

Annual Parish Meeting
Rector's Report
January 22, 2023

I loved Beverly's Haverstock's Sr. Warden's Report that is included in your annual report for this meeting. I have to echo her sentiment of gratitude and only wish I had gotten to it first. I, too, feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude right now. One of the things I am exceedingly grateful for is Beverly's term as Sr. Warden. I only wish I could have convinced her to stay on for one more year. Goodness knows I tried, but I do understand that it is a taxing position and that retired is retired. I am also grateful to Will Cary for being the Jr. Warden extraordinaire! Do you know that Will comes by here every single day – often more than once a day- to check on this holy old space and make sure all is in working order and when it isn't to have it restored to working order ASAP. I don't know of another church around that has such a loving caregiver. So, thank you Will! I am grateful for Pat Vaughn stepping into the role of Treasurer in a time of transition. He took on the role with grace, always with a smile and a great story to share! One could not find a better Secretary of the Vestry than Meg Scharre who always kept the details handled for us so we didn't have to worry about them. Having someone else to deal with the details, like agendas and minutes is always something for which I am very grateful! This has been a wonderful executive committee and the vestry has been a pleasure to work with as well. This year Pat Vaughn, Meg Scharre, Mary Redden, Larry Frederickson, and Jennie Kling will rotate off the vestry. They have each served Calvary quite well during a time in which the world shifted on its axis in ways we could not foresee. For your service we are all very grateful.

Over the last year we once again had staff turnover and it is my deepest prayer that this is the end of that. In May Terrance Griffith came on the team as our Operations Assistant, previously known as Sexton. I believe that I can safely say that Terrance is much beloved by all. I do not know of another living individual that is much beloved by all, with perhaps the exceptions of all of our current staff members. We have the A double plus team. Callie Hausman returned to lead our Children's Education in a time where we were very much walking in the dark feeling our way with each step. There was much rejoicing upon her return and we continue to rejoice for her gracious and kind leadership. Our nursery ladies, Darlene and Joann returned as well and life as we knew is seemed to be slowly returning to a bit of stability, then we renovated the entire second floor to give a new fresh home for those young ones in our care. It is lovely and I am grateful for Callie and Stephanie Smith's swift and thorough work and the guidance given by Adele Koch and others. Of course, Will Cary was involved as well. Joann, Darlene and their husbands assembled furniture and maneuvered well through the ever-moving landscape of change. We are blessed once again to have Cori

Vivian serving as our seminary intern. She is assisting Callie with the Children's ministry so you'll often see her leading the lively bunch back into church during the peace and we have all been blessed when she preaches from time to time.

When Taylor Gray applied for the position of Administrative Assistant, I was stunned and a little wary. Why on earth would a PhD student want to come and work here part-time I wondered. Feeling a bit snake bitten by the frequent turnover in the last few years I pretty much grilled everyone who applied to ascertain a longer-term commitment. When I realized that Taylor had a multigenerational connection to Calvary and had grown up here and that we immediately hit it off I canceled all other interviews. She came in seamlessly and has gone above and beyond over and over, as has each and every member of this team and that is not the whole of it by far.

As always, our choir is notable under the leadership of Jacob Cook, who is not only a fantastic director but is incredibly generous and caring with all. When I talked to Jacob during the interview process he said he wanted to bring in the music of new and diverse composers to add to our beautiful traditional music and support our commitment to truly being a place of welcome for all people. I knew in that moment he was exactly the right person to help usher in a bright new future for Calvary. We were initially very disappointed when it seemed like there was no chance of us finding the right person to accompany the choir on the organ then lo and behold a miracle happened and Margaret stepped back in and saved the day. There are not enough words of gratitude for Margaret's willingness to step back in week-in and week-out, to practice hour upon hour, after working tirelessly with the ever growing Food Ministry, which just for your information, hit the 100 mark for visitors in one day this past Thursday. That is a mixed bag, of course, because it shows that the need is growing and growing. I can't tell you how many trips Margaret has made to countless Kroger stores in the past year, how many late night food deposits she's had at her home, how many times she's stayed here all afternoon waiting for someone to drop another delivery off. There have been many who have assisted with the food ministry including the ever faithful Jim Barnes and Anne Marie DeZeeuw and Larry Frederickson, who have picked up food each Wednesday from St. Matthew's Area Ministry, brought it here and unloaded it, along with Margaret's help, naturally. Organist beyond compare, Food Ministry leader beyond compare, statistician who counts every little thing, perhaps with the exception of the number of hours she puts into her ministries here- and all as a volunteer. I think this deserves as much gratitude as we can each offer and even then it will not be enough. I have a check here for Margaret which is literally a token of our gratitude. All the money in the world would not be enough. From the bottom of Calvary's and my heart, thank-you!

If I were to mention by name every committee chair and everyone who volunteers their time and talent to Calvary we would be here all afternoon and I probably would unintentionally leave someone off. Know that I am incredibly grateful for each and every one of you!

Just before Christmas I was at Kroger, which seemed to be a daily event just before Christmas. I spotted what I thought was a beautiful small Christmas Cactus. It was loaded with tiny buds and a couple of full blooms. I had great hope for this Christmas Cactus. By Christmas, I thought, it would be in full bloom and add beauty and joy to my kitchen, where I love to keep flowers. Within a couple of days I realized that something wasn't quite right. My Christmas Cactus that I had so much hope in was wilting, the tiny buds were dropping off. I knew that I needed to do something pretty fast or the Christmas Cactus would go the way of many other plants that I had managed to kill no matter my best efforts. I was 100% committed to not letting this Christmas Cactus die, although honestly I'm not sure why this 7 dollar plant had gained such huge importance for me- but it had so I fussed and fretted over it. Actually, I put it in the sunniest window I could find and gave it small bits of water. All the buds still fell off. For that I was too late. I imagine that my beloved cactus spent too much time in a truck in cold weather conditions, or not enough time in sunlight. It had either had too much or too little water, whatever happened was too much for the buds to survive. Still, I am happy to report the plant itself looks really good now. Its once shriveling arms are now reaching happily toward the sunlight and I am convinced that by next Christmas there will be beautiful blooms galore to brighten my kitchen on dark and gloomy winter days. I will let you know.

For me this true story of the Christmas Cactus is very similar to our shared life in ministry here at Calvary for the past 4 years. When I was considering putting my name in as a possible candidate for Rector in 2018 Calvary was in a very different place. It was beautiful with lots of hope but there was very high anxiety and a difficult painful past. A priest friend of mine, who I knew had retired in Alabama to go home to Louisville, called me about a totally unrelated matter and I said, 'Do you by any chance know anything about Calvary in Louisville, I'm seeing some red flags. Are they priest killers or do they just need someone to go in and love them?' He said, 'I was a consultant there. I know them well. They just need someone to love them.' And so it began. I'm here to reaffirm my 100% commitment keeping Calvary alive and loving each of you fully, even when you seem unlovable, just as you have loved me, even when I seem unlovable. The difference between you and my Christmas Cactus was that the Christmas Cactus had no choice. If I did all the right things that it needed to grow and thrive it had no choice but to do just that. You have a choice in this because this is a relationship and it takes the involvement of all parties, not just one.

We are in a great place right now. We are doing great things, not just in bringing the beautiful building into good health but in bringing new life into our midst. We are changing. We are doing things differently. Change is hard; it makes us uncomfortable. Together we have weathered a world-wide pandemic. It was hard; it changed the entire world and we still do not have the full picture of long-reaching effects of that. The full impact of the pandemic will not be seen in some of our lifetimes and that's fine because we have plenty to do right now to let the world outside these doors

know that we are a loving community of faith that is actively engaged in loving our neighbors and welcoming all who come; however we come to Calvary we are loved.

When our bishop was here in June for his annual visit and to again confirm 7 folks with a median age below 35 he said to us, ‘this feels like a totally different place.’ He and Canon Amy echoed that sentiment several more times as the day went on. Your commitment to the future and your willingness to step out in love is seen. Keep stepping out in love, keep being willing to try new ways of being, new ways of loving our neighbors and it will be seen. When folks see a loving, happy bunch of folks they want to be a part of it. Well done. Keep it up. I am, as Beverly, truly grateful.