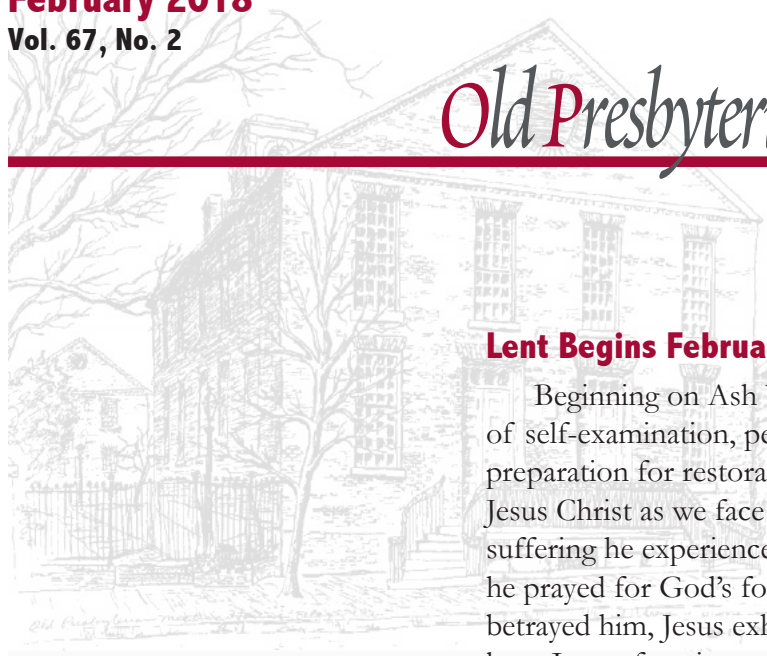


# Old Presbyterian Meeting House



# NEWS

## Lent Begins February 14

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending with Easter, Lent is a journey of self-examination, penitence for alienation from God and others, and preparation for restoration. We come to recognize the complete gift of Jesus Christ as we face the cross, remembering that, despite the betrayal and suffering he experienced, Jesus gave himself in complete trust to God. When he prayed for God's forgiveness for his executioners and those who had betrayed him, Jesus exhibited that central characteristic of God, unqualified love. In confronting such love, we know that we fall short of achieving it and yet that, like those who betrayed or fled from Jesus, we too are forgiven and restored. To Easter, there is no shorter or easier road to travel.

## In this Issue

- Souper Bowl of Caring p. 2
- Deacon Blood Drive Sign Up p. 3
- Adult Education in February p. 4
- Day of Service p. 5
- Off to the Races p. 6
- Senior High Retreat p. 7

## Ash Wednesday

Join us Ash Wednesday, February 14, at 6 p.m. for dinner and fellowship in Fellowship Hall, followed by a worship service at 7 p.m. Childcare is available from 6-8 p.m.

## Get Ready for Gracie, the Fish Bank!

At the beginning of Lent, we'll distribute Gracie, a fish bank used to collect your One Great Hour of Sharing contributions. To emphasize the purpose of giving, you will also receive a month-long sharing calendar suggesting contributions of coins into Gracie in response to the specific needs of others here at home and around the world. Cents-ability donations will be suspended during this time.

Look for Gracie and the sharing calendar on February 11. On Easter, April 1, bring Gracie back to be received during the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Your generous gifts assist those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and assist in helping the powerless.

## Old Presbyterian Meeting House

323 South Fairfax Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3716  
703.549.6670 - phone  
www.opmh.org

### Office Hours:

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

The Old Presbyterian Meeting House is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the National Capital Presbytery, and a Covenant Network congregation.

## Save the Date! Chili Cook-Off Sunday, March 4

More information and entry forms are coming soon! Contact Hannah Williams (hannahkwilliams@gmail.com) if you'd like to volunteer.

## MEETING HOUSE STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Robert R. Laha, Jr.  
*Senior Pastor*  
rlaha@opmh.org

The Rev. Katherine A. Stanford  
*Associate Pastor*  
kstanford@opmh.org

The Rev. Ann E. Herlin  
*Associate Pastor*  
aherlin@opmh.org

Mrs. Noelle Castin  
*Director of Christian Education*  
ncastin@opmh.org

Mr. Samuel Baker  
*Director of Music/Organist*  
sbaker@opmh.org

Mrs. Mary Pratt Perry  
*Youth Director*  
mpratt@opmh.org

Mr. Aaron Siirila  
*Church Business Administrator*  
aaron@opmh.org

Mrs. Heather Starek  
*Communications Manager*  
hstarek@opmh.org

Mrs. Ellen Haas  
*Computer Specialist*  
ehaas@opmh.org

Mrs. Leslie Mounts  
*Administrative Coordinator*  
lmounts@opmh.org

Mrs. Tania Ryan  
*MHCP Director*  
taniaryan@aol.com

Mr. David Heiby  
*Superintendent, Presbyterian  
Cemetery & Columbarium*  
dheiby@cox.net

Please submit materials for the newsletter through your ministry leadership for inclusion in the newsletter. [The deadline for the March issue is February 16.](#)

## Souper Bowl of Caring and Cents-ability offering on February 4

Get into the Team Spirit with the Souper Bowl of Caring! On Sunday, February 4, join the Meeting House youth as they collect money and non-perishable goods for those in need! Bring your donations (cash or check) and drop them in the soup pots held by the youth as you depart church after the 8:30 and 11 a.m. services. The money raised will be used to support our Rise Against Hunger (formerly known as Stop Hunger Now) event on Sunday, April 15. And non-perishable food that is collected will go to the Alive! Food Pantry.



More than 28 years ago, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those that do not have a bowl of soup to eat." Since that day, more than \$135 million has been raised across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around the Big Game into the nation's

largest celebration of giving and serving. Through this mission, young people learn what it's like to make a positive difference in the world – as they collect food, raise money, and volunteer to work in charities that provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to those in need.

The Meeting House joins other churches, schools, organizations, and individuals across the country to fight hunger and poverty by collecting dollars in soup pots on Super Bowl Sunday each year. Be part of this movement that is sharing God's love with those in need. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday.

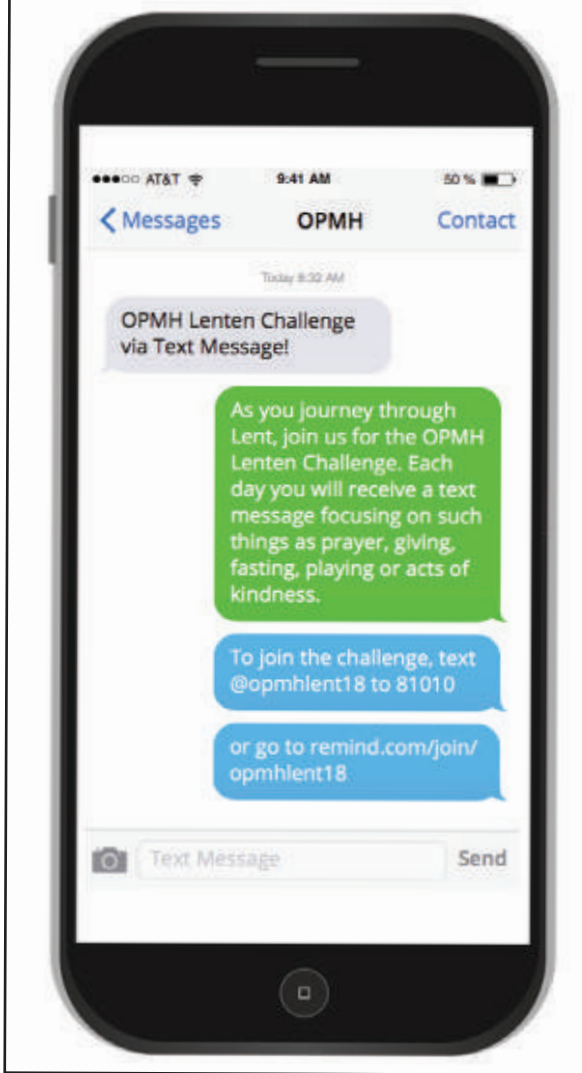
Don't forget to bring your Cents-ability cup on February 4. During worship, we'll collect the money deposited into your Cents-ability cups to be given to Rise Against Hunger for the purchase of ingredients for packaged meals to be distributed worldwide. As we gather at the Lord's table to be fed and nourished physically and spiritually, we remember the many families who are hungry. The next Cents-ability offering will be during worship on Sunday, June 3. From February 14 (Ash Wednesday) through April 1, we ask that you deposit coins into Gracie the fish bank in support of One Great Hour of Sharing, instead of the Cents-ability cup.

## Men's Breakfast, February 10

All Meeting House men and friends are invited to the men's breakfast on Saturday, February 10 at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall for "Breakfast with Bob." Bob Clark, recently retired OPMH Church Administrator, will be our speaker. Breakfast is \$10 per person. To RSVP, contact Jeff Mulvihill (monijeff@cox.net) or RSVP and pay online at opmh.org.



## Lenten Text Challenge



## In Memory of Susan Clark

Susan Ball Clark was a pillar of the Meeting House congregation when the Reverend Dr. William R. Sengel was our pastor. She served as a Deacon in 1971, as an Elder in 1975, as Clerk of Session, and was a regular Lay Reader in worship services. Even during the final months of her debilitating illness, Susan looked forward to coming to worship services each week, which she was able to do only with substantial help from her husband, Howard.

Ever since Susan died in 2012, Howard has been pondering a suitable gift to the Meeting House as a memorial to her. An article in the Newsletter about the conservation work in our historic eighteenth-century churchyard burial ground crystallized his decision to make a generous gift to the Burial Ground Fund in her memory. The Clark memorial gift will enable the Meeting House to complete the final phase of stabilizing the grave markers in this space. However, more work remains to be done, and additional donations to the Burial Ground Fund are always necessary and welcome. The next steps in the Conservation Plan for the Burial Ground include landscaping and appropriate new signage. And there will always be ongoing maintenance needs.

The Burial Ground Committee is currently considering the possibility of a permanent bronze plaque, perhaps to be mounted on one of the brick wall surrounding the burial ground, to recognize the Clark gift, along with all the other grants and generous donations that have made possible the work of stabilizing the grave markers in this historic space.

## All God's Children: The Church Family Gathers for Lent

March 11 & March 18, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Many faith communities are discovering the joy when all ages join together on the spiritual journey. The mingling of innocence and maturity, playfulness and reverence creates a bold and bigger vision of the church as the body of Christ. Intergenerational events provide opportunities for building relationships with God, relationships with the church community, and a chance to open wide the arms of Christ to every person. Please join us as we gather together to explore a Lenten theme through prayer, play, and meal. All are welcome. Childcare will be available for infants & toddlers. RSVP at [opmh.org](http://opmh.org).



# GIVE BLOOD

Donors wanted! The annual blood drive sponsored by the Board of Deacons will be on Sunday, February 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Sign up after worship, contact Tim Elmore ([twelmore@gmail.com](mailto:twelmore@gmail.com)), or go to [opmh.org](http://opmh.org) and click on the link to Inova. Under "search by sponsor" enter code 6309 and the date of February 25, 2018.

## Adult Education in February

### *The Architecture of Compassion II*

This series continues our “romp” through the history of architecture with a focus on the history of architecture in America after 1825.

**February 4:** The Compassionate Reaction to Modern Architecture New Urbanism led by Dhiru Thadani, Charter Member of the Congress for the New Urbanism, and Architect/Educator/Author. Mr. Thadani will consider the origins of the New Urbanism as a compassionate response to the state of urban planning and modern architectural theory after World War II. He will feature his experiences practicing in the United States and India, and discuss how the different cultures approach their shared challenge of providing sustainable, healthy, livable communities.

### *Challenges in the Middle East and Human Development Supported by Hands Along the Nile*

The challenges faced by all of us from events in the Middle East at times seem endless and overwhelming. These challenges will be discussed with a particular emphasis on the impact on Egypt’s large Christian community, including nearly one million Presbyterians, and the work of Hands Along the Nile, an Alexandria based non-government organization (NGO) which supports human development work in Egypt.

**February 11:** Dr. Andrea Zaki will provide an Egyptian perspective on Egypt and the region. Dr. Zaki is the leader of the Presbyterian Church in Egypt, the elected leader of nearly two million Egyptian Protestants, and the head of CEOSS, the largest Egyptian NGO. His activities transcend an enormous range of religious, economic and social development, and political issues. Dr. Zaki has also been the driving force behind a US/ Egyptian dialogue which includes leaders from the National Presbyterian Church, National Council of Churches, the UCC, the American Baptist and other American leaders.

**February 18:** Jennifer Cate, Executive Director of Hands Along the Nile, and Graeme Bannerman, Hands Board Chair and OPMH member, will discuss current challenges in the Middle East and how Hands Along the Nile works to improve the quality of life for vulnerable communities in Egypt.

### *Compassion as the Essence of Christianity: Biblical Foundations*

Is the God of the Old Testament one of fear as opposed to the God of love in the New Testament? How does God’s justice relate to God’s mercy? In attempting to answer these questions, these lectures will begin by expounding what the Hebrew Scriptures mean, when they say, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” We will see how this theme becomes the central thought of the Hebrew Scriptures, how Christ exemplifies God’s justice and mercy, and what lessons particular Gospels draw for our own Christian lives. This three-week series will be led by Anthony J. Tambasco, Professor Emeritus of Theology at Georgetown University.

**February 25:** The Hebrew Bible and the God of Compassion

**March 4:** Jesus Christ as Compassion Incarnate

**March 11:** Gospel Concepts of Compassion

Classes meet in Heritage Hall at 9:40 a.m. Refreshments are served.



## Refugee Ministry Update

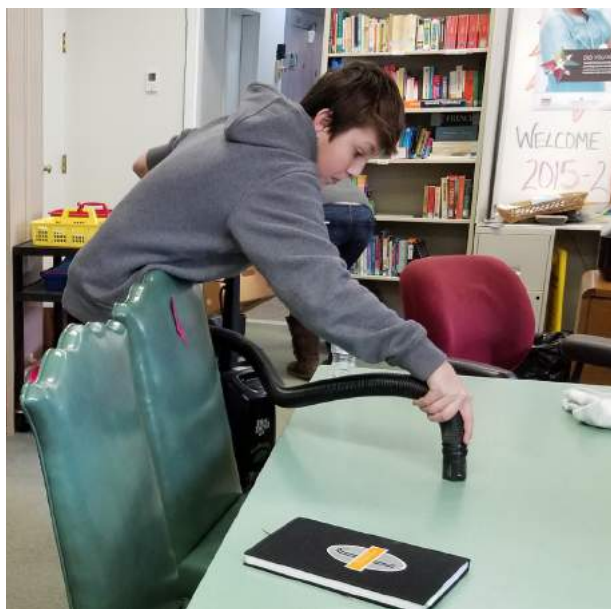
The Syrian family we are helping to support continues to settle in to life in America and their apartment in Falls Church. The most important unresolved issue is a job for the family’s father and husband. If anyone has a job opening, a lead or even just an idea as to a potential job for someone with limited but improving English skills, please contact Jennifer Veech, Alan Matney, or Rich Rawson. We also expect to be conducting fundraising in the next few months for the family’s ongoing expenses. And prayers are always good!

## Confirmation Class Day of Service

The Confirmation Class attended the 4th Annual Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Youth Day of Service on Monday, January 15, 2018 at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church (NYAPC) in Washington, DC. More than 60 youth from seven different churches attended this Presbytery-wide event. The morning began with ice breakers, a tour of the church, and a worship service reflecting on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

During lunch, the participants listened to a panel discussion of four men who shared their story about what it's like to be homeless. Our youth helped out with various projects including making lunch and sorting clothes for those who are experiencing homelessness. They also helped organize the library and resource center for Community Club, a tutoring program at NYAPC, which serves middle and high school students in the area.

*photos by Laura Campbell and Nancy Cooper*



I just wanted to extend my thanks to Ms. Mary Pratt Perry, the Youth Director for your congregation. We recently received a box full of Christmas stockings with goodies and toiletries for my whole team. More than anything, people taking the time to keep us and our fellow Soldiers in their thoughts and prayers really means the world to us and we are very appreciative of the gifts. During the holidays, being deployed can be difficult as people long for the comfort of home and time spent with loved ones. Gestures such as "Stockings for Soldiers" really help everyone remember we are backed by a whole nation who truly cares about its Soldiers and prayers for our safe return. Again, thank you so very much, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas and have a blessed New Year!  
Michael A Sorrentino Jr., CPT, SF  
Detachment Commander SFOD-A 0244

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## Calendars, Calendars, Calendars!

In a banner year for our calendar project, we collected more than 1300! We have already delivered to the Alexandria Sheriff's office, and to ALIVE! for their last-Saturday food distribution. Others will go to an Alexandria elementary school, so parents can keep track of appointments, and some to Guest House.

Although new management at the Richmond city jail discontinued the calendar project there, Fran Bolin, our Assisting Families of Inmates contact, has requested calendars for two other programs in that city:

### Offender Aid and Restoration

OAR helps formerly incarcerated individuals find success in the community. Since 1971, OAR has been the leading Reentry Service provider in the Richmond area. Each year OAR serves approximately 4,000 individuals: those that are currently incarcerated and near release and those that have recently been released from incarceration and are living in the community. <http://www.oarric.org/>

### Recovering from Everyday Addictive Lifestyles (REAL) House

As a response to the growing need for sober housing for those exiting incarceration, REAL Life opened a recovery house for men in May of 2017. Opened initially for men released from The REAL Program inside of the Richmond City Justice Center, REAL Life now also serves men exiting incarceration from other jurisdictions, as well as those in the community in need. Those residing in The REAL House will continue their rehabilitation and recovery through the same behavior modification model utilized within the REAL Program. <http://www.reallifeprogram.org/house/>

We are grateful to all who donated calendars this year, especially Fred and Susan Morhart, who again collected them from their many neighbors at Goodwin House, Bailey's Crossroads.

## RSVP for the Women's Breakfast on March 3

All Meeting House women and friends are invited to the women's breakfast on Saturday, March 3 at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Laura Campbell, Meeting House member, local residential architect, and former inspirational leader of our Stewardship & Finance Ministry, will be our speaker. Breakfast is \$10 per person. To sign up, email Olivia Michener ([olivia.michener@verizon.net](mailto:olivia.michener@verizon.net)).

## Easter Flower Dedications



As we prepare for Easter, we signify our waiting and longing by foregoing sanctuary flower arrangements and "burying the alleluias" during Lent.

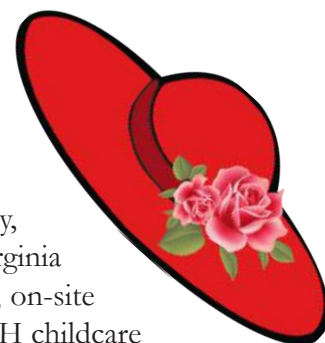
Honor or remember loved ones by dedicating Easter flowers. A mix of lilies, daffodils, and tulips (\$15) and hydrangeas and azaleas (\$25) will brighten the sanctuary on Easter and may be claimed after the 11 a.m. Easter service. To make a dedication, pick up a form in the Narthex or church office or order and pay online. Please make checks payable to OPMH, and in the memo line, specify "Easter flowers." The deadline to order is Monday, March 12.

## Off to the Races for Family to Family

Mark your calendars now for our biggest event of the year, "Off to the Races for Family to Family," a celebration to raise funds for our Family to Family program. The event will take place on Saturday, April 7 from 6-9 p.m. at the Virginia Theological Seminary with free, on-site childcare available by our OPMH childcare providers. Ticket prices are 30/adult, \$20/teen and go on sale soon!

Enjoy good food, music, and fellowship while raising money for emergency financial assistance to assist individuals in our community. All are welcome to attend!

During the event, there will be a silent auction where you can bid on fantastic items. We are looking for donations such as vacation homes, different and unique experiences (e.g., Pentagon tours, hosting dinners, etc.), tickets, art work, etc. Please contact Michael Sramek ([sevenoutlineaway@hotmail.com](mailto:sevenoutlineaway@hotmail.com)) or Jeff Mulvihill ([monijeff@cox.net](mailto:monijeff@cox.net)) if you have items to donate.



## Senior High Youth Retreat

From January 13-15, OPMH high school youth and adult volunteers went on their annual winter retreat/ski trip at Massanetta Springs. During the retreat, the youth enjoyed skiing and snowboarding, singing, and playing games in the lodge. Non-skiers visited with seniors at the Sunnyside Presbyterian Home, a senior living community in Massanetta Springs. They also had small groups group discussions about our personal identities as Christians in the world and how we can work together to help others feel the love of Christ. The retreat closed with meaningful youth-led worship surrounding this theme.

Thanks so much to everyone who made the high school retreat possible and such a great time! Special thanks to Dana Chipman, Karen Chipman, Eric Johnson, and Joe McCoy for being the volunteer adult chaperones, with Mary Pratt Perry.



## Senior Sidebar



### February Senior Speaker Series

Interested in learning about employment opportunities available to seniors? Looking for volunteer opportunities and a way to give back to the community? Register for the next Senior Speaker Series event on Wednesday, February 21 from 9:30 a.m.-noon at Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street in Alexandria. This free program will feature local experts from AARP, Office of Historic Alexandria, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Volunteer Alexandria, and the Workforce Development Center. Go to [seniorservicesalex.org](http://seniorservicesalex.org) or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110 to sign up today!

### Taxi Yellow Card Program

Great news! The Senior Taxi Yellow Card Program is going strong and offers discount taxi fares for City residents 60 years of age and older with a household income less than \$48,508. You can take a taxi anywhere that Yellow Cab goes and you can take it anytime you choose. If you need some assistance with transportation, the City's DOT transportation program may be able to provide assistance. For more information about these programs, or other programs for seniors, please call the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703-746-5999 or visit their website at [alexandriava.gov/aging](http://alexandriava.gov/aging).

# LENT

## AT THE MEETING HOUSE



**Ash Wednesday**, February 14

Service at 7 pm

Dinner at 6 pm

*Childcare available 6-8 pm*

**Lenten Text Challenge**

Text @opmlent18 to 81010 or go to [remind.com/join/](http://remind.com/join/)

opmlent18

**Sundays in Lent**

February 18, 25, March 4, 11, & 18

Worship at 8:30 & 11 am

Classes at 9:40 am

*Childcare available 8:15 am-12:15 pm*

**Taizé Prayer Service**

March 8 at 7 pm

A service for healing and wholeness

**The Church Family Gathers  
for Lent**

March 11 & 18, 5-6:30 pm

Dinner included

*Childcare available 5-6:30 pm*

**HOLY WEEK**

**Palm Sunday**, March 25

Worship at 8:30 & 11 am

Classes at 9:40 am

*Childcare available 8:15 am-12:15 pm*

**Praying through the  
Psalms Prayer Center**

March 25, 6:30-8:30 pm

March 26-28, 10 am-7 pm

**Maundy Thursday**, March 29

Service at 7 pm

Dinner at 6 pm

*Childcare available 6-8 pm*

**Good Friday**, March 30

Service at noon

*Childcare available noon-1 pm*

**Easter**, April 1

One Great Hour of Sharing

Identical services at 8:30 & 11 am

No classes for adults, youth, or children

*Childcare available 8:15 am-12:15 pm*

*Old Presbyterian Meeting House*

323 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3716

[www.opmh.org](http://www.opmh.org)

**To see a calendar of upcoming events, visit  
[www.opmh.org](http://www.opmh.org) and click on "Calendar."**