Celebrating the Offutt Gift Brings Thanks, Tribute, and Transformation

By Carol Donlan, Communications Committee

On a beautiful September weekend, Christ Church honored the late Daniel E. Offutt III for generous gifts that will, in the Rector’s words, support today’s work and lay the foundation for generations to come. We welcomed Richard Orenstein and his wife, Diana Vytell, for a celebration and thanks for the generous gifts from the Daniel E. Offutt III Charitable Trust.

A $1 million grant will be used for the support, care, maintenance, and improvement of the Fowler House as the church moves forward on the future of the property. An additional $400,000 grant has established the Daniel E. Offutt, III Christ Church Fund for Mission and Outreach, to which other contributions will be encouraged from inside and outside the parish.

But the weekend went beyond thanking a generous contributor. It became a moving tribute to the life of Dan Offutt and a personal story of transformation from Dick Orenstein, who was a dear friend of Dan’s and is now Trustee of the Offutt Charitable Trust.

“I thought it was a great weekend,” said Vestry member Steve Humphrey. “Laura and I were struck by how Dick and Diana felt welcomed and embraced by Christ Church. There was a strong sense of gratitude and thanks expressed by the people of our church.

“Dick and Diana commented a number of times about the remarkable nature of our community, the wide variety of mission and outreach programs we support. They were impressed by the commitment and the level of individual involvement of people in the programs—not just donating money, but people involved in these ministries for decades. They were taken by our community and very touched by the outpouring of thanks.”

The gifts arise from a relationship between Steve & Laura Humphrey and Dan Offutt during the later years of Dan’s life. Dan was a resident in the same Connecticut retirement community as Laura’s mother. Dan

continued on page 7

Fowler House Update: Stetson Tinkham Named HARC Representative

By Chris McMurray, Fowler House Committee

We continue to be in discussions with interested developers. In the meantime, we had a productive meeting last month with employees of the City of Alexandria Planning and Zoning Department (including the Board of Architectural Review), gaining valuable insight into the City’s approach to protecting and preserving the historic Washington Street corridor.

We are also pleased to report that Stetson Tinkham has agreed to serve as Christ Church’s representative on the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC), a body that advises the City Council on the preservation of Alexandria’s historic districts. Stetson will keep HARC apprised of our development plans as they take shape and help assure that there is excellent communication between the Church and HARC. Thank you, Stetson!
Visit the Christ Church Gift Shop for Traditional and New Fall Finds

Despite occasional days of blistering heat, fall is here, and the Gift Shop is ready with delicious seasonal offerings including pumpkin butter and apple butter at just $5 each. Our popular French Market Bean Soup ($8.20) and U.S. Senate Bean Soup ($7.50) are always a nutritious fall and winter treat.

With Halloween just around the corner, you’ll want to pick up some of our best-selling Halloween-themed cocktail napkins for only $5.25. Check out a new addition to our inventory this year—a unique, glittering owl ornament in shades of black, brown and gold for $10.50 and an ornament stand at $5.25—perfect on a sofa table or credenza surrounded by decorative fall foliage and accented by hand-painted autumnal votive candle holders at $10 to $12.

Another addition this year are gorgeous religious Christmas cards from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. At $20.50 a box, those are flying off the shelves already so hurry by if you would like to buy those, even if you aren’t ready to write your Christmas cards yet. In this case, you’ll be helping even more than our local charities with your purchase—the net proceeds that The Met earns from the sale of the cards actually help support The Met itself.
God’s Promise to Us is Companions on the Journey
Who Will Sit with Us When Needed

By The Rev. Dr. Noelle York-Simmons, Rector

I recently read this quote by psychologist and author Brené Brown and it went straight to my heart: “I went to church thinking it would be like an epidural, that it would take the pain away...but church isn’t like an epidural, it’s like a midwife... I thought faith would say, ‘I’ll take away the pain and discomfort,’ but what it ended up saying was, ‘I’ll sit with you.’”

This is about the most succinct description of my understanding of the life of faith that I have ever read. Our God has promised us free will, our God has promised us life eternal, our God has promised us that we will inherit the earth, our God has promised us a heavenly banquet but our God has never promised us an easy journey.

And this is where our community of faith comes in. This is where we act as the midwives that Brown describes. In the three years that I’ve been with Christ Church, I have seen you sit with each other through illness and death, through job loss and relationship pain. I have watched you walk with each other in compassion and love and patience through empty nests and empty wallets. And you have steadfastly said, “I’ll sit with you.”

I recently lead an introduction to Eucharist for our Kindergarteners. The four little friends who attended the session were attentive and smart and kind, just as we always hope our kids will be. They learned the basics of where to put their hands, not to dip their fingers, to remember it is holy and not a snack. And later in the morning, I saw them approach the Table with wide eyes and best manners, understanding the holiness of the moment like no one else in the building that day.

At some point in their lives, these four little friends will have their hearts broken. It is my deepest and sincerest hope that they have grown to understand not only the holiness of the Table but the comforting presence of the people and the God that surround it. I hope my little friends—and my big friends—will know the God that I know, a God that does not promise release from the pain that plagues this life, but companions on the journey that will sit with them and remind them that they are good and loved and holy.

Bishop Joseph Scheduled to Visit Three Times

By Nancy V. Knapp, Diocese of Renk Ministry

Bishop Joseph Garang Atem of the Diocese of Renk, South Sudan, will be visiting us this month. Please come greet him during one of his several visits to Christ Church. On Sunday, October 6, he will attend Evensong at 5:00 p.m. and a reception in the Meade Room afterwards. On Wednesday, October 9, he will attend the 12:05 p.m. service in the Chapel of Bethlehem. On Sunday, October 13, he will attend the 8:00 a.m. service, followed by breakfast and conversation in McMurray Commons, sponsored by One Sock On and the Diocese of Renk ministries. Watch Parish Life for more details.

For more than 20 years, Christ Church has been in relationship with the Diocese of Renk in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. Our prayers, advocacy, and financial contributions have helped sustain our brothers and sisters through wars, famine, and religious persecution. Christ Church has also celebrated better times with our mission partner, including installation of Bishop Joseph, the consecration of St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Renk, which we helped build, the opening of the Renk Medical Clinic, which we built and continue to stock.

To learn more about our mission work in South Sudan, contact Nancy Knapp at NVKnapp@aol.com or 571-212-4581.
Giving to God from a Heart of Gratitude

By Jeff Dienno, Stewardship Committee

During our Stewardship Committee meetings we have focused our discussions on the topic of “giving” through pledges. In our discussions, it has become obvious to us that giving through pledges is a natural expression of love and gratitude and there is a strong connection between love, gratitude and giving.

The Bible is filled with instances of such giving. In the New Testament, we see the story of the Magi bringing their gifts to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). The Magi bring their treasures in a pure act of worship that expresses their devotion to the newborn Messiah.

Later, as an adult, Jesus receives a similar gift of devotion from a woman who pours expensive ointment on his feet and then wipes his feet with her hair (Mark 14:3-9). Although some in the story think this is a waste of the valuable ointment, for Jesus, the gift is offered as an expression of love and adoration and he says that what the woman has done will always be remembered and told as part of the gospel story.

On another occasion Jesus encounters Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector, who is so inspired by his visit with Jesus that he decides to give half his wealth to the poor to show his gratitude and devotion to God (Luke 19:1-10).

In another story, Jesus meets a widow who outdoes Zacchaeus by giving away all that she has: a penny (Mark 12:41-44). Jesus explains to his disciples that this woman is an example of profound sacrifice.

The common theme in these stories is that the focus is not on giving as an obligation but on giving as an act of worship. All of the givers in these stories are praised by Jesus and presented in the Bible as examples of faithful stewardship. They offer their treasurers in a spirit of love and gratitude, as the gifts of glad and generous hearts that have been touched by God’s love.

Our principal concern in giving through pledges should focus on why we give, rather than where to give, or how to give, or how much to give. If we give through pledging with hearts that have been touched with God’s love, full of devotion for a God who loves us, then the questions of where and how and how much will work themselves out in time.

“If a person gets their attitude toward money right, it will straighten out almost every other area in their life.” (Billy Graham, Christian Evangelist)

Meals on Wheels Helps Seniors in Alexandria’s Neighborhoods

By Jane F. Baird, Coordinator of the Meals on Wheels Ministry

Meals on Wheels is a ministry that reaches all the neighborhoods and corners of Alexandria. It is a program designed to deliver one cold and one hot meal to persons 60 and over who can no longer prepare meals for themselves, have no other means of receiving meals, and are homebound except for doctors’ appointments. Our Gift Shop also supports the service with a monthly donation from their profits. So, keep shopping!

Christ Church volunteers and substitutes are dedicated and “save” the third Wednesday morning of each month to help deliver the meals. The Sign-Up Genius invitation is sent one to two weeks in advance. We are like the post office—we deliver rain or shine. However, I have to give accolades to the Police and Sheriff’s departments who help deliver when the snow is beyond our capabilities! The clients are so appreciative and happy to see a smiling face. We may be the only person they see that day. It is also a way to have a check in with the client and we do report any concerns.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and getting to know more of your fellow parishioners please contact Jane Baird at bairdjf@verizon.net or 703-683-5283. We provide training and Senior Services will contact a background check.

If you know someone who could benefit from this service call the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703-746-5999 for more information. For individuals under age 60 receiving help, please call Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-4414 ext. 112.
Frequently Asked Stewardship Questions and Answers

By The Stewardship Committee

What is pledging? Each of us has the opportunity this fall to renew our commitment to one another and the mission of Christ Church by making a financial commitment—a pledge, which is “a solemn promise.” Pledges are an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given us.

Why are annual pledges important? Annual pledges support what we do at Christ Church and beyond our doors. Our yearly budget is driven by the generosity of our annual pledges. Every pledge makes a difference and works toward the building and sustenance of our faith community. Pledges allow us to know what funding to expect, enabling us to plan for the costs of our ministries for the coming year.

Do I have to pay at the time that I make my pledge? Returning your completed pledge card is a promise to pay. You make your pledge and then fulfill your pledge in as many payments as you wish throughout the year, using pledge offering envelopes if you wish. Pledges are to be fulfilled on a calendar year basis, that is, beginning January 1 through December 31 of each year.

Why should I pledge when I regularly put money in the offering plate? Loose funds collected each week do help to support the ongoing life of the parish. Pledges are very important, however, because they allow us to plan responsibly and to establish a parish budget for the coming year. Pledging responsibly, based on your best estimate of the year’s income, is important. A pledge can be adjusted (up or down!) during the year if your circumstances change.

How much should I give with an annual pledge? Christian stewardship is grounded in the understanding that our standard of giving should reflect our standard of living. Each of us is called to consider making a pledge that is both responsible and meaningful based on each person’s financial situation.

How does annual pledging fit in the ministry of financial stewardship? Annual pledges are just one part of the practice of generosity and stewardship that supports and sustains our individual and corporate spiritual life. An annual pledge supports Christ Church’s operations, as well as ministries and mission. Planned giving is one gift or a series of gifts made to help secure ministries beyond our lifetimes. Special gifts fund additional parish priorities such as building renovation, program, and endowment support.

How do I pledge? Everyone is invited to celebrate this fall’s campaign by bringing a completed pledge card to church and placing it in the offertory plate, or mail a pledge card to the church at 118 North Washington Street, Alexandria VA 22314. If it is more convenient, you may submit a pledge card online at https://www.historicchristchurch.org/give/pledge-today/

October Choral Evensong

Please join us for the first Choral Evensong of this program year on Sunday, October 6 at 5:00 p.m.. The choir will be joined by guest organist Jason Farris, the Organist-Choirmaster at Grace Church, The Plains, Virginia. The choir will be singing works by Herbert Sumsion and Graham Ellis. Additionally, the service will feature a new anthem composed by Dr. Robert Lehman set to John Henry Newman’s evening prayer, “O Lord, support us all the day long.” Dr. Lehman is the Organist-Choirmaster at the Church of St. Michael and St. George in St. Louis. A reception will follow in the Meade Room. All are welcome to join us and worship in the beauty of holiness.

Wilkes Street Fall Cemetery Clean-up

What better place to be a few days before Halloween? Please join your fellow parishioners and Alexandria neighbors for the fall clean-up of the Christ Church Wilkes St. cemetery and two adjacent abandoned cemeteries on Saturday October 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We will be pulling weeds, mulching, trimming, pruning and removing overgrowth. We made a huge difference in the cemeteries over the last 11 years and now need to follow up with a clean-up of new growth weeds and vines. There is a job for everyone and teenage students can work for their public service hours. We will have a nice lunch following the clean-up, so plan on staying for a sandwich. If you can help, please contact Barry Stauffer at: 703-629-5476 or bcstauffer@comcast.net
The Lazarus Food Pantry Ministry Provides Food, Necessities, and Fellowship to Those in Need

By Barbara Fallon, Lazarus Food Pantry Coordinator

Every Thursday morning the Lazarus Food Pantry in the Meade Room offers an abundance of healthy foods and produce to an average of more than 30 guests—feeding many more than that in the homes of those who shop at the pantry.

This ministry also offers compassion and moments of laughter and companionship. Our committed team of volunteers and guests enjoy catching up, discussing life’s joys and hardships as food is selected from 12 tables. The produce table is the most popular, with produce gleaned during the season from Christ Church’s program at the Old Town Farmers’ Market.

Through a partnership with Marymount University’s nursing program, our guests also get basic medical screenings, like blood pressure tests, and can ask health questions of the students, all in their final semesters before becoming registered nurses. Recently, the City of Alexandria’s coordinator for SNAP (formerly food stamp) benefits addressed the group on how they get half-price produce at the Saturday Old Town Farmers Market.

As the guests gather around the large table in the Library, before the Pantry doors open, we offer scrumptious donated Panera pastries and coffee and a tray of fresh fruit. The fruit has turned out to be as popular as the Danishes are, with both trays always coming back empty.

Providing food for those in need goes beyond the Meade Room. An abundance of bread at the pantry is regularly delivered by a volunteer to the City shelter on Mill Road, often three full boxes of bread and bagels. Guest House in Delray, an impressive transitional home for women who have recently left incarceration and are rebuilding their lives, receives a carefully thought-out box each week of pantry staples, produce, yogurts and bread. A number of recent refugee families, without cars and in financial stress, get special weekly food deliveries, usually with a visit, too.

We have great gratitude for the generous donations each week from Trader Joe’s in Old Town (so good to us!, sometimes with 12 or more boxes), Panera on Duke Street and Mom’s Organic Market on Mount Vernon Avenue. Another team of volunteers coordinates these pickups the night before the pantry.

Parishioners show much generosity, responding to our special food requests posted monthly in Parish Life, putting cans and food bags in the white collection box outside the church entrance, or just dropping by the church office with a variety of foods that they know our guests will enjoy.

While about 85 percent of what we provide is food, we also give out two large-size toiletries once a month. We usually have a few “bonus” items provided by you, which are very popular: wall calendars (remember to bring in extra 2020 ones), greeting and Christmas cards, occasionally water bottles and sturdy, recyclable shopping bags, which are always needed.

A recent grant secured for Lazarus will provide a new, much-needed freezer that will take up much less space, and a “demonstration kitchen”, so pantry guests can learn (and sample) less familiar healthy foods and recipes.

Thank you for helping provide the abundance of food we can provide and for our volunteers and guests. For more information on this ministry, contact Barbara Fallon, at barbarahfallon@gmail.com.
Alexandria Region Council Contributes to Ministries, Selects Youth Representatives to Convention

By Susan L. Hahn, President of Region

The Alexandria Region of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia has approved the expenditure of $5,000 for two outreach ministries in the City of Alexandria, and affirmed two youth to represent the Region at the upcoming 225th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia in Arlington November 12-14.

At its late September quarterly Region Council meeting, following the recommendation of the Region Outreach Committee, the council approved contribution of $2,000 for the Meade Memorial Church Bag Lunch program which provides lunch to a range of 28 to 50 people, including children, six days a week. The number of people served is higher during the winter since a heartier meal is provided. Volunteers make the bagged lunches at various churches, including Christ Church, about every six weeks and take them to Meade for distribution by volunteers. The program has a significant financial impact on the Meade church, including utility costs and cleanup.

A total of $3,000 was allocated for this program year to the Refugee Ministry and the West End Lazarus Ministry. The Region also approved the Outreach Committee recommendation that Melanie Gray, Christ Church’s Director of Outreach & Mission, who oversees these programs, be given the authority to decide how to split the total allocation between the two ministries.

The Region Council is sending two Alexandria high school seniors to the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia: Julie Cizek of Grace Episcopal Church was affirmed as the Region youth delegate; and Jules St. John of Christ Church Alexandria was affirmed as the alternate youth delegate. Julie Cizek is the daughter of Betty Mills and Saul Cizek and a life-long member of her parish. Jules St. John is the daughter Jay and Stephanie St. John and a life-long member of her parish. Each has served her respective parish in a number of ministries and missions trips.

The Rev. Jo Belser, Rector of Church of the Resurrection, noted at the meeting that the Region is blessed to have these two outstanding young people contributing in the governance area of the diocese. Youth delegates and alternates have the opportunity to serve as a representative of both their parish and region, attend workshops at Convention, and will prepare to debrief and share their experiences.

The Region Council also allocated $300 to the upcoming Region Fall Youth Event, a “Bonfire and Pumpkin Extravaganza” to be held at the Immanuel Church on the Hill Pumpkin Patch on Sunday evening, October 27. Details of the youth event will follow as available in Parish Life. Immanuel on the Hill is hosting its 26th annual Pumpkin Patch fundraiser all month, benefiting their more than 20 outreach ministries including those supported in the City by Christ Church. The pumpkins are sustainably grown on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Farmington, New Mexico. The pumpkin patch offers all sizes of pumpkins from small hand-held “spookies” to very large pumpkins for jack-o-lanterns.

For additional information and events that may be taking place at any of the eight Episcopal churches in our region, please visit: http://alexandria.thedioocese.net/default.asp
Everyone Can Help Plan for Thanksgiving Dinner

By Andrea McNicholas, Co-Coordinator for the Thanksgiving Ministry

Pumpkin Spice flavored food has flooded the grocery shelves and mums line the sidewalks. Our plans for Thanksgiving are being finalized: plane tickets, reservations, guest lists and menu items are all being squared away—or soon will be! Many young people are taught that it was a bunch of Pilgrims who organized the first Thanksgiving, but we all really know it was just a bunch of wives and mothers who put on the feast!

For our Lazarus clients, their plans for Thanksgiving begin with Christ Church. They rely on us. They have signed up with us to take part in our Thanksgiving ministry. Without the donations from us there is no feast. Join us again this year and pick up your shopping bag with a list of suggested food items needed for the ministry, which will provide the food for over 125 families this year.

Please consider purchasing any of the items listed below and bringing them to the church on November 3, 10, 17 or 24. Please place them in the white box in the portico.

Take note! The list is a little different from last year. We are hoping to provide more fresh produce like potatoes and green beans, which we will procure closer to the distribution day.

- Disposable turkey pans
- Instant mash potatoes
- Stuffing mix
- Canned yams or sweet potatoes
- Brown sugar
- Canned green beans, corn or collard greens
- Macaroni and cheese
- Jars or cans of turkey gravy
- Canned cranberry sauce
- Cooking oil
- Chicken broth
- Salt, pepper
- Breakfast cereal
- Dinner rolls

If shopping isn’t your thing, consider a monetary donation as well. With these funds we purchase perishables like butter, eggs, and pies. You can write a check to Christ Church and put “Thanksgiving” in the memo line.

The ingathering for all the food will be held on Sunday, November 24 in the Meade Room, although your donations may be dropped off at any time up until then. Volunteers will be needed that Sunday after the 10:00 a.m. service until 2:00 p.m. to sort and organize the donations. Snacks will be served. The food will be distributed to our neighbors on Tuesday, November 26 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Contact Andrea McNicholas at alamcnicho@gmail.com for more information and to sign up. Thank you in advance on behalf of our Lazarus friends.

Rites of Passage

DEATHS:
- Dennis Marquis
- Marty York
- Harve Ferrill
- Richard Parkins
- Lorene Ray
- Arthur Edward Crowley, Jr.
- Thelma Gilliam

BIRTHS:
- Esther Virginia Grey, daughter of Sara & John Grey
- Calla Green, daughter of Stephanie & Alastair Green

BAPTISMS:
- Madeline Louise Myers
- Margaret Jane McMullan
- Madeleine Rose McMullan
- Henry Christopher Olson
- Emma Charlotte Liang

Save the Date!
Christ Church and Beth-El Hebrew will come together on Sunday, November 24 for a special shared dinner. Look for more details in upcoming Parish Life.