred back from Galilee Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach.

Welcome back to **Greg and Mary Caron!** They have been away from Trinity for three years while Greg was assigned to a naval hospital in Brunswick, Maine. Greg is a key provider of mental health services at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth. Mary is a retired schoolteacher. Both sing in the choir.

Welcome to **Jimmy Staples and Lynn Spencer!** Jimmy is a Portsmouth native, and Lynn was born in Connecticut. They've been married three years and are working on small business development. Jimmy joins us from Parkview Baptist Church, and Lynn from Monumental Methodist Church. They fell in love with Trinity Church when Lynn participated in a recent Steeple to Steeple tour.

Steeple to Steeple also brought **Ray and Patti Bozman** to us. Lutheran by background, they were seeking a church with inspiring liturgy and good preaching and teaching—and they say that that's happening here. Ray has joined our choir, and Patti is an active member of our adult Christian formation programs.

Please welcome **Dylan and Kelly Bush** to Trinity. They relocated here from Louisiana, and Kelly has transferred her membership from Trinity, Baton Rouge. They've purchased a home in Churchland, but are on temporary assignment in San Diego as Dylan receives more training in his Navy assignments.

Congratulations, Father John!

Members of Trinity church will be very interested to learn that the Rev. John Throop is one of two clergy candidates elected to the Ecclesiastical court in the Diocese of Southern VA. The election was by acclamation at Diocesan Council in February.

The Ecclesiastical Court is a canonical provision for handling disciplinary matters regarding clergy misconduct, and is guided by the canons of the Episcopal Church and also of the Diocese of Southern Virginia. The court meets only when there is a matter to be considered. So, it is always on standby. John made himself available for this Diocesan office with the hope that it will never have to meet. Any questions, please see Father John.

Vestry Meeting Notes

Highlights from the Vestry meeting of January 19, 2011

- ✓ The Vestry authorized the replacement of the boiler in the church, the work to be performed by Colonial Webb Contractors.
- ✓ The Vestry approved a change to the by-laws of the Trinity Church Foundation to allow for Trustees to be able to serve to consecutive three-year terms. The Vestry then elected Martha Frances Fortson and Louis Hibbitts to second terms.
- ✓ Father John announced that the Parish Retreat would be held at Chanco on the James September 9-11, 2011.
- ✓ The Vestry approved an increase in the fees for interment in the churchyard to \$1125 including the for carving and installation of markers.
- ✓ The Vestry was updated on plans for the 250th Anniversary celebration.

The next meeting of the Vestry will be Wednesday, March 16, in the Parish Hall.



The Parish Prayers*

The following people have been placed on the Prayer List at their request or the request of a family member or friend. Please include these intercessions and thanksgivings in your personal devotions.

For our special needs and concerns:

◆ For those facing illness or adversity, especially:

Judy Leach, Eileen Foster, Fleet Morgan, Diana Strelow, Randolph Pritchard, Catherine Blackwood, Steve Kolb, Nell Shay, Valerie Dugan, Inez Baker, Shep Trant, John Hollowell, Nancy Radcliffe, Ann Dodd, Norm Ream, Carol Fitzwater, Walter Jordan III, Dusty & Mitch Ash, Robert Nottingham, Gerald Wells, Shippy Reed, Margaret Sharrett, Ellen Esleek, Betsy Mackenzie, Dick Austin, Shep & Flo Trant, Virginia Andrews, Neale Mayo, and Marion Gartman

Our loved ones:

Jenny Clayton, mother-in-law of Peppy Owens; **Patti Donath**, former parishioner of Fr. John; **Dottie Budnick**, sister-in-law of Bob Hunt; **Lynette McLean**, friend of Sue Everett; **Lacy Roberts**, uncle of Rita Hedgespeth; **Mary Cameron Somers**, granddaughter of Betty Hudgins; **John Paul Hanbury**, friend of the Parish; **Janet Duvall**, grandmother of Jenny Stinson; **John Upton**, brother-in-law of Juliet Quicke; **Walter Meadows**, brother of Cora Lorkiewicz; **Benjamin Williams**, grandson of Dr. & Mrs. Robert McAortor; **Edward Newsome**, brother of Bobbie Davis; **Pat Lorkiewicz**, sister-in-law of Cora Lorkiewicz; **Pat Ho**, niece of Cora Lorkiewicz; **Richard Ford**, father of Cindy Ford; **Marlies Krueger**, friend of Bonnie Kroll; **Katherine Klein**, mother of Frank Klein; **Cindy Barcliff**, sister of Laurie Klein

For all serving in harm's way: including Paul Radford, Dan Phillip, and Bob Miller

For all the blessings of this life:

◆ For those celebrating the anniversary of their birth this month, especially:

1	Rita Hedgespeth	7	Ray Bozman	13	Christopher St. Hilaire	25	Randolph Pritchard
	Randy Bowes	8	Stephen Kolb		Marilyn Brown	27	Dean Burgess IV
	Tanner Pierce		Charles Porter	21	Darin Darden		Richard Gill
4	Robert Korty	10	Bob Hunt	22	George Brown	28	Ed Hoffler
	Paige Walker		Samantha Lynn Vick	24	Mike Riley		Avery Scholes
6	Mary Annunziata	13	Sharon Stanaway		Cindy Ford		

◆ For those celebrating their wedding anniversary this month, especially:

4 Ricky & Elizabeth Compton 15 Eddie & Ellen Tapman

*If you would like to have your name or the name of a loved one placed on the Prayer List, please call or e-mail the church office.

(Continued from page 11)

move forward in faith and not turn back nor turn aside. In this season of Lent, I pray that all of us will embrace the First Law of Faith for ourselves individually and for us together as a congregation. That's a clear Lenten discipline: daily to build up

and daily to be confident of the life that God in Christ has for us in a broken-down world.

In Christ,
John+



The Last Word (from the Priest-in-Charge)

A basic law of the universe is that, at some point, everything breaks down.

Bodies break down. After all, we know that we have a certainty of death, as Benjamin Franklin wrote in a proverb: "There is nothing certain in life but death and taxes." As one wag observed along the way, "But taxes are guaranteed to go up." Three years ago this month, I learned this lesson for myself. I knew I had some problems in my vision (and other symptoms I ignored). I went to the ophthalmologist in the middle of a busy week, with much on the calendar ahead. At the end of the various exams, he told me flatly, "The problem is not in your eye. It is in your head. And you need to go to the emergency room right now." So I did. And two days later I had brain surgery. And my life changed forever. Bodies break down.

Things break down. We sure have learned that lesson here at church when, by a God-incidence, the church's 35 to 40 year old boiler broke down and was irreparable. The machine lived way beyond its normal lifespan. We all have had cars that quit for good. Refrigerators stop working. Computers die. I sure found that out when the computer monitor in my office blacked out one day and a funny smell came from within. (By the way, I brought it to church from my previous business, so it had aged.) We all have stories to tell. But as scientist-philosophers have known, the Second Law of Entropy is a fixed and certain part of this existence: "The moment something comes into being, it starts decaying." How about preaching that Gospel?

Relationships can break down and immoral behavior can happen easily. The Bible and the current culture both have certain standards for relationships—and human beings always fall short of them in some way or another. Divorce is so much more readily available in our time. But in other times, the illusion of marriage was maintained in some cases as husbands and wives took up with others. As the writer of Ecclesiastes

says, "There's nothing new under the sun."

A church can break down, too. I've witnessed churches disintegrate or simply fade away. A long-standing church here in Portsmouth has called it quits--Parkview Baptist Church. The congregation dwindled for years and, no doubt, had been through phases in history when things were better or were worse, and people came or went. In the end, in this case (and by their own admission), the leaders said that they simply had no more energy to move into the future. Other churches have serious conflict that goes unaddressed, or are rooted in a time which never can be again (or so it would seem). Churches can break down.

"In contrast to the Second Law of Entropy is the First Law of Faith: God always renews the creation, ..."

Societies can break down, too. Growing up in Chicago, I watched neighborhoods move through change, both with fear and with hope. I remember the downtown area 40 to 50 years ago. It's definitely not the same downtown today—and, in many ways, it's much better than anyone ever imagined. From what all sorts of people tell me, Portsmouth has been through something of the same transformation in an entirely different history and economy. People remember the old Olde Towne, and homes that were there long ago. People moving in know it as it is—a place on the National Register of Historic Places. High Street has had prosperous times and difficult times. We can say the same thing about the United States, no matter where one is in the political spectrum, the society and the economy break down.

So how do we build up?

In contrast to the Second Law of Entropy is the First Law of Faith: God always renews the creation, in the power of the Spirit and the witness of Jesus Christ. But we need to take this truth on faith, and act upon it with courage and confidence.

As we near our 250th anniversary, we can celebrate how the living God has sustained this congregation. And we can choose, in the Spirit, to

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Trinity Episcopal Church
500 Court Street
Portsmouth VA 23704

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SHROVE TUESDAY

**Mardi Gras
& Pancake Supper**

**March 8
5:30-7:30 p.m.**

Don't miss the fun!



The Trumpet
March 2011