

The Pitch from Fork September/October 2010



Dear friends,

The first time I ever encountered a GPS system was nearly ten years ago. A friend had just purchased one for his new car, and he took me for a spin to show it off. I was duly impressed as the GPS tracked exactly where we were and told us precisely where to turn and how far to travel on each road to our destination. To my amusement, the GPS spoke in a sexy female voice with a British accent. But then we missed a turn. Immediately the beautiful GPS voice screeched, “You are off track! You are off track! You are off track!”—and continued to do so as we headed down a highway ramp from which there was no easy exit. Suddenly I didn’t find the GPS especially helpful, and apparently neither did my friend. He turned it off and handed me a trusty (and silent!) road map, and we navigated the rest of our trip the old-fashioned way.

I purchased a GPS system of my own about two months ago and have been pleased with its performance. Not only does it guide me smoothly around the greater Richmond area, but also it was very useful during my vacation trip to Tennessee and South Carolina. What I like best about *my* GPS is what it does when I make a mistake: If I miss a turn, my GPS simply says, “Recalculating,” and then tells me a new set of directions. I love that. No panic; no blame; just a pragmatic recalculation to get me back on track.

I think my GPS has something to teach me about dealing with mistakes—mine and others’. Far too often, my initial response when something goes wrong is to assign blame, to point fingers, to label and name what I or someone else has done badly. How much more gracious it would be, in the face of human error, simply to step back, regroup, and come forward with a new plan. The attitude of the early GPS systems seemed to be: “*You* made a mistake, and now we’re *stuck*.” In contrast, the current GPS system seems to say, “Hang on just a sec, and *I’ll* find us a nifty new way to get where we need to go.” Recalculating—what a great idea!

Recalculating. If you think about it, that’s what God has been doing with us and for us all along. The whole splay of salvation history is the story of our loving God trying to figure out how to save us: from the Garden of Eden to the Flood to the Old Testament Prophets to the sending of Jesus, and on into our lives here and now. God, on our side, traveling with us, guiding and loving us, and recalculating the way forward when we steer off the track. God’s own son on the cross, dying for *our* sins—*there* is a major recalculation.

Recalculating. May we have the grace to practice the spiritual discipline of recalculation, in our personal lives *and* in our corporate life as the household of faith here at Fork Church.

Blessings.

–Anne †

From the Junior Warden

Entitlement – Having worked with college students for the past 15 years and as a mom of two pre-teen boys, this is an attitude with which I am very familiar. Nothing can make my head spin around and my eyes pop out more than when one of my kids takes for granted the many blessings they have or when they roll their eyes and slough off to do a very simple chore they have been requested to do.

Having given this issue a lot of thought, I am also aware that *I* have made my kids this way. With the supersized culture we have created – not in which we live – but which we have *created*, how could our kids be anything else but spoiled? I realize that if I think of it as something somebody else created, I am helpless to do something to correct it. *I* am the one who has made my kids' lives so cushy that it doesn't occur to them that life is anything, but easy. Often it is easier to complain about a situation and play the role of a victim than to take charge and do something to change it. Acquainting my kids with people who are less (way less) fortunate and letting my children suffer the consequences of their actions/choices are two ways I can be proactive in changing this attitude.

Our youth group leaders are taking steps which will also help make a change. The youth have partnered with the Peter Paul Development Center in Richmond over the past year. This is a program that helps at-risk youth in the poorest neighborhoods of Richmond. In addition, our middle-schoolers will be taking an overnight trip to Maryland at the end of August for an educational mission experience. On this overnight journey, the children will experience life for 24 hours like a child in a Third World Country might experience. They will be given “little to eat – just some rice, vegetables, and eggs – and they must find a way to build a fire and cook their meal. The challenge continues on into the night as they must sleep in traditional housing, such as a Mozambique hut.” The idea is to help them take a step outside of their own lives to get a glimpse of just how privileged they are and create a desire in them to do something to help others.

There are other mission-oriented opportunities in which the middle and high school youth will be involved in the coming year. I am very grateful to be a part of a church community that is committed to making our kids aware of our duty as Christians to look outside ourselves and help those in need.

Beth Schubert



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FORK THIS FALL?

Update for the 275th Anniversary: Quilt To Be On Display Plus Much More!

Your anniversary committee continues to seek your help in sharing with us old photographs, documents, objects, and memorabilia that we could include in a display. We would like you to bring what you have to church on October 10th and October 17th. Your items will be kept in good care and a receipt of loan will be given upon request. Your items are being collected by Debbie Murphy.

The items will be on display along with the 1914 quilt following a visit by Patrick Henry and also following church service on October 24th from 11:30 until 1:30 p.m.

Please join us at the Fork Church parish house on Friday, October 8th at 5:45 p.m. for a wine and cheese social followed by Dr. Carl R. Lounsbury, who will speak and share with us a power point presentation at 6:30 on the subject of church architecture. There is no charge for this event, donations will be accepted and appreciated.

Dr. Carl R. Lounsbury is Senior Architectural Historian in the Architectural Research Department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation where he is responsible for major research projects such as the Courthouse, the Capitol, Bruton Parish Church, the Douglass Theatre, and other buildings. He also teaches courses in architectural history and field recording methodology at the College of William and Mary. His publications include *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building*; *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*; *From Statehouse to Courthouse: An Architectural History of South Carolina's Colonial Capitol and the Charleston County Courthouse*; and *The Courthouses of Early Virginia: An Architectural History*. A collection of his essays will be published by the University of Virginia Press. Dr. Lounsbury has been at Colonial Williamsburg since 1982. He has a MA and PhD in American Studies from George Washington University and a BA from the University of North Carolina.

On Saturday, October 23rd at 4 p.m. at Fork Church, Kevin McGranahan will join us for a reenactment of Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty" speech. Several members of our congregation will also take part in this event. Following the occasion, please join us in the Parish House for a display of historical memorabilia.

Kevin has been working professionally in the entertainment industry, movies, television, radio, concerts, and theatre. Kevin has appeared locally as Patrick Henry at the historic St. John's reenactment of the famous "Give me liberty" speech, and stars as Patrick Henry in the 2007 production of the PBS /WCVE film *Liberty or Death*.

Then, on Friday, November 12th, we will have a more recent reenactment of some of your favorite Fork Church opera selections, a little bit of our own current history along with a feast of pasta and salad with lots of help from our youth. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults, children \$5.00 and children under 5 are free of charge. Please mark your calendars for what should be a fun fellowship event and the kickoff to our anniversary finale.



The finale of our celebration will take place on Sunday, November 14th, as we will commemorate our 275 years during our 10 a.m. church service. We will be honored by a visit from Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston, Bishop of Virginia. Delegate John Cox will also join us to present a resolution to the congregation from the General Assembly of Virginia. Following the service, we invite everyone to a reception in the Parish House. But, before we hurry over for the reception, we will gather beside the church for a group photograph, which will hopefully end up as memorabilia when we celebrate our 300th anniversary.

The Fork Church quilt will be displayed this fall as part of the church's 275th anniversary celebration. The design consists of 30 blocks with names and an occasional illustration. One date, June 4, 1916, appears in a block with the name L. D. Aylett. Altogether there are 271 listed individuals, many of whom appear on the church register or on markers in the cemetery. We assume that families may have purchased squares to include whomever they wished. General R. E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson appear, but most are familiar Hanover County names, and sometimes names of relatives living in other areas. When the quilt was completed, it was auctioned to raise additional funds for the church. The winner was Confederate Lt. Nathaniel Burwell Cooke of Janeway, who purchased the quilt for his wife, Jane Mercer Winston.

This "time capsule" continues to be stored at Janeway, and it is shown on rare occasions. The quilt will be on display with other artifacts of Fork Church history on a date to be determined in October 2010. Please let us know if you have historical photographs, documents or other items associated with the parish to include as part of the October event.

Alastair Macdonald

Support our 275th

This is a big year for Fork with the yearlong celebration of our 275th Anniversary. Be sure to get your Fork Church mug, tote and replica!

Contact Debbie Murphy 227-3664 or Lisa Licata 227-3268.

Adult Forum Resumes

The Adult Forum will resume at 9:00 AM, September 12, 2010. The present plan is to begin with reflections upon the classic work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*. Barnes and Noble has the following endorsement:

“After his martyrdom at the hands of the Gestapo in 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer continued his witness in the hearts of Christians around the world. His *Letters and Papers from Prison* became a prized testimony to Christian faith and courage, read by thousands. Now in *Life Together* we have Pastor Bonhoeffer's experience of Christian community. This story of a unique fellowship in an underground seminary during the Nazi years reads like one of Paul's letters. It

gives practical advice on how life together in Christ can be sustained in families and groups. The role of personal prayer, worship in common, everyday work, and Christian service is treated in simple, almost biblical, words. *Life Together* is bread for all who are hungry for the real life of Christian fellowship.”



What can replace Christ in our lives? Nothing.

Please come and join us and do not let "Adult Forum" intimidate as it may not be an apt description.

Thanks,
Don Schubert

Healing Service and Holy Eucharist

Our monthly service of healing and Holy Eucharist will be held Wednesday, September 22, and Wednesday, October 27, both at 11 a.m. During the service, anointing and the laying on of hands are offered, as well as prayers for ourselves and for others. All are welcome.



Fall Newsletter Report 2010

While I was driving around this summer I saw this sign outside of a church.

The Church Is a Gift from God Assembly Required

I thought about the sign for a long time. I finally realized the phrase “assembly required” means that for the church to exist we need to “show up” on Sunday. If we don’t, the church as it should be will be lacking vital “parts.” In other words, the church cannot really be the church without all of the parts just as the wagon we might be assembling needs all of the parts to roll as it was intended. This holds true for Sunday morning church services. It holds true for the Sunday school and for the Youth Group. Actually, I think we do a good job of not only “showing up” but also providing essential “parts” to make Sunday worship services, Sunday school classes, and Youth Group activities positive and meaningful experiences. The church sign is just something to think about as we make our commitments for the fall.

Ann Neri, Angela Woods, and I have designed the Godly Play program for Fall. I will again be teaching the 3, 4 and 5 year- olds. Ann Neri will be leading the group of children in grades 1, 2 and 3. Angela Woods will lead the group of children in grades 4 and 5.

My Group 1, will again look at the core stories of the Old and New Testament. You may hear your five-year old say he or she has heard the story before. That’s correct because I tell the same stories each year. However, I tell them that I have told the same story more times than they have heard it, and each time I tell it I learn something new. Then I ask them to listen very closely and to discover what new things they can learn as I tell the story again. Many new things are learned. I love teaching this age group. They are so full of enthusiasm and energy that it is contagious.

Ann Neri’s Group 2 will hear the stories about many of the women and men of the Old and New Testament. They will be making a quilt with symbols of these people. Each square will represent one person from the Bible. They will make a square each week so that at the end of the year we can all enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Angela Wood’s Group 3 will participate in a variety of learning activities. They will explore some of the Saints of the church. They will hear some of the same stories heard in earlier years but in more depth and with a different focus. They will also begin to learn about the Episcopal Church in particular and the parts of our Episcopal Sunday service.

All of us will have assistants whom you will meet on the first Sunday of Sunday school, September 12th. Bring your children to church that Sunday. We will all receive a blessing and go off to begin our adventure for the Sunday school year 2010-1011.

Youth Group

This year we have 18 young persons eligible to be active in the Youth Group. There are ten 6th and 7th graders and eight high school youth. Jim and I will coordinate the middle school youth. Jessamy Austin and Anne Kirchmier will coordinate the high school group.

Our first meeting will be at our Mount Olympus farm on Sunday, August 29th. Please arrive between 4:00 pm and 5:00pm for swimming, kayaking and a picnic. We will conclude at 7:00 pm. We will break up into two groups to discuss the program for the fall. There will be an exciting mix of *fun, fellowship, food*, and of course some *faith* issues. As we go through the year we will engage in prayer, study, community service, mission trips, holy hockey, eating, movie nights and lots more.

Come on August 29th and find out what is in store for the youth at Fork Church this Fall.

Blessings and Peace,
Boo Smythe

THE PEOPLE OF FORK CHURCH

People and Prayers That ‘Wow’

“WOW” is the best way I can describe what happened during a 48-hour period this summer in the Fork Church neighborhood.

It started with a phone call I made to two elderly sisters who live in the woods across from us just to check on them—something I don’t do often enough, because these ladies are not inclined to ask for help. The sister who answered simply asked for prayer to see them through this heat wave. They had no air conditioning, only fans providing little comfort.

I consulted Anne Kirchmier who suggested some local services that might help, and she also put out a notice to the vestry and prayer chain. That was on a late Thursday afternoon, and I didn’t check e-mail until late that night. The “wows” had already begun, and they continued throughout the next day.

I don’t think of e-mail as a God thing; in fact, sometimes I wonder if it’s of the devil. But God used about 20 e-mails and the compassion of His people at Fork Church to work what must have seemed a miracle to the sisters on the eve of the hottest weekend this summer.

Mazie Florance thought of Meals on Wheels. Elizabeth Gordon offered WHEAT services. Others offered monetary support. Greg and Paula Muniec said they had an extra air conditioning unit to donate. David Aderhold was standing by to help, as was an electrician friend of Mazie’s.

By day’s end Friday, Elizabeth and another volunteer electrician had visited the sisters to meet them and check out the wiring. Good news, Elizabeth reported—the wiring was OK for the Muniecs’ A/C unit. And she and her children had made some new friends to help through WHEAT food deliveries.

More new friendships made Saturday morning as Greg and his son Robbie plus Glenn Murphy visited the ladies to install the air conditioning unit. One more service to provide Monday morning—installation of an additional outlet to help the sisters.

I have always been moved by the familiar passage in Matthew 25:40: “‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” But

I've never been *physically* moved enough. What I witnessed Thursday evening through Saturday morning was a real movement among Fork Church members who put feet to that Scripture and showed by example what it means.

Anne's sermon the following Sunday reminded me that prayer started it all. I'm not sure if she was already planning to talk about prayer and Friday's events served as timely illustration, or the other way around. But prayer should *never* be underestimated!

WHEAT became personalized, too. I was reminded that this wonderful volunteer ministry not only provides food to the needy but also helps with utility bills. My neighbors in the woods may need that additional help, and I hope all of us at Fork will do what we can to replenish WHEAT funds which are low right now.

Now if Terry can just catch that groundhog that continues to dig under the sisters' house!

Lou Ann Cave

Wheat Appreciation

We finished another quarter of WHEAT hotline duty on August 15th. Thank you all for donating food. This quarter was oddly quiet. Some days there were no calls and some days there were six or seven. We really found it very hard to get in touch with clients and therefore weren't able to help as many as we would have liked. This happens sometimes but it is unusual to have it happen as frequently as it did this quarter. We helped a few clients by paying electric bills or rent and by delivering groceries. I did speak to one woman who had gotten behind on her bills because she was helping her daughter; a single mother of a one year old, who found herself homeless after she and her baby were kicked out of her boyfriend's house. The caller had never had to ask for help before and was shocked that we could help her so easily and quickly with no red tape! She was also unbelievably humbled and said she would pay us back when she could. It is so gratifying to help people like that.

The highlight of our WHEAT duty was the addition of Paula Muniec on the hotline! Elizabeth Gordon put together training materials for her (that we wished we had when we started) and Paula answered phones for a week. Thanks to Elizabeth's hard work, Paula's initiation was relatively uneventful. Thank you Elizabeth for providing the training and thank you Paula for joining our team! If you have been thinking about volunteering but are concerned about the time commitment or what is expected of you please give Paula, Elizabeth or me a call. We'd love more volunteers!

WHEAT is struggling financially so if you can donate money that would be very helpful. WHEAT is a 501(c)(3) so all donations are tax deductible. We also always need food. As it gets closer to our next hotline duty we'll post a list in Church of any gaps on our pantry. Don't forget to use your coupons when shopping for WHEAT. Martin's gives double coupons when you use your Martin's cards and many stores in our area have double coupon days. That is a great way to save money.

Thank you all for your continued support and welcome aboard Paula!

Lisa Licata

Birthday??

Have you received a handwritten birthday card in the past year from Fork Church? If not, we probably don't know your birthday! Please send any and all birthday information to parish secretary Betsy Tompkins at forkchurch@embarqmail.com so that we can celebrate you!



NEWS IN THE LIFE OF FORK CHURCH

Youth Trip

On August 26 and 27, Boo Smythe, Anne Kirchmier, and nine of our Fork Church middle school students participated in the Heifer Global Village Experience, a program designed to help our youngsters experience and better understand the struggles that impoverished people face day in and day out. The group stayed at Shepherd's Spring Heifer Global Village, a site complete with international homes, gardens and animals representing Guatemala, Mozambique, Kenya, Appalachia and refugee camps—places where Heifer International works to improve people's sources of nutrition and income through the gift of livestock and training.

Parish History Notes #29: Fork Church in 1900

A visit to Trinity Church, a few miles to the west, provides a smaller-scale model of the layout of Fork Church between 1835 and 1913.

The pews were arranged as we know them today, having been cut down from the older compartment style, but the pulpit was in the center at the front of the church, where the altar currently stands. Under the reawakened Calvinist philosophies of the nineteenth century, the spoken word was the most important element of a service and symbols such as crosses and flowers were of little value. "*Sola scriptura*" ("by scripture alone") was one of five important slogans of the Protestant Reformation that reflected the tenets of John Calvin (1509-1564). The altar was placed in front of and below the pulpit, holding less significance that it does under our liturgy.

The communion rail formed a semicircle around the pulpit, extending to the east wall at the approximate location of the current railing on either side of what was then the pulpit. The organ was on the north wall behind where the pulpit is now placed. A pot-bellied stove occupied a prominent place in the center of the aisle, with a pipe chimney extending up and then horizontally to a side window, where an upper pane was removed to accommodate it.

Next Issue: The Renovations of 1913

Alastair Macdonald

OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRATION

Pastoral Care

As the vestry member who has the area of pastoral care, I thought I knew what pastoral care was when I took this position. Upon doing some reading and research in this area, I found it is more than I had thought. I came to realize that pastoral care means to celebrate life's joys as well as to bear one another's burdens and sorrows. In addition, we do this by having a servant's heart, by listening, caring, learning and praying for one another as members of God's family. This is to be done in fulfillment of God's commandment to love one another as God loves us. Wow! What an order! Celebrate – everybody likes to do that. A servant's heart – that's hard, I think. It is never convenient to stop and help. Listening – in this busy world? Praying – is that good time management? Caring for others when caring for our own families is sometimes all we can handle. All this is a tall order, but isn't this what the church community should be about? Think about this as we rush about in this hectic world. If everyone stops for a second and follows God's vision, what a wonderful place we would live in! Let us all take time to care for one another. Let us all practice pastoral care.

Anne Rickman

WHEAT Update - Thank You Fork

When we agreed to take on phone duty for WHEAT over a year and a half ago, we didn't ask your permission. Nor did we consider how much it would impact you. Since then we've come to you time and time again asking for your help and support and every time you have been there for us and for WHEAT. We are so thankful to you for your help in this important ministry. Everything you do makes a difference.

WHEAT continues to be very busy. Every tour of duty is different but it isn't unusual for us to field 42 calls, deliver 80 bags of groceries and provide financial assistance to eight families in a two week period. Unlike many charities, WHEAT does not require any proof of need. If you call and ask for help, we provide what we can. While we help people in the "Social Services System" we also help people who don't qualify for Social Services assistance. You only need to live in Western Hanover and ask. We are always particularly happy to help people who are working hard to help themselves but have encountered an obstacle that your generosity can help them clear. As we write this we are helping a family who experienced a kitchen fire and another family that is trying to making it on their own without the help of an abusive husband. There are of course many people with problems so great that we can't help them out of the trouble they are in. For instance, we called on a client with depression, a physical disability and an apparent hoarding problem. Bringing her groceries and helping her with rent won't change the course of her life but it will help her get by while others more qualified than we help her with her larger problems.

The WHEAT system, that requires no proof of need, has its pitfalls. There are certainly people who look to take advantage of whatever handout they can find even if they don't really need it. But for every one of those there are two more people who really need help, who thank God for organizations like WHEAT, and who don't want to take any more than they need.

Thank you for helping us to be there for them.

Elizabeth Gordon and Lisa Licata

Outreach Dinner



Many thanks to all who brought food and stayed to help at the Aug. 29 outreach dinner co-hosted with St. James the Less on Sunday, Aug. 29. The next event has been changed from Oct. 31 to Oct. 24. In addition to food, we need people to help in the kitchen to prepare, serve and clean up. Please call Lou Ann Cave at 227-3649 if you can provide either or both of these services. You will be rewarded with smiling faces and tons of gratitude! Thank you for participating in this ministry to our neighbors who need a little extra help and fellowship.

COMMUNITY AND DIOCESE

Shrinemont Fall Camp- October 25-28

This camp is specially designed with senior citizens in mind. The theme is "Discovering Ourselves Anew," and numerous workshops are offered. Please check the bulletin board in the Parish hall for a complete list of the activities which include an Outreach Project for Stop Hunger Now. Fall Camp is not to be confused with...

Our Annual Parish Retreat at Shrinemont- November 5-7

Mark your calendars for our Shrinemont weekend. Children of all ages are welcome!

Workshop Series –September 26-November 14

These Sunday evening workshops will be held at First Baptist Church. Divorce Recovery Workshop Series is for anyone who is experiencing the loss of a relationship. Special programs for children and teens are included. Information is posted on the bulletin board, or contact Geri Hale-Cooper, Workshop Coordinator, 358-5458. ext 132.

Beaverdam Heritage Day

Members of the Beaverdam Heritage Days Foundation are preparing for a "Grand Opening Celebration of Pop's Country Store Museum and The John Lewis Thompson Learning Center on October 9, 2010. This free event will be a day filled with music, moonwalks, hay rides, alpacas, oxen-pulled wagon rides, great food and a variety of items to buy. Historical exhibitors will be portraying living history. Several guest entertainers and speakers will be on BHDF's stage completely remodeled by W.C.Lang, the museum's contractor.

During the opening ceremony, a dedication of the Thompson Family Cemetery where PVT. John Lewis Thompson, a southern vet of the Civil War is buried, will take place and our very own Amy Newell, Debbie Murphy and Jesse Gordon will sing the National Anthem.

The Diocese is Listening: Be Heard

The Diocese will host a series of listening sessions on faithful sexuality and the blessing of same-gender unions this fall. Please mark your calendar to attend one of the following sessions. Look for details and information in future issues of the e-Communique and in the September edition of *The Virginia Episcopalian*.

Sept. 29, Calvary, Front Royal, 7-9 p.m.

Oct. 13, St. Paul's, Ivy, 7-9 p.m.

Oct. 27, St. Alban's, Annandale, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Nov. 3, St. John's, Tappahannock, 4-6 p.m.

Nov. 17, Christ Church, Glen Allen, 7-9 p.m.

The Hope House: Gulfport, Mississippi, May 8, – June 11, 2011

What is the Hope House? It's an effort to raise the funds and volunteers to build a house from the ground up for a family in Mississippi who lost their home to Hurricane Katrina. What is needed? We need to raise \$50,000 - \$60,000 to build the house. How can I help? There are many ways to help. How can I get more information? Contact Rob Monolo at 690-2792 or Christy Monolo at cmonolo@oag.state.va.us. We really need your help and would love to hear from you!

July 15, 2010

Dear Diocesan Family,

It is with great pleasure indeed that I write to tell you that the Rt. Rev. Edwin "Ted" F. Gulick Jr. has accepted my appointment as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Virginia. This is the culmination of a series of discussions I've had with Bishop Gulick since 2008 leading up to this call. As I met with the Standing Committee to discuss this appointment, we all sensed a profound call in the intersection of Bishop Gulick's deep roots in this diocese, his gifts and passion for his continuing ministry, and our common sense of how he can complement and support the vision for ministry here. The Standing Committee unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed this appointment.

A native Virginian, Bishop Gulick grew up as a member of St. Stephen's, Catlett. As a youth he attended St. George's Camp at Shrine Mont and served there as a staff member. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Lynchburg College and a master of divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary. Bishop Gulick served as a parish priest for 20 years before he became the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky in 1994. His episcopate is one that has been marked by a dedication to outreach, youth and young adult formation and ecumenical ministries. He was a nominee for presiding bishop in 2006.

Bishop Gulick will begin as our assistant bishop effective January 1, 2011. Before that time, Bishop Gulick has very graciously agreed to visit a number of congregations around the Diocese as a visiting bishop. Once he becomes assistant bishop of Virginia next year, he will assume a full schedule of visitations, as well as focusing particularly on pastoral care and response, especially for our clergy and their families.

I know that you will join me in welcoming Bishop Gulick back home to Virginia. This is an exciting new chapter in our common life, and I look forward to our future ministry together.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston
Bishop of Virginia

Virginia diocese, Episcopal Church prevail with state Supreme Court Court reverses lower court's property case judgment

By Mary Frances Schjonberg, June 10, 2010

[Episcopal News Service] The Supreme Court of Virginia on June 10 ruled in favor of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and the Episcopal Church in a church property dispute.

A lower court had ruled that the nine breakaway congregations involved in the cases were entitled to retain all the parishes' real and personal property when they left the Episcopal Church and joined another denomination.

The Supreme Court held that although disagreements had caused "a division" within the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Virginia, the breakaway congregations had affiliated with a church that was not a branch of either the Episcopal Church or the diocese. Such an affiliation is required, the court said, for Virginia's one-of-a-kind "Division Statute" (Section 57-9(A)) to apply.

The Supreme Court had heard arguments April 13 in two cases concerning church property that involved nine Episcopal parishes of the diocese which the majority of members and clergy left to form congregations of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA), which the Anglican Province of Nigeria began in 2005. The departing members of those congregations then filed claims to parish property under the Division Statute.

The appeal by the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Virginia was based on a number of grounds, including the claim that the statute did not apply to these congregations. The appeal also challenged the constitutionality of the lower court's application of the Division Statute, which dates to the U.S. Civil War and is triggered when there is a so-called "division" of a church or religious society. The trial court's rulings would have allowed former Episcopalians to claim Episcopal Church parish property as their own.

The Virginia diocese and the Episcopal Church have opposed the congregations' claims and asked the courts to declare that the property must be held and used for the mission of the Episcopal Church and the diocese.

The Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutionality question in its June 10 decision because, it said, it had concluded that the CANA congregations had not satisfied the requirements for asking for relief under the statute.

To do so, the court said, the congregations would have to have first shown that there had been a division with the church or religious society to which they belonged. Then the congregations had to show that they sought to affiliate with a branch "derived from that same church or religious society" and not one with "merely a shared tradition of faith." While they proved there had been a division, Justice Lawrence L. Koontz Jr. wrote for a unanimous court that "CANAs clearly is not a branch of either TEC or the diocese."

The Supreme Court returned the cases to the lower court for further proceedings to resolve the property claims of the Episcopal Church and the diocese "under principles of real property and contract law."

"This decision brings us one important step closer to returning loyal Episcopalians, who have been extraordinarily faithful in disheartening and difficult circumstances, to their church homes," Virginia Bishop Shannon Johnston said shortly after the ruling. "We are extremely grateful for this opportunity to correct a grievous harm. The Episcopal Church has and will continue to stand by its people, its traditions and its legacy -- past and future. We look forward to resolving this matter as quickly as possible and bringing our faithful brothers and sisters back to their home churches."

-- The Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg is a national correspondent for Episcopal News Service and editor of Episcopal News Monthly and Episcopal News Quarterly.

Many thanks to Deb Anderson for her help with this edition of *The Pitch from Fork!*

Coming November 14th we are
Celebrating
An Anniversary This Month

