



## SAINT TO SAINT...

When you receive this edition of the *Gazette*, I will be back working full-time following my rotator cuff surgery on January 5. I will see my orthopedist on February 9, and expect, God-willing and I don't slip on some ice, to be free of my sling. This will also permit me to go on to more advanced physical therapy to restore strength in my arm, however, even at that point, I will be limited to lifting objects weighing no more than five pounds with my right hand. I'm very optimistic, however, and have been told that the progress I'm making is quite good.

I want to thank all those who sent cards and offered up prayers for my surgery and recuperation. I've had a very real sense of your support and now understand the basis for the deep warmth expressed in so many letters of thanks to the *Gazette* from those who've been ill or had surgery and have also received the "shower" of cards and glad sentiments from Laurel folk.

I also want to thank our Session for giving me ample time off to heal and gain strength as they busily have done the ministry of the church. Last but in no way least, I confess my wife Jan has been an angel for me, especially as my surgery fell during a slow time in her academic schedule permitting her to be even more to me of a Florence Nightingale not to mention a Paul Prudhomme!

I look forward to jumping back into my work and joining you in planning for ministry in the coming year. I recognize, however, that there may be a little curve to this, and I know I must yield to the needs to my body as I get back into the swing of things. As I write this in January, pain in my shoulder is now minimal, but sleep can be elusive as I continue to work on the correct angles and

pillow depth to permit dozing at night. This, however, improves with each passing evening.

In addition to my gratitude to friends and members and to the Lord, I might add that I think that any stint of illness or recovery after surgery reminds us of our frailty and our dependence upon others. May this period for me not only deepen my sense of daily thanksgiving but cause me to be more sensitive and proactive to the needs of those around us whose health is frail and have need for regular trips to the doctor, who, like I, depend not only upon the Lord's grace but also upon that of His disciples!

*...Pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

*The prayer of the  
righteous person is powerful in what it can  
achieve. — James 5:16*

Together with you in ministry,

*Pastor Mark*





## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

**Wednesday February 1**  
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

**Saturday February 4**  
7:30 am Men's Breakfast

**Sunday February 5**  
8:45 am Adult Sunday School  
10:00 am Worship/Communion  
11:00 am Team Meetings

**Monday February 6**  
6:00 pm Toastmasters

**Wednesday February 8**  
7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday February 12**  
8:45 am Adult Sunday School  
10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Session Meeting

**Monday February 13**  
10:00 am Elsie Bradshaw Circle

**Tuesday February 14**  
Happy Valentine's Day!

**Wednesday February 15**  
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday February 19**  
8:45 am Adult Sunday School  
10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Lasagna Lunch

**Monday February 20**  
6:00 pm Toastmasters  
Presidents' Day

**Wednesday February 22**  
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday February 26**  
8:45 am Adult Sunday School  
10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Annual Congregational Meeting

**Monday February 27**  
6:00 pm Toastmasters

**\*Choir meets each Wednesday evening at  
7:00pm**

**\*LAMB's Basket 1<sup>st</sup> Monday and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
of each month**

**\*\*Faith Revival Church will meet each Sunday  
6:00 pm. Tuesdays, 7:30 pm, Fridays 7:30 pm,  
Saturdays 7:30pm**



The Shepherds on Call for the month of February are **Marshall and Gladys Chamberlayne**. They may be reached at 755-6172.



## Sanctuary Flowers for February

February 5 -Carolyn Stinger - In loving memory of my husband, George Stinger.

February 12 - Dixie Mertens - in honor of David and the choir.

February 19 - Brenda MacRae - in loving memory of my father, John Ruser.

February 26 - Carol Short - to the Glory of God and in gratitude for my wonderful husband, Rick.



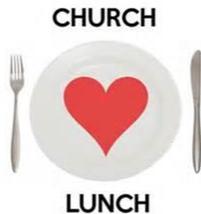
**Happy February Birthday to the following members and friends of Laurel!**

- Roeder, Emmett (3)
- MacRae, Alex (4)
- Short, Rick (27)
- Fitch, Margaret (28)

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Join the men of Laurel on Saturday, February 4 at the IHOP, 9820 Broad at 7:30 am for an hour of good food and fellowship!



Please join us for a post Valentine's Day lunch on Sunday, February 19th following our service in the fellowship hall. We will be serving Lasagna with salad and a dessert. Hope to see you there!



**NEW ADULT CLASS IN FEBRUARY**

Our faith suggests that there are overarching themes that unite both the Testaments of the Bible and, in fact, form threads that intertwine within its 66 books. Our February adult class will look at four: God with us, God seeks our freedom,

God loves us and God is always bigger than we imagine. In our study, we'll consider specific examples from both the Old and New Testaments and consider how these big ideas of faith can give us personal hope. A new participant's guide is available for each week. They will also be posted at laurelpres.com. Sundays, February 5, 12, 19 and 26 in the Fellowship Hall at 8:45 am.

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**ANNUAL MEETING OF CONGREGATION FEBRUARY 26**

You're invited to attend our Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 26 after worship in the church sanctuary. It will be a "crisp" report (45 minutes or less) about our ministry during the past year including



highlights from each of the Ministry Teams and a financial report. We will also share the 2017 budget and plans for the coming year.

Our screen and slides will be an integral part of the presentation and hopefully help to make the meeting entertaining as well as informative. Since we are a corporation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we will hold a very brief meeting of the corporation as well. There will be no formal votes taken during the meeting and members and non-members alike are encouraged to attend. Our time together will include a brief period for asking questions or sharing ideas about ministry.

So, join us on the 26<sup>th</sup> and "be in the know" about ministry at Laurel Church!



**Monday February 20th**



**Note: New Address and Phone Number for Becky Zolnai**

1237 Gaskins Road Apt. C  
Richmond, VA 23238  
716-2574

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***Songs from the Heart Service***

We were very thankful to hear such moving and uplifting stories from four of our members on Sunday January 22. Those members were: Cheryl Dorman, Washington Ndirangu, Pete MacRae and Gladys Bowles. They were willing to share very personal stories that touched their lives through special hymns. For Cheryl Dorman, it was “How Great thou Art”, which she shared has brought her comfort over the years. She began singing it when she was a small child and it was a favorite song of her father’s. Washington shared his favorite song, “Abide with Me” which has words he repeats daily in his life. It is translated in English to say *Stay with Me*. We then sang it in Swahili. Pete MacRae shared his touching story about how “Blessed Assurance” was a favorite hymn of his mother’s and has been played at his sister, mother and father’s funerals. And, Gladys Bowles shared her love of “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” and what having a firm foundation means to her. She conveyed that the words *On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand* resonated with her.

Thank you to the Worship and Education Team for putting this service together. And, thank you to Duane Berger for researching each song and sharing with us the history behind each writer.

**Great is Thy Faithfulness Cheryl Dorman  
Thomas O. Chisholm 1923**

The author of this hymn, Thomas Obediah Chisholm, was born in a log cabin in Kentucky. At the age of 16 he taught school in the same country schoolhouse where he had received his elementary education. When he was 27, he accepted Christ as his Savior during a revival meeting. He was ordained as a Methodist minister, but was forced to resign due to poor health. He wrote more than 1200 poems in his lifetime, many which appeared in religious periodicals and several that became the text for

hymns.

One of his poems landed in the hands of his friend, William Runyan, who put it to music and published it. The hymn continued on in obscurity for nearly thirty years. It was picked up by the Moody Bible Institute and later by George Beverly Shea and the choirs of Billy Graham, who used it frequently on their international crusades.

The phrase, “Great is thy faithfulness”, comes from the book of Lamentations. “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

Just think, with each new day, God gives us the chance to prove His faithfulness. And throughout history, He’s never once been proven wrong, for His mercies are new every morning, no matter what!

**Abide With Me Washington Ndirangu  
Henry Francis Lyte 1847**

The text for this hymn was taken from the account in Luke, of Christ’s appearance with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. “Abide with us: for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.”

Henry Francis Lyte was born in Scotland, educated in Ireland and was the pastor of a poor parish church among fishing people in Devonshire, England.

It was Henry Lyte who coined the phrase, “It is better to wear out than to rust out.” He was challenged by poor health, having both asthma and tuberculosis. On his last day in the pulpit, he walked along the coast and finalized the words to a poem he had written, Abide With Me.

Within two months, he passed away. The words of this hymn beautifully describe the end of his journey. “Fast falls the eventide” –for him, the darkness was deepening and he felt very much alone. But he asked God to be with him, when “other helpers fail and comforts flee”. He considered God to be the “help of the helpless”. And surely our God helps us. He is the one who never changes. He is our guide and security. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

**Blessed Assurance Pete MacRae  
Fanny Crosby 1873**

“This is Fanny Crosby, the hymn writer.” The clergyman introduced the bent-over, blind, old woman to the policeman. “Please help her to get to her train.” The officer choked and strained to tell her, “We sang your hymn, ‘Safe in the Arms of Jesus’ last week. It was at my little girl’s funeral.” Fanny reached for his arm and took it in her

hands. With great feeling and tenderness she replied, "My boy, God bless your dear heart! You shall have my prayers. Tell your wife that your dear little girl is, 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus.'" Hearing these words, the officer broke down and wept openly.

Fanny Crosby wrote for the masses. She wrote poems and lyrics that spoke to the average person and when put to music, they could be easily sung by a congregation. She is credited with over 3000 hymns. She was blinded as a baby by treatment from a man claiming to be a doctor. As a child, she resolved that her handicap would not stop her. When Fanny was nine years old, she wrote:

Oh what a happy soul I am, although I  
cannot see;  
I am resolved that in this world,  
contented I will be.  
How many blessings I enjoy, that other  
people don't;  
To weep and sigh because I'm blind, I  
cannot, and I won't.

This attitude from her youth would follow her throughout her life. Through blindness and poverty, she strove to help others and sought to ease their pain and suffering. One of Fanny's dearest friends was Phoebe Knapp. While Fanny lived in the Manhattan slums and worked in rescue missions, Phoebe lived in the resplendent Knapp Mansion in nearby Brooklyn. Fanny was a frequent houseguest. In 1873 during a visit, Phoebe played a new composition she had created on the piano. She asked Fanny what she thought the tune said to her. Crosby replied, "Why, it says, Blessed Assurance!" She quickly composed the words and a great hymn was born.

### **My Hope is Built on Nothing Less**

#### **Gladys Bowles**

**Edward Mote 1834** Edward Mote was born into poverty in 1797 in London. His parents wouldn't allow a Bible in their house, but through the preaching of the Rev. J. Hyatt, of Tottenham Court Road Chapel, he underwent a great spiritual change and ultimately became a Baptist minister. He served the church for many years. Later, he would reflect, "So ignorant was I that I did not know that there was a God." Retelling of how this great hymn came into existence, Edward wrote: "On the Sabbath following, I met brother King who informed me that his wife was very ill, and asked me to call and see her. I had an early tea and called afterwards. King said it was his usual custom to sing a hymn, read a portion, and

engage in prayer before he went to meeting. He looked for his hymnbook but could find it nowhere. I said, 'I have some verses in my pocket. If he liked, we would sing them.' We did, and his wife enjoyed them so much that after service he asked me, as a favor, to leave a copy of them for his wife. I went home, and by the fireside composed the last two verses, and took them to sister King." He published the hymn in a collection of his own compositions and named it, "The Immutable Basis of a Sinner's Hope." Aren't we glad it has been changed to My Hope is Built on Nothing Less? This hymn, penned by the son of neglectful pub-keepers in London, has become one of the most beloved gospel hymns in the Church today. The basic message strongly presents Christ's righteousness as the only requirement for salvation, making it very much a hymn of grace.



### **Letters in the Sand**

You wrote in the sand "I love you sweetheart"

This was fifty years ago  
We promised that we'd never part  
Those many years ago-  
But you were headstrong and so was I  
To say anything else would be a lie  
And it wasn't easy to say, "I'm sorry"  
But you did -with a great big sigh  
'Twas then I knew -so could I  
Over fifty years together had taught us  
What love was all about  
The sharing - the understanding  
That simple little touch -  
That showed you really cared -so much  
So let's live life as we should  
Toss the bad -keep only the good  
And thank God for another fifty or so.  
By Nancy C. Kinch '16



Welcome Back to Pastor Mark Sprowl! It was great to see him looking fit as a fiddle, (although with arm in sling) in church on Sunday January 22. He will be back in the office on Monday January 23rd



**New additions to the list are in bold type**

Let us keep the following people in our prayers, sharing in both their joys and needs:

Our First Responders – Police, Fire, Rescue  
Our Military Personnel

Corinne Augustine – mother of Carol Short  
Lorraine Binford  
Flash Bowlin

Marshall and Gladys Chamberlayne and Family

Vickie Chaplin  
Jean Cole

**Cindy Corell**

The Coulson Family  
Wayne and Marcia Deisher  
Deisher-LaPrell Families

Randy Duff – brother of Lorraine Duff  
Susan Dyson  
Lucille Hayes  
Jimmy Hicks

Sherri Kolb, daughter of Vickie Chaplin  
Anne Leveridge  
Buddy Mallory

Michelle McBane and Family  
Ann McDermott & Family

Dixie Mertens  
Shirley Milliken  
Trudy Moolenaar

Richard Rader, nephew of Bonnie Poff  
Cathy Roeder  
Sheryl Salmon  
John Schutrumpf  
Tripp Shepherd  
Jim Smith

**Pastor Mark Sprowl**

Jackie and Jan Stevens

**Billie Summers**

Prayers for Ruling Elders  
Prayers for friends and families  
Prayers for the Middle East countries  
Prayers for the homeless  
Prayers for Laurel's mission  
Prayers for New Beginnings

*If you know of someone in need of prayer or are in need of prayer, please call Flash Bowlin at 672-6009*



**GRACE GROUPS RETURN IN MARCH**

This Lenten Season (beginning the week after Ash Wednesday, March 1), Pastor Mark will again lead morning and evening sessions of these weekly study and fellowship groups that continue through the six weeks of Lent. Through song, study, prayer and fellowship we will grow closer in Christ and to one another. One comment from a previous session, "I really got to know folks much better." Stay tuned for the March newsletter and announcements on Sunday mornings for registration information.



**Upon the cross of Jesus mine eyes at times  
can see**

**The very dying form of One who suffered  
there for me;**

**And from my stricken heart with tears two  
wonders I confess; The wonders of redeeming  
love and my unworthiness.**

These words from the Lenten hymn *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* remind us of one of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith: despite the fact that we did nothing, nor could we do anything, to deserve it, Jesus loved us... to death. The six weeks of the holy season of Lent give us an opportunity to reflect upon this "wonder."

And that season begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1 at 7:00 pm in our sanctuary when, through Scripture, prayer and song we will recall Jesus' deep love and contemplate how we can now respond. During this brief service, the choir will give us a lovely anthem, and there will be the traditional "imposition of ashes" for those who desire it. Our time of worship will be preceded by a light meal in the Fellowship Hall at 6:15 pm. Please join us for this meaningful service.



**MIRACLE AT 87!**

Your prayers, beautiful trays of food, flowers, cards and loving care helped me through pneumonia at 87! LPC Angels helped me realize that God has NOT finished with me yet. Imagine this-30 of kidney function, pacemaker, 2 stents, 3 heart valves flowing backward, and the stress of daughter with PSP (a more progressive type of Parkinson's). Awesome, incredible to me. Love you. Thanks a million.

Billie Summers

Dear Church Family's,

I would like to say thank you for everything you have given my family. We are very thankful for all of the food and presents. You have really made our Christmas one to remember. Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Brandon

Dear Church and families,

I wanted to thank you for my gifts and for taking the time you do for my family and I really like the stuff you got. Merry Christmas

Christian

To the Church and Families,

I wanted to thank you for all you have done for my children and I. Words can't express how truly grateful I am. To see all the joy on my children's faces when they saw all the gifts and food that were given to us from a complete stranger. To know that they're wonderful people out there and how truly amazing God is.

When I found out that my daughters school had given our name to ya'll and I got the call, I was just speechless. I hung up the phone and just cried. Tears of happiness. I'm a divorced single mother of three wonderful children. I work two jobs and recently started college again. My

children and I struggle and some days I just want to give up, but every day I wake up and tell myself "this too shall pass."

I've always been the type of person to give you the shirt off my back. Friends, family, strangers, anyone. Just the woman I am. But, for this to happen to me, my children and I? It makes me believe that God decided to show me Hey, I see you struggling, I see how hard you work, let me help you. And, for that, I truly am grateful. I want to wish the church and all of the families that helped make my Christmas special and my kids a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Julie M.

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(Photo by Mike Topham Photography)

Congratulations to Alex and Sara MacRae on their recent nuptials at Laurel on December 30<sup>th</sup>!



**Member Care and Mission Team Ministry  
Notes  
January 15, 2017**



**Operation Christmas Child Project:**

The meeting was opened with prayer and member concerns were discussed.

Shepherds on Call for February are Gladys and Marshall Chamberlayne

Walk in Ministry is January 23. Sign-up sheet is in the Narthex

Margaret will check with VA Randolph to see if there are items to collect this year. We also expressed our thanks to Margaret for organizing the holiday families and making the deliveries for 2016.

We are planning for a Lasagna dinner in February after church on Sunday February 19. This will take the place of the normal lingering. We will discuss with Worship and Education as this is their month for lingering.

We also discussed the gift bags we hand out to visitors. We are running low on mugs to put in the bags. We will check with Mark to see if we can order more of them.

We have decided to do a monthly collection for Operation Christmas Child as well as allow people to put together their own shoebox in November. We will collect an item to include each month and store those items to assemble boxes from the items collected in November. The hope is that we will have more boxes to contribute and people who don't want to put a box together will be able to contribute items as they feel able. The monthly items were taken from the website for Operation Christmas Child; it is something they promote as an alternative to the traditional shoeboxes. We hope this will be a success for us.

Marcia Deisher

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**NEED A (MINI) BOOM BOX?**

In cleaning out our cupboards, we've discovered three cassette FM players. They work with batteries and accommodate the old-style cassettes. They are free for the asking.

The Membership Care and Mission team has decided to try something new regarding collection boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Our hope is to provide more boxes than in years past. Beginning in February, we will be collecting a different item each month. Then, in November we will assemble all the boxes and prepare them to be shipped. Here is the suggested list of items for each month:

Feb- accessories such as watches, barrettes, costume jewelry, sun glasses

March-quality crafts- wooden cars, whistles, yarn hat, example- pillow cases turned into tote bags (cut in half and grow grain ribbon used to make handle."

April- stuffed animals.

May-hygiene items, tooth brush, soap, deodorant, hair brushes, combs.

June- toys, slinky, jump rope, balls.

July-clothing items-socks, sandals, sun dress, shirts shorts.

August-school supplies- pencils, pens, notepads, erasers, calculators, rulers.

September-games- cards, mini etch a sketch, puzzles.

October- letter and photo

November- \$7.00 donation for box

December- prayers for children that will receive the boxes.

There will be a collection box located in the hallway. \*\*Remember the boxes are 5.75" wide by 11" long, so make sure your purchased items will fit! Also, items should be new.

You may also pack a shoebox on your own in November.

Thanks for helping!  
MCM Team

**February 2017**

	02/05/17	02/12/17	02/19/17	02/26/17
Usher Captain	Dixie Mertens	Michael Henderson	Bob Anderson	Steve Searce
Usher Team	Carolyn Stinger	Gladys Chamberlayne	Eddie Ann Mathewson	Mary Searce
Usher Team	LaVerne Miller	Ginger Lanier	Ann Whitby	Michelle McBane
Usher Team	Lorraine Duff	Washington Ndirangu	Michael Whitby	Rob McBane
Sound System	Rob McBane	Steve/Mary Searce		Bob Anderson
Projectionist	Karen Johnson	Jacob Searce	Rudy van't Riet	Karen Johnson
All month prep: <b>Rick Short</b>				
Lay Reader	Gladys Chamberlayne	Carl Carpenter	Pete MacRae	Gladys Bowles
Nursery	Kathy Horigan	Michelle McBane	Gladys Chamberlayne	Kathy Horigan
Children's Church	<b>(Need Volunteer)</b>	<b>(Need Volunteer)</b>	<b>(Need Volunteer)</b>	Gladys Chamberlayne
Communion Prep	Mary Lawrence			
Communion Prep				
Communion Captain	Michael Henderson			
Communion Server	Bob Anderson			
Communion Server	Gladys Chamberlayne			
Communion Server	Rudy van't Riet			

If unable to serve your commitment, please contact another to serve in your place.  
Thank you for volunteering!

DEADLINE FOR GAZETTE – 19th OF EACH MONTH

Consider going paperless and receiving the Gazette via email. Just send me a message at the below address and I will take care of the rest. Brenda MacRae

Gazette email: [pbmacrae@comcast.net](mailto:pbmacrae@comcast.net)  
804-672-3707

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