

### **Continuing our Mission and Ministry**

In spite of the challenges we face with the ongoing pandemic and the surge of the Delta variant, we have been able to continue our mission and ministry in wonderful ways that are serving folks in our parish and in Madison County. The parish's "A Way Forward Team" continues to evaluate our circumstances in this pandemic and recommend changes as necessary to protect the safety of everyone. We are now requiring all persons (those vaccinated and those unvaccinated) to wear masks for our in-person worship services. There is plenty of room in the sanctuary for folks to be socially distanced. For the time being, there will be no congregational singing. The choir members will remain masked and will sing for us. Our fellowship time after the service will be held outside at the front of the church. We have made these changes to abide by the guidelines of our Bishop, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and our Governor.

Another disruption we have experienced during the pandemic is that we have not had a secretary for the last 18 months. Until we can hire a part-time secretary, we will have to make some adjustments. On Sundays we will have only a short PowerPoint slide presentation and we will return to using The Book of Common Prayer and Hymnal. The priest and lay readers will announce the pages in The Book of Common Prayer and the hymn titles and numbers to guide everyone during the worship service. Communion waivers will continue to be served at the altar and available in plastic bags on the table in the Narthex.

Tremendous progress is being made in the renovation of the Parish Mission House and improving the landscaping of our property. Most of the interior painting of the Parish Mission House has been done. There remains a lot of work to do. If you can help, please speak to Leslie Farris. Every bit of help really makes a difference. We are trying to complete the renovations in time for the Bishop's annual visit on Sunday, October 10.

You may have noticed that the wooden sign and cross in the front yard of the church has been removed. The Vestry decided that this was necessary to create a large, flat area for the installation of our new church sign. We are expecting the new sign to be delivered later this month.

God is ever present with each of us and in the midst of all of our mission and ministry. Although there are many things that are uncertain right now, we can absolutely trust in the Lord. There are blessings every day, if we are open to seeing them. There are opportunities for renewal and growth, if we are willing to embrace them. This is a time that call us to be gentle with ourselves and with one another. With God's help, we will all get through this and days that are brighter than we can ask or imagine are on the horizon. I am holding each of you in loving prayer support. **Mother Carol+**

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6**

### **Helping the Homeless in Madison County – A Panel Discussion**

All through the pandemic several members of Our Saviour have been assisting hungry and homeless residents of Madison County on a regular basis. They have been distributing sandwiches or pizza in Richmond or Berea and registering homeless guests during the winter months through Room in the Inn (RITI). Janie Jordan, Leslie Berger, and Louise Locke have been front-line workers in this ministry to people in need. Mother Carol, Pat Harris, Linda Myers, Ollie Jordan, Leslie, Phoebe and Nate have assisted them.

If you want to hear firsthand what Janie, Leslie and Louise have been doing, stay after church on August 22 (12:30-1:45). They will tell us about the ministry of assisting the homeless in Madison County. It's a chance for all of us to listen, ask questions, and salute our front-line workers. Their work, along with Garden for the Hungry, is our response to the words of Christ in Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick, and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me." **Grace Sears**

### **Caring for our Christian Brothers and Sisters in Haiti**

Did you know that Haiti is part of The Episcopal Church? Our diocesan has been in partnership with our Christian brothers and sisters in Haiti for many years. Our Daughters of the King have a chapter in Haiti and we have been helping schools in the Les Cayes area, as well as churches and Daughters of the King in Haiti. The impact of the earthquake in Haiti last week has been devastating with tremendous loss of life, businesses, and homes. The needs are immense. If you want to help fund the relief efforts, you can make a donation online at this link: [https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause\\_pdetails/MTlyNzM3](https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTlyNzM3) or to Episcopal Relief and Development at this link: <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/where-we-work/country/haiti/>

### **Jim Farris and James Anderson: The Lawn Rangers**

I love to drive by our little church on the hill, consider its simple beauty, and take in the well-tended field upon which it sits. Surrounded by a small wood, vegetable garden and a huge welcoming tree that shades the parish house, it can draw one in with its neatly trimmed serenity. Although I know that it is lovingly cared for by devoted parishioners, I have never had the opportunity to see just how much dedication, toil, and sweat it takes to maintain this peaceful parcel of property.

I ventured out on Saturday afternoon to visit with the tireless duo of **Jim Farris** and **James Anderson**, as they pursued their recurring goal of cutting and trimming the lawn of Our Saviour. The plan had been for the two to attack the pasture on Monday afternoon, but the protestations of two wives to their husbands working in the 90 degree-plus heat had put the kibosh on this scenario. So, the date was changed to Saturday, when the heat was ONLY to be near 83 or 84 (who knows the heat index!). As I sat in my air-conditioned car, James drove up on the mower headed toward the field. When I got out to speak to him, I noticed Jim lifting a behemoth of a wheel-mounted trimmer from the back of his vehicle, and it seemed to be about a third of his weight, yet he appeared to remove it with ease and he began to edge along the curb.

He moved slowly along the edge, picking out clumps of grass embedded between the parking lot and the curb by hand. He informed me that no tools really work adequately for this task. He talked

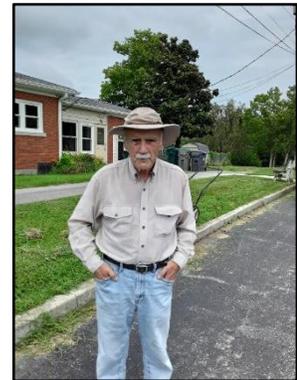
about trimming around the playground and said that perhaps he outsmarted himself by purchasing such a large trimmer. He thought it might ease the task, but its size has been a drawback, as his machine is “even clumsier than me” and sometimes thwarts his efforts to trim between tight spaces, and therefore, he sometimes finds himself plucking weeds manually. He says that he can almost hear the Johnson grass snickering as it quickly regrows behind him. He recalls that earlier in his service, he began to call the left front side of the Parish House the “Johnson Grass Memorial.”

Meanwhile, James makes lessening circles around the perimeter of the property, sometimes almost disappearing into the distance. As he rounded the corners of the driveway, I thought of the alternate title of *The Hobbit*: There and Back Again, as round and round he slowly traversed, the mower spewing tiny bits of grass out into the increasingly hot air. Jim said that James had mentioned that sometimes he actually felt better after an afternoon of mowing as the slow, gently bumping motion of the mower was like a soothing massage. This may be true, but it might not be the case for the sauna like conditions that the two usually face.



**James Anderson**

Jim refers to the pair as “Partners in Grime,” a moniker easy to understand as the afternoon passes, the heat increases, and the dirt flies. The duo has been working together on this continuing project for several years. Jim says that he has been doing this work for multiple years since he served on the vestry, and James had been mowing on and off for several years before he took on the task on a full- time basis. Jim recalls that as he began his efforts, the time invested for each cutting and trimming was approximately 5 to 5 ½ hours, but with the newer, more efficient tools at hand, it now takes about 3 ½ to 4 hours each time.



**Jim Farris**

After a short break for a La Croix Seltzer, lovingly packed by Emily, whom Jim says takes better care of him than he does himself, and whom he calls the third “Partner in Grime,” the pair returns to their labor. As I begin to melt into a puddle, they return to their task, undaunted by the conditions which they face week after week. Still, knowing that Jim enjoys his “unfrenzied pace,” I know that I am impinging on their valuable time. I ask Jim more about the commitment, dedication, and concern for this chore which he has taken upon himself.

Jim pointed to the phrase “No good deed goes unpunished,” indicating that with this wonderful gift of the church and grounds, there is necessary upkeep. He also stated concerns for the future, as the population of the church is dwindling, and the average age of the parishioners increasing. He spoke of his concern for what he called the “Consumer Society” that seems to be turning away from a church community, and the impact that this has and will have on caring for our gifts and blessings in the coming years.

He spoke eloquently and repeatedly of his work as only supporting those who perform the “structured activities” that keep the Church moving forward. He feels a deep sense of privilege and honor to have been able to render this service for the church and church family that he truly loves. We are truly blessed to have two such dedicated and devoted members of our community. **Linda Myers**

### **“A Might Fortress: To sing or not to sing?”**

Our opening hymn on Sunday, August 22, will be “A Mighty Fortress is our God”. Unless you are in the choir, you will only be allowed to sing it in your mind because of our COVID restrictions; but think of it as an opportunity to reflect on the words, the melody, and the history of this hymn. And since you will be holding the Hymnal in your hands instead of watching PowerPoint, you will have a better opportunity to do so.



First, you will notice that there are two versions of this hymn (#687 and #688) in our Hymnal. Why two when the words and music of both are by Martin Luther? Two differences: first, #687 was harmonized by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) an innovative German composer, and the second (which we will sing) was harmonized by J. S. Bach. Also #687 is rhythmic while #688 is isometric. What does that mean? Doesn't “isometric” refer to some kind of exercise? Well yes, but in this case, “isometric means something like “sturdy rhythm” and “having equal measurement”. When we sing it, you can pat your foot to the beat. “Rhythmic” in contrast means “more irregular and often syncopated rhythms”. In other words, if I played #687 you would think I was trying to jazz it up or modernize it. But no, this was a style of Reformation music. Our Hymnal has two other examples. (Look at the two tunes to “Sleepers Wake” and to “Now Thank We All Our God.”)

We did sing #688 on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation but otherwise not very often. It is based on Psalm 46 and has been called “the great hymn of the Reformation” or, more colorfully, “the Marseillaise of the Reformation” but in our modern era, several objections have been raised to it. One is that it is too militaristic (fortress, bulwark etc.), another is that its references to the devil are theologically troubling, preaching a theology of dualism—two supreme but opposed powers—God versus Satan. A third is that it has words and references that are unclear to modern congregations. (Who is this Lord Sabaoth anyway?)

So least one person has tried to modernize the hymn by removing all male references to God and replacing Satan with various references to evil. “A mighty fortress is thy Love, a bulwark never failing; etc.” (Among the comments in reply: Why not just explain the original words? Let's see if it endures after a few hundred years.) Richard Schmidt, an Episcopal priest, includes this hymn in *Sing to the Lord an Old Song*, his book of meditations on old hymns that he believes still have relevance. Among his interesting thoughts, he concludes that the “one little word” that Jesus might use to fell the devil is “Ha!” as he recalls people such as those in Alcoholics Anonymous who have travelled and survived adversity so that what once “threatened their very lives has been reduced to a memory and a joke.” A final bit of relevance. Many historians agree that Luther wrote this hymn in 1527 as the plague was approaching. So, bear that in mind as you worship while wearing masks but giving thanks for the miracle of vaccines.

And by the way, “Lord Sabaoth” is translated as “Lord of hosts” or “Lord of power and might.”

#### **Sources:**

Hymnal 1982

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/a-mighty-fortress/>

<https://www.challies.com/articles/hymn-stories-a-mighty-fortress-is-our-god/>

Richard Schmidt, *Sing to the Lord an Old Song*. (Forward Movement: 2019)

<https://hackingchristianity.net/2017/10/for-reformation-500-an-inclusive-hymn-of-luthers-mighty-fortress.html>

**Jane Rainey**

## Christ's Birth Year

In the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, a well-meaning monk calculated the year of Christ's birth as 1 AD. Later study has changed this to between 4 and 6 BC. This date is derived from well dated secular events such as the death of Herod the Great. I wondered what the secular world was doing at the time of his birth and looked at the year 5 BC.

5 BC was known as the year of the consulship of Augustus and Sulla. It corresponded to parts of the years 3756-3757 of the Hebrew Calendar. There were two probable, large astronomical events: a nova and a supernova. Some people believe the Star of Bethlehem was a supernova, nova, comet, or conjunction of Jupiter with Venus or another planet. The Han Dynasty ruled in China.

The Roman empire was ruled by Augustus Caesar who was considered a great leader and established the Pax Romana (peace of Rome). Ordinary people were born, married, and died. Politicians argued. People worked as fishermen, merchants, scribes, religious leaders, etc. just as they do today minus much of the technology. Yet in this ordinary year (or possibly the one before or after), the founder of our faith was born in a barn and laid in a manger. What A Year! **James Anderson**



### Birthdays

Rev. Carol Ruthven	Aug. 20 <sup>th</sup>
Grace Sears	Aug 30 <sup>th</sup>
Dan Evans	September 8
Graham Locke	September 16

If you would like to add any events, please contact me!

### Parish Calendar

August 26: Embracing Evangelism 6 PM

August 25, September 8, 15, 22, 29: Contemplative Prayer 6 PM: Evening Prayer 7 PM

September 1: Contemplative Prayer 6 PM; Monthly Healing Service and Holy Eucharist 7 PM

September 4: Memorial Service for Father Arthur "Art" Conaway (Visitation 10:45 to 11:45; Memorial Service Noon; burial to follow at the Memorial Garden of the Cathedral Domain)

September 11: Daughters of the King Diocesan Assembly, St. Raphael's Church, Lexington

September 19: Launching the Renewal Works program in our parish

September 25: Pride Festival in Richmond

September 30: Clergy Day for diocesan clergy, Church of the Resurrection, Nicholasville

October 3: Blessing of the Animals, Eve of St. Francis Day

October 10: Bishop Mark Van Kouvering Annual Visit to our Parish



### **Ancient Joke of the Week**

A little boy was afraid of the dark. One night, his mother told him to go out on the porch and bring her the broom. The little boy turned to his mother and said "Mama, I don't want to go out there. It's dark." The mother smiled reassuringly at her son. "You don't have to be afraid of the dark, she explained.

"Jesus is out there. He'll look after you and protect you!"

The little boy looked at his mother "Are you sure He's out there?" "Yes, I'm sure, He is everywhere, and is always ready to help you when you need Him," she said. The little boy thought about this for a moment and then went to the back door, and cracked it a little. Peering out into the darkness he called "Jesus? If you're out there, would you please hand me the broom?"

*Thanks to all who contributed to this edition. If you would like to add a submission or an important date to share, please contact me. **Linda Myers***