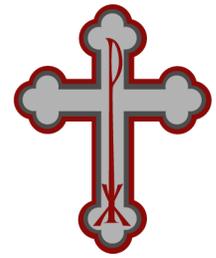


# Cross Current



Volume 1 Issue 2

April 2017

## Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross

- Rector's Message
- Vestry News
- Retreat Outcome
- Food Pantry Report



## We Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Holy Cross,

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior who, simply put, is able!

Holy Week begins on Sunday with Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, quickly moves towards to his unfair trial and tragic death at Golgotha, and culminates with Jesus being resurrected on the third day with all power. It is, no doubt, an emotion ride.

In a very real sense, the activities of this week are a microcosm of the way in which things tend to unfold in our own lives. At times we are up and celebrated, and other times we are down. We are betrayed, and we betray others. We are broken, and we are put back together again. We are disenfranchised, and at other times empowered. The constant in this rollercoaster ride of feelings and emotions is a God that loves us, and never fails to remind us that *"I am with you Always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20) We invite you to walk with us as relive the life, death, and new life of the one that lives in each of us.

This Thursday we will begin with the Maundy Thursday service followed by the Agape meal. Friday beginning at 12 noon we will explore the 7 last words of Jesus at St Paul's Episcopal Church on Peyton Road. Later that evening we will have our Good Friday service here at Holy Cross. During the veneration of the cross we will bring our all of those things in our lives that plague us.

My prayer is that at the end of this prayerful time together, we will be prepared to serve as Jesus served, be committed as Jesus was committed, survive as Jesus survived, die as Jesus died and rise as Jesus rose. So that we are able to boldly proclaim those words that have made it through time. God. Ain't. Through. With. Us. Yet.

God's Peace,  
ddpj+

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## Vestry Voice



We are entering Holy Week, with the Passion of Christ on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday service with foot washing, and Good Friday services. All of this will culminate on Easter Sunday, with the Resurrection, where the Great Easter Vigil will be celebrated at 6:00 AM and The Easter Solemn Mass at 10:00 AM.

However, before we could successfully arrive at Easter, the Vestry and the faithful have worked diligently throughout the first quarter of the year on Vestry training, operating policies and a budget. With Father Patterson serving the parish as a part-time priest-in-charge, it is critical that lay leadership continues to actively provide oversight on church matters and support to his ministry. Vestry training has been focused on leadership. One of the lessons learned has been the importance of the continuation of lay leadership when we have a full time rector !!!

The budget preparation has been completed, and with your support and faithfulness, the Vestry has approved a **BALANCED BUDGET** for 2017. You will hear more about the budget soon. This budget presumes:

- 1) Continuing the mortgage payment at the current level (with a two year extension by the bank)
- 2) That Holy Cross parishioners will faithfully honor our pledges throughout the year.

Through February, our income has been 5% higher than forecasted, and our expenses have been 15% lower than expected. We are grateful for the vigilance of the church's Finance Committee in their consistent attention to the details of cash flow.

Weekly, the Welcome insert of the upcoming Sunday bulletin is being posted on the Holy Cross website by Friday evening, where you will find what will happen at church. More updates are coming for the website.

In March, our Buildings and Grounds Committee conducted a campus-wide review to identify improvements to the physical plant. That list is being prioritized; when complete, it will be published to the parish

The Church Progress Initiatives have begun planning how to engage more closely with parishioners and the community, how to enhance our spirituality, how to communicate more effectively, how to be a more welcoming community, and how to reconcile one with the other.

There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place, and I know that it's the spirit of the Lord.

As we enter this exciting season of Easter, please join us in worship. As always, each Easter service will be followed by the Holy Cross tradition of breakfast and brunch. Bring your favorite dishes to share at these meals. Invite friends and family to join us as well. You will be glad you did and so will they.



## Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Maundy Thursday — April 13: Service: 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday — April 14: Service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church: 12:00 noon

Good Friday — April 14 Service at Holy Cross: 7:00 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt — April 15: 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Vigil — April 16: Service 6:00 a.m.

Easter Solemn Mass — April 16: Service 10:00 a.m.

## Church-Wide Retreat and Beyond

In January, 2017, Holy Cross had its first church-wide retreat. Twenty-nine parishioners met at the Forrest Hills Mountain Resort in Dahlonaga, with Canon Angela Ifill as our facilitator, beginning our work after dinner on Friday evening, working through Saturday, and ending on Sunday, followed by worship. This report summarizes the weekend.

### Friday, 1/20/17

- The retreat began with an invitation from Canon Ifill, the facilitator, for those present to share stories regarding their personal spiritual journeys. The sharing of personal stories continued throughout the weekend.

### Saturday, 1/21/17

- There was devotional time spent discussing Ephesians 6:10 – 20 The Whole Armor of God. The scripture spoke to the subject of seeking a personal relationship with Christ.
- The group spent time discussing and reflecting on “What is life-giving at Holy Cross?” and on the hopes and fears for the weekend retreat and for Holy Cross. While there was a long list of fears there was an even longer list of hopes.
- There was a discussion regarding stressors- facts, actions and circumstances that cause stress. This included, but was not limited to finances and people not feeling heard
- There was a role playing exercise on the subject of whether HC was actually welcoming to newcomers and the need to “grow the circle wider”. Specific steps for fostering growth were identified.
- The preceding exercise developed into a conversation around the need to increase spirituality and discipleship at HC instead of membership.
- Working in 3 smaller groups, each group developed three specific, measurable, achievable and realistic and time bound goals for HC
- The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were discussed and each group had to identify what they were willing to give up to achieve the goals



### ACTION ITEMS

- Within the next 3 – 4 months, review and solidify goals
- Begin congregational engagement to gather parish perspectives
- Report to the congregation of this weekend's events at next Sunday service

### Sunday, 1/22/17

Next steps and assignments

- I. Establish a process for Reconciliation to heal wounds of HC past and present congregants, led by Dr. Jennifer Friday
- II. Establish a Greeters Ministry, led by Ms. Monica Foderingham
- III. Establish an Engagement Initiative, led by Ms. Soyini Coke and Ms. Claudette Grant
- IV. Expand and improve communications within the parish and between the parish and the community, led by Mrs. Karen Williams
- V. Enhance spiritual vitality, led by Ms. Michelle Ware and Mr. Roland Wallace

Since the retreat, the Informational Roundtables were convened to gather parish perspectives. Four of these sessions were held between February 17 and February 25, at which members of the parish were invited to share their hopes and fears, then discuss these five initiatives. Volunteers were invited to sign up to work on each. Parishioner input was gathered, and distributed to the five (5) initiative teams.

Each initiative team has drafted their goals, and is now working to develop plans for implementation over the next few months. If you would like to help with any of these, please reach out to the initiative leader.

## Church-Wide Retreat and Beyond (cont.)

### Reconciliation Initiative

The Truth will set you Free! Holy Cross has been a church that has been experienced hurts. To move forward, we must deal with the pain, not mute or numb it. We must get to the source of the hurt and speak truth to power. Speaking truth will move us to reconciliation. Reconciliation is difficult and takes time, but with the grace of God guiding us, we are ready to move into the future – Healed and Whole!!! The Reconciliation Team has been constituted to identify the conflicts that have plagued Holy Cross and to move us towards reconciliation.



### Greeters Initiative

Why such an initiative? To be genuinely and sincerely welcoming to anyone who comes through the doors of Holy Cross. We wish for Holy Cross to be perceived as a welcoming place, and that will help in advancing healing within the church.

### Engagement Initiative

The intent of the engagement initiative is to enhance relationships among parishioners as well as their participation in the life and ministry of the parish. A first step to this end is ensuring feedback from the retreat is shared and parishioners have opportunities to fully participate. However, the primary purpose is to ensure parishioners experience worship and community at Holy Cross. Let us engage with the scripture in a meaningful way and enjoy each other's company as a church.

### Communications Initiative

One of the areas of focus, common to all of the groups, is that of communication. It was felt that improved communication could help us move forward at Holy Cross. This would include communication within the parish as well as between the church and the community. The purpose of this team is to look at ways to develop this at Holy Cross.

### Spirituality Initiative

Holy Cross, God is strong, and God wants us to be strong. Following guidance from Ephesians 6:10-20, this team is intended to find ways to enhance spiritual vitality at Holy Cross. We must pray as a community of faith. We must learn who God is and what God has done. We must learn how to love others as we love ourselves. Above all, we must love God.

Much has occurred since the beginning of 2017. With God's help, Holy Cross is moving to put on the whole armor of God. Please come join us in this exciting work.

## Meet Roland



Roland Wallace, Jr. is newly elected to the vestry this year. An avid 8 o'clocker, Roland is also seen between services with the older youth teaching Sunday School. He is an educational resource for the youth and helps them to become better students by modeling Christ. Always available for the children, Roland is approachable, committed, and respectful.

He considers himself a listener, communicator, and a learner. And whatever he learns he is ready to share by passing this knowledge to others by sharing and teaching.

Roland feels that one thing Holy Cross can do is to show God's love to the community and everyone with whom we come in contact. And he believes that the Episcopal Church is right on point

when it comes to the teaching of Christ.

Roland is the Chaplain of the Holy Cross Men's Club. He is a retired educator, having taught in several school districts in California. He served as Assistant Principal at Columbia, Clarkston, Cross Keys and Avondale High Schools. He retired from Avondale High School.

### Meet Debbie



Debbie Harris is also newly elected to the vestry this year. She has been a member of Holy Cross since being relocated here by IBM from Poughkeepsie, NY.

Debbie believes that Holy Cross needs to try to attract more young people possibly by introducing new music that appeals to that generation. She feels that we should get involved and stay engaged in anything in the church and keep an open mind and be ready for change. She also believes that we might think about partnering with other churches in the community to present workshops and classes on learning basic computer skills, how to use cell phones, etc.

Debbie retired after working for 30 years with IBM and 9 years with MAPICS. She is a graduate of Marist College in Poughkeepsie.

### Gratefulness

*To Father Dennis and our sisters and brothers in Christ at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross*

*The Willabus, Simmons, and Joell families wish to thank you for the love and kindness expressed by our church family in the form of encouragement, emails, phone calls, tracts, support, and most of all your prayers. Thank you, thank you, thank you.*

*This outpouring of love towards our family during Chrystopher's accident and during his recovery is appreciated. He is doing better but improving daily on a long journey*

*Please continue to keep us in your prayers. We would like to say to all who have asked persons outside of Holy Cross family to add our family to their prayer list. Please convey our sincere thanks. God is good.*

*Thank you kindly,  
Bevily Willabus*



## Men's Day



The Holy Cross Men's Club celebrated Men's Day on March 19 and they took over the kitchen too. They presented food after both services to the delight of everyone! Thanks HMC

## Tumbling Rocks

*This article appeared in the Episcopal Relief and Development 2017 Lenten Meditations on March 30. I think it speaks to us all.*

When I was a kid, I loved collecting rocks. While visiting a relative, I learned of a marvelous invention – a rock polisher. It was a machine with a motor that would continuously turn a coffee-can-sized cylinder. You put your rocks in the cylinder, turned it on and left it tumbling. In time those rocks bumped up against one another and broke off the sharp edges and ground down the rough spots. The rocks came out of that coffee can looking like jewels to my childhood eyes. The rocks weren't transformed into gemstones but they sure were shiny and beautiful in their own right.

So I think of church as God's tumbling coffee can for our souls. We come together and as we interact we bump into one another, sharing our conflicting ideas and diverse perspectives. In the process, our souls are polished. And not just in church. The people in our lives teach us how to be the unique person God is calling us to be. Other people are the voice of God to us.

God uses each of us to shape and teach others. So it's a good thing we're not all the same. There's a beautiful soul in each of us, and as we worship in churches full of lots of different Christian people, God makes us each more the person we are called to be, not by changing us into something we're not, but by helping each of us shine.

**Michael Buerkel Hunn**

Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Ministry Within The Episcopal Church.





## Short Meditation on Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday might be one of the moments of the year when that peculiar lingering bittersweetness of the Gospel is strongest, perhaps along with the feast of the Holy Innocents.

All of the Easter period is a long bittersweet moment. We march—as Jesus did—towards both the searing pain of the Passion and the glory of the Resurrection. We fast and deprive ourselves, but for joy.

Here is the entrance of Christ, the King of Kings, into Jerusalem. On a donkey, according to Scripture and befitting a King of humility. Jesus is surrounded by joy, but He—and we—know that He is headed for the Cross. And the ones bearing the palms, cheering him, are the ones who, a week later, will shout for him to be crucified. We bear the palms, and we shout “Crucify Him!”

Jesus, sitting on this donkey, surrounded by mirth and joy, and what must have been the sadness and even distress in his heart, as he rode up to that city, that city He loved among all cities, and where He would spend His last week—even His disciples around Him, overjoyed and oblivious.

Indeed, all of us crucified our Lord and God. We are the Jerusalemites, who cheer Him one day, and crucify Him the next.

Palm Sunday is a bittersweet day indeed, but it is the first step on the path to freedom, the path of Holy Week.

Now what is left is to meditate, contemplate, and repent—that is to say, to turn around.

~Pascal Emmanuel Gobry, *patheos*

## Sam Brown Food Pantry

A very generous grant from the Atlanta Community Food Bank allowed us to renovate the space and to purchase new appliances. We now have a more efficient use of the space that allows us to simplify sorting and packing. We continue to look at ways to improve the process and logistics of getting the food out.

One of the grant requirements is that we increase the number of persons that we serve, and increase the amount of food we get from sources other than ACFB. While we have not actively en-

gaged in efforts to increase our numbers, we are planning additional services to the population that will do so. To increase the amount of food we get from other sources, we are currently doing monthly food drives that are targeted and based on the needs in the food pantry; especially for food that is unavailable from the ACFB. The drives also allow us to provide food to those who do not qualify for the state and federal programs supported by ACFB. Last year the drives brought in

more than 1000 pounds of food.

The Food Pantry can pay for the food it purchases from the money raised during the Hunger Walk. This year we brought in about \$2500, significantly below the \$8000 we raised about \$8000 last year.

Jennifer Friday

### March Distribution

Households Served	63
Persons Served	167
Children Served	47
Seniors Served	59

### Food Needs this Month:

Sugar, Flour, and Rice  
2 lbs. or 5 lbs. bags preferred.

## Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross

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**A Multi-Cultural, Eucharistically Centered,  
Growing Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of  
Atlanta.**

### Vision and Mission Statement

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross is a multi-national, multicultural congregation, grounded in tradition, blended with contemporary style, working to restore all people to unit with God and each other in Christ. We joyfully give of our time, talent and resources, committing our lives to God's service, through individual and collective actions, in the community and the world, seeking and serving those in need and sharing with them the gospel of Christ.

[www.holy-cross.org](http://www.holy-cross.org)

### 2017 Church-Wide Retreat

Relax  
Renew  
Reflect  
Retreat

