



March 2017 | Issue No. 102

A Sacred presence
in the center of *Memphis*

THE COMMUNICATOR

YOUTH PROGRAM BEARS AREHART'S DNA

Room 319 on most days looks like it's managed by a professor with concentration issues. In one corner, carnation seedlings are growing in a happy haphazardness. Across the room, a semblance of a clothesline is tacked to wall and weighed with clips that hold clusters of affirming notes the students write to each other each week.

In between, the walls are painted with the kinds of murals junior-high kids paint for themselves. This is their room and one of the best symbols of the massive curriculum-writing project Youth Minister Matthew Arehart envisioned from nearly the day he started work at Holy Communion in 2012.

What existed before still makes him shudder.

"Demographically, the lessons were written for smaller, rural churches," Arehart says of the J2A curriculum created in 1986. "The examples were not at all current. The model wasn't working. The kids didn't pay attention to it. There was absolutely nothing in it they found interesting."

In 2012, Holy Communion stopped using the model. It borrowed and pieced lessons together until Arehart was ready to start writing in 2014.

"We didn't have anything to move into, but for me, it was more important to stop. As long as we had that safety net, we weren't going to try to figure anything else out," Arehart said.

Each new lesson has a science, art or sociology activity to add relevance and help it be accessible to all kinds of learning styles.

"To me, the experiments just make it more interesting," Arehart says. "You don't always remember the lesson, but you remember the experience and the relationships. And that's almost more important.



Students Avery Walker and Emma Gammill burn graven images as part of their lesson from Leviticus. Photo by Cindy McMillion

When you revisit it, your mind will connect to that experience."

The curriculum is the new map for how junior high and high school students move through formation and confirmation at Holy Communion.

"In junior high, we wanted to give them a grounding in the faith they inherited, to grow into the covenants," Arehart said "As we move, they will have experiences to do outreach at home in Memphis. The idea is that as they grow, their faith worlds will get larger, culminating in an international pilgrimage the church will offer now once every three years instead of every two years.

The curriculum matches the three-year lectionary cycle. The old model was a series of Bible stories tied to the liturgical year

but often unrelated to Sunday worship.

"I just remember the old way being very unstructured," said Kneeland Gammill, 18 and a senior at St. George's Independent School in Collierville. "We would read something out of the New or Old Testament in Sunday School, but it wouldn't relate to what we were talking about in the church service."

The other issue, he said, was that a significant portion of Sunday School in pilgrimage years was turned over to preparing for the trip, including fund-raising projects.

"Now, we sit down and talk ten, fifteen or twenty minutes," Gammill said. "There is usually a Scripture reading. Matthew explains it. He puts a lot of emphasis on the modern. He weaves elements into the lesson that is more practical and easy to understand."

Arehart will finish the three-year junior high lessons this semester. He is more than halfway through rewriting the senior high lessons.

(story continued on page 2)

"A few years back, Rabbi Micah Greenstein spoke at CHC and something that he said has stuck with me. He talked about how so many people want to do good and plan these mission trips and go do something to help people somewhere else, then they feel good about the work they have done and come back home to a place that needs help. He said we need to 'do the most that you can with the time that you have in the place where you are.' Here, we had a large group of youth, a desire to do good, and a city that has a lot of work that can be done... but how could we be more active in our city?"

"Once I started thinking about this, then everything started to make much more sense," Arehart said. "Once we changed how we do pilgrimage, then the doors would open to be able to do so much more as a youth program and to so more in the city of Memphis. So, moving pilgrimage to Year C of the Lectionary, we now have two years to do other things."

Year A is focused on local mission.

"I am currently putting together a summer retreat that deals with learning the history of Memphis, what is going on in Memphis now that is positive, and how can we get involved? This would continue Year B when we would add a regional mission trip," Arehart said. Under the new format, the four Sunday morning classes for grades 6-12 have been replaced with a junior and senior high offering,

reducing the recruiting it took to find teachers and substitutes for four classes.

"The cool thing is, Matthew is really flexible on adjusting the lessons," said David Visinsky, a parent who co-teaches the junior high class. "If something really clicks, we can go deeper. That flexibility wasn't available with a canned product."

Visinsky is the first to say the Old Testament is a challenge for middle schoolers. "It's not the most fun thing in the world to teach, but Matthew has turned it into something that is a lot more fun.

"He's not just rewritten the lessons, he has really revolutionized it. He took something that was off-the-shelf and made it ours. There is so much more value in teaching that way as opposed to a three-page thing that may not be applicable to our class."

Several other congregations have asked Holy Communion for permission to use the lesson plans, including St. George's in Germantown and St. Mary's in Dyersburg.

"I didn't know that," Gammill said. "That's impressive. Matthew built this from the ground up. We would joke, 'Matthew must live at the church' because he was always working. We all gained a lot of respect for him. He cares about it so much and has put so much of his time and effort into it."



Mary Caroline Collier and Avery Walker

Photo by Cindy McMillion

AREHART IMPROVES HIS PROFESSIONAL GAME WITH COACHING

In the realm of Wall Street and Main Street, millennials often have mentors.

In ministry, "anecdotally, I would say it's unusual," said the Reverend David Grant, pastor of discipleship at 2,100-member Irving Bible Church outside Dallas.

For more than a year, Matthew and Grant worked in a long-distance coaching relationship that Matthew says helped him look at challenges from another viewpoint.

"They do things differently at the Bible Church. Sometimes just by seeing how other people manage issues you can see a solution."

Holy Communion paid for the coaching.

While Grant does not talk specifics about what his clients are working on, in youth ministry, "communications is a big one," he said. "How do you communicate with your immediate authorities and parents? It's a huge deal. And you have to be creative with kids. What works today is going to be different in six months or a year because social media has really ramped up. It changes how you get ideas across."

As an example, he says most churches have Facebook pages,



Matthew Arehart



Reverend David Grant

"but kids are not interacting there. They're on Snapchat or Twitter. In our experience, parents still use e-mail," he says with a chuckle.

Grant's coaching starts with assessments to identify one's management strengths and weaknesses.

"Of course, it's easier to strengthen a strength, but in order to survive as a youth director, you have to use your left hand if you are right-handed," Grant said.

"Matthew made the initial contact. I was working with Wonder Voyage, which plans overseas mission trips and pilgrimages. I met Sandy and Matthew in Germany in 2013. Out of that, our friendship was created."

Grant spent a weekend in Memphis getting to know Matthew.

"I will not coach someone out of town unless I can do a site visit. There has to be a deep, deep level of trust for coaching to work," he said.

"Our coaching relationship is formally over, but Matthew can call me anytime and ask a question. I consider him a friend."

FAITH IS VESSEL THAT HOLDS DIVINE LOVE

It is a rare day now that Dr. Omid Safi, one of the nation's leading authorities on Islam, is not on the phone with reporters - often the international press - responding to the latest threats and fears about Islam.

"I really do think of it as a public ministry," Safi said from his car idling in his driveway early one morning in February after a breaking news interview with the BBC. "I am still persuaded that knowledge is more powerful than ignorance. We have so much to learn about one another and with one another."

When Safi speaks at Holy Communion's Speaker Series at 7 p.m. March 23, he will have to discuss the current challenges for Muslim people here and abroad, he says. But his larger message will be what Islam is instead of what it is not.

"Quite often what ends up happening when we have people of good faith and goodwill, we end up talking about what Islam is not about," he said. "It is not fanaticism. It is not oppression of women. We don't seem to set out time to talk about what Islam is about and what in its highest aspirations, it offers people."

Along with Christianity and Judaism, Islam's "grandest reality is unleashing divine love onto the world," Safi says.

"In our tradition, love is not hearts, OMG," Safi says. "It's not chocolate and roses and Hallmark cards. It's agape and then some. It's the overflowing, over-spilling of God that brings creation into being, that sustains us here. And if we merge with it, it will carry us back home."

Safi, director of the Islamic Studies Center at Duke University, specializes in contemporary Islamic thought and Islamic spirituality. He is the editor of *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*. He used the platform to show how Islam is rooted in social justice, gender equality and religious/ethnic pluralism.

In conjunction with his visit here, he is speaking at Calvary's Lenten Preaching Series and leading a class at Rhodes College. He's also looking forward to spending time alone at the National Civil Rights Museum, particularly outside Room 307, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s room the day he was assassinated.

"I teach a course on the history of the Civil Rights Movement and am always thinking, what does Dr. King have to say about America today," said Safi, who was a guest of King's family at this year's national MLK commemoration at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

"This same love we are talking about always has something to



Dr. Omid Safi

"I have also learned that what fundamentally changes people is a face-to-face meeting. There is really no substitute for sitting down with someone, looking deep into their eyes and breaking bread with them."

say about justice. All we mean by justice is love when it moves into the public space.

"There is in reality, one love. There is no ultimate division between love of humanity and love of God. You cannot claim to love God and be indifferent to God's children," Safi said.

Safi's visit here comes as the number of anti-Muslim hate groups in America tripled from 34 to 101 in 2016, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is by far the largest spike since SPLC began tracking the category in 2010.

Holy Communion's longtime Speaker Series is funded with personal gifts "to engage in meaningful dialogue for spiritual growth, both within the congregation and the larger community," said John Russell, president of the seven-member committee that attends to the details.

"The events attract numerous visitors from outside our congregation. Importantly, our parish has the opportunity to show hospitality to a wide cross-section of the Memphis community. We usually have a book signing and reception in the parish hall after the lectures so we can personally welcome guests.

"Our first speaker was Elaine Pagels, the American religious historian who is professor of religion at Princeton

University and is probably best known for her book on the Gnostic Gospels," Russell said. "Through the years, we have hosted writers, scholars and theologians, including Bruce Feiler, Jon Meacham, Jan Karon, Diana Eck, Anne Lamott, Karen Armstrong and Walter Brueggemann."

Members of the committee are: The Reverend Badgett, Mike Davis, Daniel Amsler, Barbara McCaull, Wayne Ferguson and Madge Saba.

"As someone who has been teaching at the university level for 25 years, one of the things I've learned is that there is obviously a role for lectures, discussion groups and books. And being a teacher, you can imagine I am rather fond of all those things," Safi said.

"I have also learned that what fundamentally changes people is a face-to-face meeting. There is really no substitute for sitting down with someone, looking deep into their eyes and breaking bread with them. This is say, don't stop with the lecture, but somehow, some way, get to know a family. Invite them to your home. It's really an important point to continue the task of face-to-face, heart-to-heart, human-to-human, getting to know one another."

MARCH & APRIL AT HOLY COMMUNION...

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:15



MARCH / APRIL

March 5, 12, 19, 26 & April 2 | Stewardship of Creation with The Reverend Hester Mathes | 9:15 a.m. Parish Hall

March 5, 12, 19, 26 & April 2 | My Episcopal Life Father Sandy Webb offers this five-week Sunday morning class for newcomers to long-established Episcopalians | 9:15 a.m. Room 308

On Wednesdays evenings, March 29 and April 5, he will offer the hands-on lab accompaniment.

April 9 | Intergenerational Palm Sunday forum | Matthew Arehart, Alice Hollis and The Reverend Ben Badgett | 9:15 a.m. Parish Hall

Easter 16 | Easter Sunday, no adult formation

April 23, 30 and May 7 “Oikos: Designing and Building God’s House,” a three-week series on the design of worship spaces | The Reverend Sandy Webb | 9:15 a.m. Parish Hall

SPEAKER SERIES *March 23 at 7 p.m. with Dr. Omid Safi*



Our Speaker Series this spring will feature Dr. Omid Safi, professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University. He is also director of Duke’s Islamic Studies Center and a columnist for “On Being.” He wrote, “Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters.”

While violence and extremism dominate the news, we rarely have the chance to encounter a dimension of the Islamic tradition that is the path of Divine love. With Dr. Safi’s visit, we are invited to ponder a path where the love of God and humanity mingle together. A reception will follow.

LENT, HOLY WEEK & EASTER



March 1 Ash Wednesday

Holy Eucharist with Ashes
7 a.m., noon and 6:30 p.m.

March 26 Choral Evensong

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist | Motet Choir

April 9 Palm Sunday

Holy Eucharist at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
5:30 p.m. Celtic Eucharist

April 13 Maundy Thursday

6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist
followed by all-night vigil

April 14 Good Friday

Good Friday Liturgy at noon
Stations of the Cross at 6:30 p.m.

April 15 Great Vigil of Easter

8 p.m. Vigil and Holy Eucharist
with music by the
White Station High School Choir

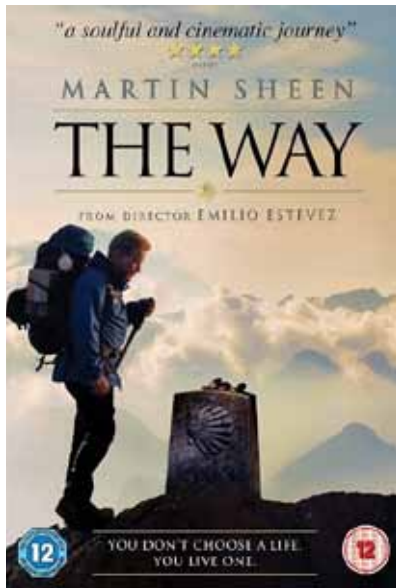
April 16 Easter Day

6:15 a.m. Morning Prayer
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Easter Egg Hunt follows on the front lawn
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Baptism
5:30 p.m. Taizé Eucharist

GROUPS A

All Saints' Guild <i>Second Tuesday</i> 10:30 a.m. Carrick Room	Brotherhood of St. Andrew <i>Second and fourth</i> <i>Saturday</i> 8 a.m., Chapel	Centering Prayer <i>First Saturday</i> 9 a.m., Chapel	Daughters of the King <i>Second Sunday</i> noon Carrick Room	Knitting Ministry <i>Third Tuesday</i> 11 a.m., Room 308 <i>Every Wednesday</i> 6:30 p.m., Room 307
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Tell Your Story | Take a Journey | Make a Difference



Dinner, choirs, Zumba, nursery and childcare.

Dinner 5:45-6:30 p.m.
Nursery is available from 6:30-8 p.m.

LENTEN FILM & FAITH SERIES March 8th & 22nd 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Come journey with us, as we discuss the film, "The Way," starring Martin Sheen as a father who embarks on his own reluctant spiritual pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, a famous foot trail leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. The people he meets help frame the pits and snares that have distracted humankind for centuries.

See the movie on your own. Discussion will be led by the Reverend Ben Badgett and Robert Propst.



CHORAL EVENSONG WITH THE HOLY EUCHARIST March 26 at 5:30 p.m.

Words³...

A reading series of writers of all genres and backgrounds. Listeners welcome. Free coffee and Gibson's Donuts!

5:30 in parish hall

THEMES:

March 21 Dear Diary

April 18 Outside My Comfort Zone

Baseball, Softball and T-Ball Registration NOW OPEN for ages 5 through 12

Registration is available online; forms are available at the church and online.

Exercise Schedule at Holy Communion

Beginner's Gentle Yoga	Intermediate Yoga	Tai Chi	Zumba
Mon. & Wed. 4:15-5:15 p.m. Room 308	Tues. & Thurs. 4:15-5:15 p.m. Room 308	Mon. & Wed. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Room 308	M 6:15-7:15 p.m., Gym W 6:30-7:30 p.m., Gym Sa 9:30-10:30 a.m., Gym



How About Giving Up Time in LENT?

Spring Meal Delivery MIFA Meals on Wheels

There is a variety of routes and openings this spring. Contact Sara Hall if you can help.

March 26 Serve & Host Dinner at Room in the Inn at Calvary

Room in the Inn is a ministry that provides homeless people with a hot meal and place to stay for the night.

For details, see <http://www.calvarymemphis.org/riti>

We are looking for 10-12 people to partner with Calvary volunteers.

Contact Hester Mathes.

Spring Meals

We need people to prepare dinner for our youth gatherings on Sunday evening at CHC. Plan for 20-25 youth. Dinner is served at 6:15 p.m.

in Blaisdell dining room.
Contact Matthew Arehart.



TAKE YOUR PRODUCE PERSONALLY

Sign up for your spring produce!
Visit www.csafarmjobs.com

AND GUILDS

Men's Bible Study Friday 7 a.m. Room 214	More Than a Meal First Sunday after 10:30 service at Grace-St. Luke's	The Reading Life First Tuesday 11 a.m. Carrick Room	Sandy and Mimsy's Biblical Adventure Thursday 10 a.m. Room 308	Words ³ (Words, Cubed) Third Tuesday 5:30-7 p.m. Cheney Parish Hall
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RETREAT OFFERS SPACE TO GAUGE WHAT'S NEXT

In church life cycles, completing a capital campaign ranks up with there with deciding to put the house on the market and spending a year making repairs.

The church met its \$7 million goal this winter shortly after the vestry overnight retreat in February at St. Columba Conference and Retreat Center.

“For us, it was the first time in the last five years that we sat down to say, ‘What do we want to do?’ rather than ‘What do need to do?’” said Sandy. “Which is a very different question.

“We brainstormed together all the many things we could be. The staff did a similar exercise. We will engage in this visioning process over the first half of this year and distill it down to some guiding principles by early next fall so that next year’s budget can be driven by this conversation,” Sandy said.

The vestry retreat was led by the Reverend Frank Allen from St. David’s in Radnor, Pennsylvania. In 19 years, he has led the congregation through four capital campaigns.

“We were looking for someone who knew about coming off capital campaigns. His task was to help us think about mission and ministry with the building design process getting underway,” Sandy said.

Allen asked the vestry to ponder the larger questions of identity, including purpose and mission, based on where the congregation has been in the last five years.

“People realized just how much the church has come through,” Sandy said. “Imagine what can happen when we are not starting from a place of restoration.”

In the last year, the vestry has hammered out the details on the largest growth project in the church’s more than six decades. It also completed a \$7 million capital campaign, produced a record stewardship campaign and is well down the road in having a blueprint

for a new gym, plus renovation of Blaisdell and Greenwood.

From a vestry and staff view, ministry is no longer merely about numbers. Depth matters as much as width, Sandy says, noting that the challenge is thinking of creative ways for both members and staff to stretch and serve.

“Are we offering adult education that challenges us to think in new ways or are we just going over the same material,” he asked.

Cava Sittnick, new to the vestry, was impressed with the level of energy and the overwhelming sense that Holy Communion “is doing what God is calling us to do.

“We’re a church where a lot of people feel very comfortable for a lot of different reasons.”

Besides thought-provoking classes and forums, Sittnick is proud of the music program, outreach and the care the congregation offers its members.

“And our hospitality has really grown. It’s very, very prominent in our church. I come in contact with all these newcomers. The first thing they say I, ‘This is the friendliest church I have been to!’”



The Reverend Dr. Randy McCloy at the retreat.

With construction looming on the horizon, the vestry is clear that its mission is to be focused on ministry. Committees of experts, many from the congregation, will oversee design and the construction project.

“Every aspect of the project – from contract negotiation to temporary space for the staff to staging construction equipment to planning and getting input from parishioners – will be well-planned and carefully thought out,” said John Lewis, senior warden.

“Our plan is to remain focused on our core mission and activities. Although it’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of a great project, we don’t want to ignore the day-to day activities and longer-term goals that are so important to our future.”

Reflection from new Vestry member, Anne-Morgan Morgan



I parked and entered the building - the smell took me back as if time stood still. I was amazed that almost everyone there through the years had been a part of my life in special ways and the few who hadn't, I felt sure soon would be.

Later, as I once again lay in a twin bed at St. Columba, I felt comforted by the group I had gotten to re-know that night. I was filled with hope for our future, and I felt restored in my own faith. When I woke up to sunshine, I fully expected to hear voices down the halls singing, “Rise and Shine.” The reality was a little disappointing.

Looking out at nature during morning Eucharist was amazing.

So was the silence we kept, which forced me to slow down - something I need to do more. A conversation about warm fuzzies led me to remember a tale I first heard at Happening at St. Columba years ago. Of the thousands of starfish washed ashore each morning, the person trying to save them knows he can't reach them all. To the starfish, the effort makes all the difference.

That story has inspired me many times, and I feel its importance again! I have to say the extended vision of the vestry was the most surprising to me. Not just this year, but five, even ten-plus years out. And not for just our church, but our diocese, our community and so much more... Now, a month out from the retreat, I still feel motivated, empowered and hopeful. It is a great time to be Holy Communion!

I say to each of you: *Be thankful and rejoice in the Lord always!*

SISTERS' CHAPEL REVERBERATES IN HOPE



The Reverend Sandy Webb

On the banks of Galilee, Jesus said: “Come, have breakfast.” On Wednesdays, St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral downtown does the same – worship and breakfast at 8:00 a.m.

The service is entirely familiar, yet entirely unique. The words are the same, but their significance is greater. Most of the people at this service are either homeless or in danger of losing whatever housing they may have. “Give us this

day our daily bread,” sounds different on their lips than it does on mine. Their dollar in the plate is so much more sacrificial.

Befriending people on the margins of society is nothing new for St. Mary’s: They gave refuge to the victims of Yellow Fever when everyone else skipped town, they created a school for girls (now Holy Communion’s neighbor) when no one else would,

and they marched for Civil Rights when it was most unpopular. Now, they are fostering an authentic Christian community among people whose stories and personhood are too often overlooked.

The young man who sat next to me at the service never shared his name, but he had a well-worn copy of the Shelby County guidebook on tenants’ rights tucked under his arm. He came to church looking for hope; I hope that he found it.

Maria, too. A homeless veteran, a childhood rape victim, and almost certainly one of the millions of Americans struggling with mental illness, she sat across from me at breakfast. Her life is hard, but her smile never wavered: “Today,” she kept telling me, “Today is the day that things are going to get better.”

When asked to pray, very few people asked God for the tangible things that they lacked. Instead, they asked for peace, for kindness, for patience, even one for self-control. They asked for the very things that St. Paul tells us the Holy Spirit stands ready to give.

Faith is much easier when things are going well than when they are not, when we are physically safe than when we are not. I was lifted up by the harder kind of faith in Sisters’ Chapel today, and it was a beautiful thing. I went to see a ministry that is transforming its neighborhood, and ended up being transformed myself.



Pastors’ Network looks deep into the storied soul of Memphis



By the Reverend Ben Badgett

For two days in the middle of February, Memphis clergy from across denomination and race gathered for an emotionally intense retreat that took us around the city and also across history. We traveled to a lynching site but also to a beacon of life and hope, St.

Jude Children’s Research Hospital. And in between these field trips, we spent thoughtful time in sessions guided by the Rev. Dr. Russ Parker talking about healing wounded history and healing generational wounds - both are relevant in our contemporary Memphis community.

The lectures and visits were powerful, but, as with all of these gatherings since last summer, the most enriching part was building relationships. And Holy Communion played a vital

role in building those relationships. Prior to the retreat, Holy Communion was asked if we would be willing to host the closing service of Holy Eucharist. It was humbling and a tremendous honor for our parish to participate in this historic event to play such a prominent role. The sacrament of Holy Communion was a powerful conclusion to an event that brought many lives together in the spirit of healing and reconciliation.

Though this group of clergy have been meeting for several months now, this retreat was not so much a culmination of our time together, but a turning point to start something new. Next year on April 4, 2018, the nation will observe the 50th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the year ahead, many will be wondering how to mark this tragic moment in the city’s history. The spirit of hope that abides in Memphis can help lead the way for us all as we ask this question.

THE COMMUNICATOR



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The Reverend Ben Badgett, *Associate Rector*

The Reverend Hester Mathes, *Associate Rector*

The Reverend Dr. Randy McCloy, *Deacon*

VESTRY

John Lewis, *Sr. Warden* + Jeffrey Block, *Jr. Warden*

David Visinsky, *Treasurer* + Debbie Campbell, *Clerk*

Bill Bateman, Katie Collier, Sarah Cowens, Amanda Goetze,

Hugh Holt, Nat Johnson, Tim McCormack, Lattimore Michael,

Anne-Morgan Morgan, Mike Murphy, Cava Sittnick, Christy Yarbrow

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The Communicator, (USPS.) #015-799, is published Monthly by CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION, 4645 Walnut Grove, Memphis, TN 38117-2597. PERIODICAL POSTAGE paid at Memphis, TN. POSTMASTER: Send address change to Church of the Holy Communion, 4645 Walnut Grove Rd., Memphis, TN 38117-2597.

EASTER FLOWERS AND MUSIC DONATIONS

Each year our nave is beautifully adorned on Easter Day with fresh spring flowers, and our parish choirs are accompanied by instrumentalists who contribute to the splendor of the Resurrection celebration.

All are invited to make a donation toward the flowers and instrumental music for Easter Day.

Donations may be made in honor of a loved one, or in thanksgiving for God's many blessings. To have your gift acknowledged in the Easter Day bulletin, donations must be received in the finance office by noon on Tuesday, April

4. Contact Teresa Boone for details,

767-6987.



Church of the Holy Communion, an Episcopal Church in the center of Memphis, seeks to be a sacred presence, grounded in the servant ministry of Jesus, offering spiritual growth opportunities for all.