

# News from the Mountain Top

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May 2024



# Good Shepherd Episcopal Church

## Good Shepherd's Guiding Light, *by Eileen Cawood and Judy Hall*



In today's world it is unusual to find someone who has been committed to the same church for 77 years. But we are blessed to have such a rarity in our midst – meet Lois Tapscott. Born in Winchester, VA and baptized as a baby at Good Shepherd she has been a faithful member of this church for her entire life. She was confirmed at age 12, had a brief introduction to leadership at the age of 16, then in her early 20's became Secretary. By age 30, she was elected to the Vestry and served as Warden for the next 47 years, until her recent retirement from this position.

When asked about the Good Shepherd of the past, Lois remembers that in the early days there were a lot of children in the Pine Grove area. They were bussed to Grace Church in Berryville and it was there that Lois took her confirmation classes. She also said, with humor, that there was a children's choir and that she must have been able to sing back then because she was in it. The physical structure of the church originally consisted of just the sanctuary with the sacristy behind it. Then in the 1960s the upper parish room and lower kitchen area and bathrooms were added.

Lois recalls that in the summer the church would hold two yard parties – one in June and one in August when they would make ice cream. Though it was a fun time, she said, it was also a lot of hard work. The congregation was larger then, comprising adults as well as children, and most of the people lived in Pine Grove and walked to church.

In this photo of the Good Shepherd Congregation in 1962, Lois is the young lady in the front pew and second from the right. Lois's mother (Mattie McCarty) is in the second row, third from the left. Notice there are no stained glass windows in memory of the Pittas (Lois's grandparents) or Mattie McCarty.



During her time as Warden, Lois has seen many changes in Pine Grove and in the church itself as it went through a period of decline. In 2006, The Diocese sent The Rev. Chris Cunningham to see if there was a heartbeat at Good Shepherd. Well, Chris found a few strongly beating Christian hearts, one of them being Lois'. Enough to inspire a revival! By 2008, Rev. Chris had rounded up enough funds and volunteer labor to remedy the structural problems with the building and return the sanctuary to a more historically accurate worship space. The congregation also started to change. Most of the people in this photo from 2008 were from outside of Pine Grove, some of us actually lived in Bluemont, Shenandoah Retreat, Berryville, or Purcellville! In this picture the only local, Pine Grove residents are Lois, Jeanette Carter (Lois's oldest sister standing next to her), and Tommy Carter, Jeanette's husband and junior warden (on far right).



Since then, as a lay led mission church, a procession of supply clergy have relied on Lois for advice, love and leadership. For them and us, Lois has been the matriarch of Good Shepherd. She always provides a quiet leadership that supports anyone trying to become a part of our beloved community. During COVID, Lois learned how to Zoom in order to be with the small band of people who needed to worship together on Sundays.



Lois has walked the trail of the stations of the cross, made and delivered Christmas tins, helped with many meals, gone on meditation walks, and participated in all the blessings of the animals and the "For Whom the Bell Tolls" prayer meetings. She attends all our Lenten, Epiphany, and Centered programs, and many more spiritual gatherings at Good Shepherd. She has always supported members of the congregation whenever they come up with new ideas.

Lois has now stepped down as Senior Warden after 47 years. She hopes this means that she will be less involved in all the craziness of running a church. She

continues to be our mainstay on the Altar guild, sharing her knowledge and experience, and of course, she loves her work with all aspects of our FISH ministry. Behind the scenes, she continues to support our new senior warden and treasurer. Stepping away is going to be challenging. Recently, she showed up on a weekday afternoon just to see if everything was still okay.

No matter who you are or where you come from, anyone who has spent time at Good Shepherd knows that Lois is the heart of the church. We pray that Good Shepherd will remember what Lois has taught us, that the love of Christian community is the strength and blessing of this very special place.



*July 2023 service with our longtime friend,  
The Rev. Canon Michael Sie from Liberia, West Africa.*

## Spring Is In Our Steps, by Josette Keelor



At our first of three meditation walks this spring, we discussed what it's like to move from one season of our lives to another. Specifically, how have we been moving from the winter of our lives into the spring.

We might experience a change of seasons at various times in our lives. Walking along the Shenandoah River, I noticed signs of change in the flowers, trees, and—despite the frigid wind that day—the weather, which, in general, has grown warmer.

And yet, we were seeing signs of spring this year long before the calendar would admit it. You might remember how the crocuses started pushing through the ground in January, and the daffodils in February. By March, we were welcoming tulips, and — as of our April meditation walk — we were enjoying the Virginia bluebells.

What struck me was that even though the flowers had been showing us signs of spring for nearly three months, the trees had no intention of speeding their transition from one season to another. Sure, the weather might have been temperate enough in mid-January to encourage the hearty crocuses to brush off winter and enter the slightly warmer air of late January; but that didn't mean all of Mother Nature was ready to rush things.

What a metaphor for life! For, how often have we been in a hurry to change our situation, trying to hustle through our days, weeks, months, or even years to get to the next season of our lives. Instead, we might take a leaf from Mother Nature's book and note that quick movements aren't needed for great works of change to take place.

Even the smallest changes – the slow progression of leaves forming at the ends of branches that are barely noticeable to our eyes – can, within a few days, become clear signs that spring has sprung, and summer is just around the corner.

What tiny steps might we each make to help us toward our next season?

## April FLEX Student of the Month: Adina, from Romania, *by FLEX and Good Shepherd staff*



This year has been an exciting one for the Macoy family as they hosted a FLEX (Future Leaders Exchange) program student named Adina. Anyone who meets Adina quickly realizes what an open and friendly person she is.

"The biggest lesson I've learned about the American culture so far is the value placed on diversity and inclusion," said Adina, FLEX student from Romania. "I've seen that since I came here in my host community. I've never felt excluded or not accepted because of my different background. On the contrary, when I tell people I'm an exchange student they're always very welcoming and curious about me and my country."

Catherine and Adina are like two peas in a pod and they have become great friends. "The relationship between me and my host sister is very special to me," continued Adina. We have so many things in common. We both like reading, learning new languages, and throughout our lives we both wanted to have the same jobs. I feel like I've made a sister for life."

We at Good Shepherd have been blessed when the girls take time from their action packed schedules to help us with FISH outreach and Easter flowers. After spending hours of Holy Saturday making amazing flower arrangements for the windows of our church, they celebrated Easter with the Macoys in our Episcopal tradition on Sunday, March 31st and again in the Eastern Orthodox tradition on Saturday, May 4th from 11:30 p.m. till 12:30 a.m. on Sunday May 5th. What a wonderful exchange of Christian traditions!



## Music as Ministry, *by Josette Keelor*

Recently, I attended a free program by violinist Vijay Gupta on the campus of James Madison University called "How Music Acts as Medicine". There, he played for a small audience and talked about his work with Street



Symphony, a community-based program on Skid Row in L.A., which brings music to the homeless. Although he said some might scoff at the idea of a program that funds professional symphonic music on the streets, when it might instead spend that money feeding the hungry or housing the unhoused, Gupta said his ministry does a much more than people realize: It gives people hope.

It's through hope, that those in dire situations find the will to do anything about it. Street Symphony provides this hope, while helping establish relationships through conversations about music. It helps people who don't know how else to express their thoughts, memories, and needs. It gives them a way to reach out for help.

Street Symphony reminds us of the power that music can have in a community. As many of us have witnessed through Good Shepherd's music ministry over the years, music can help us connect with each other and with God through our memories and our shared experiences. Singing or performing together offers another way of communicating, as we combine our talents and histories to forge something new.

Info: <https://www.streetsymphony.org>

If you have any ideas for ways we can expand upon or deepen our music ministry, we're all ears!

## Creation Care Corner: The Three R's, by Tim Hall

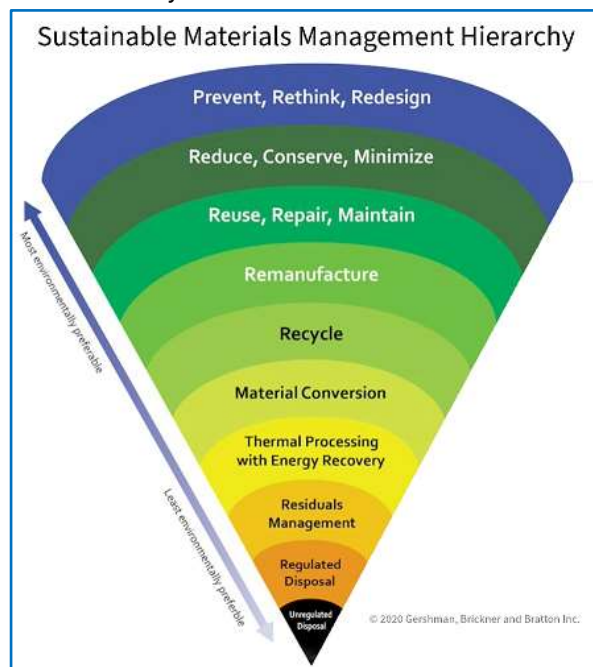
At the 225<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Virginia in November 2019, delegates overwhelmingly passed Resolution "R-1: Discontinuing single-use plastic products, single-use foam products, and single-use water bottles at diocesan churches and facilities". The Diocese was already late to the game, for at the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention held in 2009, the Episcopal Church had adopted Resolution 2009-A-045 that resolved to "ask the Church to restrict the use of bottled water at General Convention and at other Church-sponsored activities because of the *extreme negative environmental impact that attends its production*", and it further resolved to encourage "every baptized Christian to practice simple energy and water conservation techniques so that, by working together, *we may restore the beauty of God's creation* and ensure that this resource may again be available to all God's children in abundance."

You can read the words to our adopted resolution at [episcopalvirginia.org](http://episcopalvirginia.org), urging us all, as the church and as individuals, to transition to reusable, compostable, and washable alternatives. The statistics cited were unfathomable. We all know them, or at least we have a sense of them. Here's an example from 2019:

- 500 billion disposable cups are consumed every year. Americans alone throw away 25 billion Styrofoam coffee cups every year. Styrofoam cannot be completely recycled. Most of the Styrofoam disposed of today will still be present in landfills 500 years from now.
- 32% of the 78 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually is not recycled or sent to landfills. It is left unmanaged and flows into the world's oceans through streams and rivers.
- 90% of the trash in the world's oceans is plastic, roughly 46,000 pieces per square mile.

So what are the Three R's you might ask? Generally, they are considered to be "**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.**" You can see in the diagram that those are some of the best ways of helping our environment. But you can also see that there are other important "R" words... **Rethink, Redesign.** Living here on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains, we see the beauty of nature every day and we want to preserve it, to pass it on. Doesn't it break your heart to see plastic trash along the side of the road? That same trash and more being swept into our Shenandoah River?

We are doing quite a lot at Good Shepherd to get on board with this effort. Of course, shortly after the 225<sup>th</sup> Convention, all churches closed their doors because of the COVID pandemic. No more coffee hour. And we were all slow to resume gatherings. But when we did, Good Shepherd began looking for alternatives to plastic... compostable cups for water from our refillable 5-gallon jugs, cutlery made from plant fibers, biodegradable plates. Penni has offered to take real flatware home to wash it. Sometimes it doesn't all work perfectly, but we're trying. We recycle. And being good stewards of creation doesn't stop there. We've replaced all our lighting with LEDs. We installed a high efficiency, dual fuel HVAC system in 2017. Your facility planning committee is looking for ways to tighten up the building to reduce heat and cooling loss. Your garden guild is creating beautiful outdoor green space to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and welcome wildlife. What will you do? Will you consider bringing your own water bottle? Will you make sure that anything recyclable is rinsed and recycled, not put in the trash? Will you help wash dishes? Would you like to serve on any of these committees? We can do more to rethink, reduce, and reuse and become even better stewards of God's creation.



## Outreach



AA meets at Good Shepherd every Saturday night at 8:30 pm, in person or by Zoom. Drop in or contact: <https://aavirginia.org/meetings> and search for Bluemont.



FISH of Clarke County (36 E. Main St., Berryville) The FISH clothing store and food pantry are open 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Anyone not able to stop by when FISH is open may contact FISH at 540-955-1823 or via email at [fishfoodpantry@comcast.net](mailto:fishfoodpantry@comcast.net) to schedule delivery.