

the st. james



April 2008

Volume 8 Number 4

Sunday Schedule

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00 am Adult Education
10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II
11:00 am Sunday School
11:15 am Coffee & Fellowship
11:45 am Children's Choir

St. James Episcopal Church
4515 Delray Street
Roanoke, Virginia 24012
Phone: 540-366-4157
Fax: 540-366-2851
Email: stjames@rev.net
www.stjamesroanoke.org

Rector's Message

Dear Saints of James,

Millie Collier is a poet, life long Roman Catholic, woman of faith, lover of Dorothy Day, Philadelphian, devoted wife and a compassionate friend. She and Michael have known each other since the early 1970 's when he taught at Yeadon High School. I have known Millie since 1985 when Michael and I were married. Recently Millie had one of her poems published in the *National Catholic Reporter* and she sent us a copy, which I share with you.

Network(ing)
By Mildred M. Collier

With tiny stitches like a quilt,
invisible to the naked eye
but infinite in number,
the net is woven-

Silently
it winds around you,
this unseen web of prayer;
a gossamer circle,
its strands shining and strong.

Spun
as with the quilt,
by many anonymous hands,
a gift of strangers –

to buoy you,
and lift you up
above the abyss
of pain and desolation

Rest easy in your silken net:
You are not alone.

(Inspired by those who ask us to pray for someone they love)
(con't. Page 2)

St. James Episcopal Church

Clergy:

The Rev. Susan E. Bentley, Rector
seb@rev.net

Staff:

Mrs. Connie Bierly, Secretary
 Mrs. Sharon Capps, Organist
 Mrs. Donna Park & Ms. Sandi Hudson,
 Sextons

The Connection:

Send copy to: sjconnection@cox.net
 Bill Williamson, Editor
wmson@cox.net
 All Saints of James, Reporters

Internet Web Page:

www.stjamesroanoke.org
 Butch Eanes, Webmaster
Weanes@rev.net

The St. James Vestry:

Senior Warden, Doris Mattox, 992-3088,
 Junior Warden, Maile Armstrong, 947-5016
 † Clerk, Lynn Wright, 992-5615
 † Treasurer, Matt Cordani, 362-3016,
 † Ass't. Treasurer, Avis Aheron, 774-0010
 † Rec. Treasurer, Bob Bird, 366-0996
 Helen Campbell, 489-4536, Jed Doak, 354-4164,
 Butch Eanes, 992-5195, Chuck Cohen, 366-3178,
 Michael Kennedy, 389-1003
 Bob Ostrom, 265-3771, Peter Hannon, 986-0778
 († - Not Vestry members)

Standing Committees

Christian Education:

Liturgy: Helen Campbell, 489-4536
Membership: Pat Ball, 725-8730
Outreach: Ray Kasey, 562-1956
Parish Life: Tricia Champion, 563-9554
Property: Maile Armstrong, 947-5016
Stewardship: Avis Aheron, 774-0010
Finance: Glen Lake 345-7550
 & Gail Fields, 265-0786

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#### Episcopal Church Women:

Pam Reilly, 362-0742

#### Daughters of the King:

Esther Williamson, 366-3177

We have done a lot of praying these past few weeks, as individuals and as a parish, supporting each other, asking for healing, for strength, for comfort. In the midst of the glory of the Easter resurrection, we are aware of our loss of members who have gone on to their eternal life in the risen Lord. This is painfully evident each Sunday as we see the empty spot of our Choir Director, Bill Capps. For one who loved the liturgy as Bill did, it was so theologically fitting that he die on Maundy Thursday, and have his funeral service on Easter Monday – it certainly was a glorious celebration of his life.

I am reminded of the apostle Paul's words to the people of Corinth. He talks about being the Body of Christ, and how we are all baptized into one body, which does not consist of one member but of many. As in our human body, Paul affirms that we all are important in our different roles, gifts and abilities, and that we are to care for each other. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (I Corinthians 12:26-27)

As Saints of James, we are part of the Body of Christ and we share each other's joys and sorrows. We surround each other with a web of prayer. We see the image of Christ in each other, and we gather together in worship each week to proclaim that we are an Easter people and our song is alleluia.

Easter Blessings, SEB+

### Heartfelt Thanks

Sharon, Joanna, and Mary Leigh would like to thank all the Saints of James for their outpouring of love and support during our recent loss. Bill loved everything he did at St. James, and everyone here. Thank you for helping us deal with his death with style and celebration. There is no place quite like St. James, and no folks quite like you. Thank you for continuing to remember us in your prayers as we continue to be God's people, in God's special place here at St. James.

Sincerely, Sharon, Joanna and Mary Leigh

### The Stewardship Corner

All things come from you, O Lord, and of your own have we given you.

+  
+ +  
Time + + Talent  
+ +  
+ + + + +  
Treasure

**Pledged and Unpledged Support:** It was previously reported that pledged and unpledged support were running behind in the month of January. February's pledged and unpledged support totaled \$12,033 compared to the monthly budgeted amount of \$9,811. After taking a closer look at the budget and pledged and unpledged funds that have been received through February, there is a positive variance of \$6,008 at the end of February. This is due to the receipt of prepaid pledges in 2007 for 2008 in the amount of \$13,284. Please continue to fulfill your commitments timely and thank you.

**St. James Cycle of Prayer:** In April we give thanks for the services of the Property Committee members and the Gardeners. We pray that their ministry to maintain, enhance, and beautify the parish property and grounds continue to be rendered to the Glory of God.

**Kroger Cares Program:** We have been participating in the Kroger Cares Program for a year now and have received a total of \$2,263 through February. When the total reloads reach \$5,000 or more, St. James receives a rebate check from Kroger for 5% of all the associated reloads. Please remember to load your Kroger gift card before you pay for your groceries or gas, and St. James will receive credit for your purchases. Check with Dorothy Herndon if you'd like to purchase a card for \$5.00.

**Adopt-a-Day:** For a donation of \$33.00, you can celebrate a special occasion or honor a loved one on their special day. Forms can be found on the table outside the secretary's office. Forms will also be emailed during the first week of each month and can be filled out and returned to the parish secretary via email. Please mail your donation to the church or put it in the offering plate. In 2007, 45 days were adopted leaving 320 to still be adopted. Please consider "adopting" a day in 2008.

As the new stewardship committee chair, one of my responsibilities is to submit information to be published in the Stewardship Corner of the monthly

Connection publication. This is no small task for someone who has not written anything other than emails for many years and has limited experience with stewardship at St. James.

I have spent the past few weeks reading numerous publications on stewardship, surfing websites of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center ([www.stewardshipresources.org](http://www.stewardshipresources.org)) and the Stewardship Office of the Episcopal Church ([www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship)) and talking with Mother Sue about "growing joyful stewards." I am pleased to report that while overwhelmed by the amount of information and strategies for stewardship available, I haven't thrown up my hands and run from the task at hand. Rather I have spent a good deal of time in quiet thought reflecting on how the experience of giving brings us into a closer relationship with God. To quote John H. Westerhoff, "We have only one ministry: to serve God in every moment, wherever we are, whatever we are doing, as stewards of the gift of life itself."

I hope that in the months to come we will learn about "growing joyful stewards" and that stewardship is about loving God with our heart, soul, mind and strength, and that stewardship, giving and generosity are not just about meeting budgets.

Avis Aheron

When you need a will,  
it will be too late to write one.  
**Don't wait.**  
And don't forget your church.

### E-Mail Address

Please make sure that our parish secretary, Connie Bierly, has your current e-mail address, so that we can send you important parish news. Just send an email to: [stjames@rev.net](mailto:stjames@rev.net) and ask Connie to add you to our email list.

**Funeral Homily for  
William Oliver Capps, Jr.  
March 24, 2008  
St. James Episcopal Church  
Roanoke, Virginia**

Job 19:25-27; Psalm 121; Revelation 7:9-17; John 11:21-27

One of Bill's favorite choir sayings was: "When all else fails, look at the director!" Our Risen Lord is our director today, as we gather together to celebrate the life of William Oliver Capps Jr., known to most of us as Bill, and to some of his family as Dickie.

Without Bill vested and seated in his director's spot, we look to the one who said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." Bill knew the truth of this reality, and it gave him strength and peace, such that he left specific instructions written to his priest and family. At the bottom of his funeral plans he wrote: "It is my fervent desire that these instructions be followed. I hope that the funeral service will be celebrated to the glory of God. I ask that the emphasis be more thanksgiving for my life than sorrow for my death."

So here are our directions, we are to give glory to God for creating his child Bill, and give thanks for his life of 60 years, and all the ways we have been touched by him. All of us here have our own stories of how our lives have been graced by Bill's presence among us. I first met Bill in the early 80's through the Cursillo movement, when I was young in age and growing in my faith. For me, Bill was a fountain of Bible knowledge and touched me with his wonderful singing and his Spirit filled faith. His faith led him to a healing ministry in the Order of St. Luke. Several years ago, Bill gave me the oil stock that he had used for anointing for healing in the Order, to be used by St. James in their healing ministry. Each month when I did Sunday morning anointings at the altar, Bill was the second person at the left end of the altar rail. Using that oil stock, I would anoint Bill, as I did for the final time last Wednesday evening, praying "that you may know the healing power of God's love."

I believe Bill did know that healing power and God's love. He understood that in spite of what might be happening with his body, there was a greater reality at work. He knew that his Redeemer lives, and that his belief in him would bring him

eternal life. And that is why Bill wants us to celebrate his death today, because he believed deeply that this is not a day to lament what has become of him, or sorrow for him, but one of rejoicing – for today he is singing with the heavenly chorus of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven – and he is in his glory, in a place where there is no pain, or sorrow but life everlasting.

Later in this service we will pray the prayer called the Great Thanksgiving, saying, "For to your faithful people, O Lord, life is changed not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens." This is the faith that Bill had and in the midst of our very real feelings of grief and loss, Bill wanted us to be comforted and rejoice in this knowledge.

The last time Bill was a part of our worship at St. James, was 3 weeks ago, the Fifth Sunday in Lent and the Gospel lesson was the Raising of Lazarus, a portion of which we heard read a few minutes ago. When Jesus calls the dead man Lazarus out of the tomb, he says to the gathered neighbors, friends, and family members, "Unbind him and let him go." Bill has been unbound and we must let him go free. He is no longer shackled to machines, treatments, tests, schedules, medical equipment, or assistance by others. He has been unloosed to live into the fullness of his creation, in the light of the Risen Christ, in whom Bill put his faith, hope, and trust.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me, even though they die, will live."

Bill continues to live with us. I feel his presence here in this place where Bill worshipped God for 34 years, where he sang God's praises, and where he was fed by the spiritual food of God's Body and Blood, which was a foretaste of the heavenly banquet where Bill is now feasting. We will keep him alive by telling those tales and sharing the memories that bring smiles to our faces, laughter to our lips, and sometimes tears to our eyes.

And so this day, we offer thanks to God. We offer thanks for Bill, for all he has meant to us, and for all he continues to mean. We offer thanks for his 60 years of life, for his 38 years of marriage with Sharon, for giving us Joanna and Mary Leigh. We offer thanks for his wonderful voice that brought joy to our hearts, his talent for drama that brightened our

lives, his keen mind and knowledge that challenged us to be life long learners, and his gift of taking time to be present to others. And we offer thanks that what we face today is not a final devastation, but rather an opportunity to see the reality of Resurrected Life and believe with the faith, hope, and love of our friend and companion Bill, who knew that God is our ultimate director.

“When all else fails, look at the Director.”  
Amen.

© The Reverend Susan E. Bentley

### **Fulfilling one last request**

“When did Jeff get old?”

Gee, thanks for the humble pie, Joanna.

This keen observer of my advanced years is a bit younger than I am. I chalked up such a comment to the fact that I had not seen her for more than a year.

When I lived in Roanoke, I watched Joanna and her sister Leigh grow up. They were like little sisters to me, and to my wife. Later, as our sons went from infants to toddlers and beyond, the girls became like sisters to them.

Their mother, Sharon, was also like a second mom to us. Their father, Bill, was like a second father to us both. We also have the honor of Bill and Sharon as the godparents to our sons.

Bill Capps made a special request of me a number of years ago. Would I do a special reading for him, when the time came? Of course, I answered, thinking the day would be many years in the future. Recently, Leigh and Sharon reminded me and I had not forgotten.

I felt honored to fulfill his personal wish, while feeling a twinge of concern. In spite of the countless times over the last 15 years I have served as a lay reader, this time I knew I might have a rough time getting through the liturgy.

The trouble was Bill would never be able to hear me follow through on the request. Nor would he hear the choir he had directed for many years. He would not be able to take communion or see the many family and friends who had gathered in the church.

This time, the choirmaster would not occupy his usual seat between the altar rail and the organ, right next to his wife. He held a different place of honor during this service, the day after Easter.

Sharon did not sit at the organ and accompany the choir. This time she sat in the front of the church in a regular pew, surrounded by her daughters and hundreds of others who had come to St. James.

William O. Capps Jr. died early Thursday morning, March 20. The liturgy of Christian burial took place Monday, March 24, just 24 hours after the Easter service. The Episcopal burial service is an Easter liturgy, and uses the celebration of Christ's resurrection as the basis for the service.

I think Bill would have liked the fact that we all shared two Easter services in one weekend.

As for me, and my small portion of the service, I got up at the appointed time in the liturgy and lead prayers for the departed and for his grieving family.

A few minutes before I got up to read, I took off my glasses so I could cheat a little. I was not attempting to stave off any more comments that I looked older. Without glasses, I could not see any familiar faces as I looked out at the assembly. I could read the prayers for Bill and grant one of his simple wishes for his final service.

The last service he would direct would go off without a hitch and he would not be there physically to oversee it. I know in my heart that he was present, and I feel that he would have been pleased at how it went.

He would have taken comfort in the fulfillment of one of his last requests about the event itself: “I hope that the funeral service will be celebrated to the glory of God. I ask that the emphasis be more thanksgiving for my life than sorrow for my death.”

Well, Bill, we did celebrate and we gave thanks for your life because it touched the lives of so many of us.

You will have to allow us a little time to deal with the sorrow part.

William “Bill” Capps Jr. - husband, father, godparent, teacher, veteran, musician, actor, one of the “Saints of James.”

*Jeff Walker is an independent columnist who lives in Culpeper.*

## **Are You Called to be a Daughter of the King?**

The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is a spiritual Sisterhood of women dedicated to a life of Prayer, Service and Evangelism. We have made a commitment to Jesus as our Savior, and we follow Him as Lord of our lives. We are an Order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church, churches in communion with T.E.C., or churches in the Historic Episcopate. Today our membership includes women in the Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA) and Roman Catholic churches.

We are an Order, not an Organization. An Order is a community under a religious rule; especially one requiring members to take solemn vows. We don't just enroll as members and attend meetings, we take life-long vows to follow the Rule of Prayer and Rule of Service.

Through our Rule of Prayer we promise to pray daily:

- ◆ For the unity of Christ's Church.
- ◆ For the spread of Christ's Kingdom, especially among women and girls.
- ◆ For God's blessing upon members of the Order.
- ◆ For the spiritual growth of the parish and the clergy of the parish where the Chapter is formed.
- ◆ For the Grace to follow our Rule and our own needs.

Through our Rule of Service, a Daughter seeks daily to do the will of God where she is, remembering Jesus' words, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these...you did it for me." Matt. 25:40(NIV). The Rule of Service is the application of one's Baptismal vow, reaffirmed by Confirmation:

- ◆ To be Christ's faithful servant in the extension of His Kingdom.
- ◆ To regularly take part in the worship, study and work of the church.
- ◆ To render at all times aid to the clergy as deemed necessary for the Spiritual health of the parish.

If you feel called or would like to know more about the Order you can ask any member (you will know us by the cross we wear) or visit the website at

[Http://www.dok-national.org/](http://www.dok-national.org/)

## **St. James Wish List**

After several inquiries, the St. James Vestry has established a "Wish List" of items that we would like but our budget doesn't currently allow us to purchase. Some are items that could help our parish office run more smoothly. Others could benefit Christian Education or the parish at large. If you would like to make a donation or could access items through your business or other organization, please contact a member of the Vestry or the Rector for more specific information about these products. We thank you for all you do for our St. James family and recognize that assistance with our "Wish List" is over and above our pledge obligations or donations.

Cross-Cut Shredder-Staples Brand, heavy duty \$150

Three-Hole Punch-Staples Brand, adjustable \$ 40

Paper Trimmer, Staples Brand, heavy duty w/ lock \$100

Automated External Defibrillator, Cardiac Science Powerheart Plus, G-3 \$1350

Weather Radio

Hands Free Nursery Gate, Toys R Us \$55

Digital TV, DVD & VCR Player on rolling cart \$630 (\$80 AV Cart-online, free shipping, \$90 Combo DVD/VCR Toshiba Model #SDV295 Circuit City, \$460 26" LCD Curtis Mathis TV, Walmart)

An electric stapler has been received.

Contributions towards a brass Advent Wreath Stand which will be ordered by the Altar Guild

## Adopt-A-Day 2008

Jan. 25 adopted by Esther & Bill Williamson in celebration of the birth of Evan Lee Miller.

Jan. 30 adopted by Mimi & Bob Copenhagen in celebration of their 54th wedding anniversary.

Feb. 03 adopted by Bishop Neff & Dorothy Powell.

Feb. 12 adopted by Dorothy Herndon in celebration of Marty Herndon's birthday.

Feb. 13 adopted by Doris & Larry Mattox in celebration of Joyce Brown's 82nd birthday.

Mar. 17 adopted by James & Doris Champion in memory of James R. Champion, Jr.

**Aug. 3 adopted by Cam Srgan in celebration of Sharon Capp's birthday**

**Aug. 8 adopted by James & Linda Kyle in celebration of their 38th wedding anniversary.**

Aug. 15 adopted by Robert & Carol Killinger in honor of Lonnie Bower on her birthday.

Nov. 27 adopted by Denise & Randy Smerecki in memory of Casimer Smerecki.

***New listings are bolded***

### Youth News:

5th and 6th graders read carefully - there is some stuff here for you too!

The Youth have some great things coming up! Please put them on your calendar and try to join us. These activities are for all youth at St James (and their friends) in grades 7-12!

April 27 Global Youth Service Day:

We will be joining Roanoke Area Youth (RAY) for a cleanup at Riverbend park. We will leave after church to grab some lunch (Taco Bell anyone? ), so bring your dirty clothes and tennis shoes (as opposed to sandals). We will return to St James at 7:00 after attending the contemporary service and dinner at St. John's. Bring clothes to change into so we don't sit there wet and nasty for dinner. If you only can come for the clean-up, that's OK too :) Cost: Lunch money. May 2-4 Mass on the Mountain.

**\*\*For 6th - 12th graders \*\*** Join Diocesan Youth in a camp out and Climb up around Natural Bridge.

Fishing is allowed as well! The Bishop will be joining us for a mountain top Eucharist on Saturday as well. Check out the registration on line at [dioswvayouth.wordpress.com](http://dioswvayouth.wordpress.com) Cost: \$50

May 4: Messy Antics. Join RAY at the Spring Convocation at St Peter's Calloway for a VERY messy VERY fun time while the adults have their meeting. Find out about all the upcoming events too! We'll leave from St James at 1:30 and return to St James by 4:30. Cost: none (but wear old stuff and bring a change of clothes so we don't mess up the bus on the way home !

May 16 - 18 Spring Youth Event (SYE)

For grades 5-8 only \*\* That's right, 5th and 6th graders are welcome at this event\*\*

Curious George is the theme this year at this special retreat for Middle School Youth (and special guests of the 5th grade youth). Come see who the man in the yellow hat really is and just why is George so curious???? You'll never know unless you go! Starts Friday evening and lasts until early Sunday afternoon. We may take the bus, if enough youth sign up to go, so let me know soon! Cost:\$ 75. More info and registration on line at [dioswvayouth.wordpress.com](http://dioswvayouth.wordpress.com)

Please Note: There is ALWAYS scholarship money available for these events. Don't let a little thing like money STOP YOU from coming out and praising the Lord with tons of other great Youth from our Diocese! Check with the Rector for scholarship help.

And Don't forget about all those great Camps and summer Mission Trip offerings for the Summer - don't be left out and behind - register NOW!

Beth Wiegandt

### Future Baptismal Dates

The next dates scheduled for the Sacrament of Baptism are:

Pentecost Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>

Celebration of the Feast of St. James, July 20<sup>th</sup>

All Saints Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>

If you desire to be Baptized or have a child that you would like to be baptized, contact the Rector to arrange for Baptismal preparation.

## From the Parish Register, 2008

### Baptism

Mariah Cordani, February 3, 2008

### Confirmations

Rachel Ostrom, February 3, 2008

Susan Tolliver, February 3, 2008

### Reception

Denise Smerecki, February 3, 2008

### Marriage

Julia Felts and Ronald Taylor, March 29, 2008

### Deaths

June Bessell, January 7, 2008

Louise Southern, January 14, 2008

Eric Brown, February 14, 2008

Bill Capps, March 20, 2008

Jean Garman, March 28, 2008

### Transfers In:

Ron Taylor, February 2008

Jody Harrison, February 2008

## Daughters of the King Spring Assembly

Daughters of the King from our Diocese will gather for a Spring Assembly on Saturday, April 26, 2008 at Ascension Episcopal Church in Amherst, VA, beginning at 9:30 a.m. The guest speaker, Nancy Strachan, from St. John's, Bedford, had the rare opportunity of meeting Immaculee' Ilibagiza, author of *Left to Tell, Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, and has traveled with her to Rwanda. Nancy reports the trip forever changed her. Mark your calendars and plan to attend the assembly, and buy a copy of the book to read before we gather. The Spring Assembly will also include a brief business meeting, Holy Eucharist celebrated by The Rev. Susan E. Bentley, the diocesan DOK Chaplain, and a buffet luncheon, provided by Karen Smith-Moretz, a Daughter of the King affiliated with the Shepherdess of St. James. Registration forms are in the Parish Hall and will be accepted by Helen Campbell, DOK Diocesan Treasurer.

## April Book Study

You won't want to miss reading *Left to Tell, Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, by Immaculee' Ilibagiza. This is the story of a 22 year old Rwandan native caught in the 1994 genocide of one million ethnic Tutsis. She survived by hiding in a

Hutu pastor's tiny bathroom with 7 other starving women for 91 cramped days. Her unquenchable faith and connection to God throughout the ordeal is uplifting and inspiring. The book is for sale in the Parish Hall for \$12.00. Checks can be made out to the Rector's Discretionary Fund and put in the envelope with the books. The books study group will meet April 23 from 3:45 to 5:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to buy the book even if you are not able to come to the discussion. For more information on Immaculee' Ilibagiza, see the article on the DOK Spring Assembly.

## ThankYou

Many heartfelt thanks to all of my St. James family for the outpouring of cards and gifts you have given to us and to Evan. We have appreciated each and every thing. A very special thanks to the anonymous person who crept up our back stairs and left a very generous package last week. We love you all.

Krystal and Woody Miller

## Stained Glass Windows

As you may have noticed, the George P Lawrence memorial stained glass window has been removed from the nave for repair. The window had buckled significantly at the bottom, due to the pressure of heat expanding between the outside clear glass window and the inner stained glass. The window has been delivered to the studio of the original artist Kathy Sue Hudson for repair, and we are discussing ways to relieve the heat build up between the glass of all our stained glass windows.

Our former member, Frances Stebbins, has written an article for the magazine *Prime Living* about the stained glass work of Kathy Sue Hudson and our windows are featured with pictures in the March 2008 issue. There are copies of the magazine in the Parish Hall.

## Alternate Council Delegates

The Vestry will be electing two people to serve as Alternate Delegates to our Annual Diocesan Council, January 30, 31, Feb 1, 2009, at the April 21<sup>st</sup> Vestry meeting. This is a two year commitment for Alternate Delegates who will serve one year as the alternate and attend the next Annual Council as a Delegate. There are also three Convocation meetings a year that Alternate and Delegates need to attend. If you are interested in being nominated as an Alternate, contact the Sr. Warden, Doris Mattox or the Rector.

## Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Responds to Darfur Genocide

By passing Resolution #7, the Eighty-Ninth Annual Council of Southwestern Virginia unanimously joined sister dioceses in Virginia and Southern Virginia in calling for divesting of investments in the Sudan.

The people of the Darfur region of that country have been attacked repeatedly by government troops and government-sponsored militias. The country's government claims 9,000 have died, but estimates run as high as 450,000. It is so terrible that in 2004 then-Secretary of State Colin Powell called the situation "genocide," as President Bush and Congress have repeatedly declared.

State after state has passed bills divesting of companies, many of them affiliated with China, doing business with the Sudanese government and thus contributing to the atrocities—and China itself has been a major ally of oil-rich Sudan.

Two bills were proposed to this year's General Assembly session, each providing for divesting the Virginia Retirement System of these companies. They had bipartisan support. One bill, HB556, patroned by Del. Shannon Valentine, a communicant of St. Paul's, Lynchburg, died in committee. The second, SB87, was passed unanimously by the Senate. It, too, died without action in a

subcommittee of the House of Delegates.

Many hope to try again next year, using the intervening time to address various concerns about how the divestment might occur without undue cost to beneficiaries of the retirement funds.

However, each diocese voted a second commitment: for itself and its congregations to check their own portfolios and divest of any companies identified as supporting Sudanese genocide. A list can be found on request at a website, [www.sudandivestment.org](http://www.sudandivestment.org).

Already, our diocese has begun to look into its holdings. At February's Executive Board meeting, diocesan treasurer John Hall reported that the diocese does not hold any of these companies directly. Indirect holdings, such as through mutual funds, are harder to discern.

Parishes should search, just as the diocese is doing. Why? Confronting apartheid in South Africa proved that international influence, including economic pressure, can produce change.

So too, just this month, an official of the Sudanese government, no less, asked the Chinese government *not* to invest in his own country. "The lives of the innocent Darfurian people are at stake here," he said. "The message I gave to the Chinese is this: Do not invest in Darfur blood."

If, for the sake of the Darfurians, the Chinese shouldn't invest there, why

should Virginians?

There is one more reason. All during their long civil war, which could resume at any moment, Sudanese people have been pleading with the world, "Do not forget us." They don't ask for intervention; they appeal for prayers, and for the sorts of help that we can offer.

This is one.

*David Cox is priest-in-charge of St. Luke's, Hot Springs.*

**Resolution: #7** (as amended by the 89th Council)

**From: The Rev. David Cox and Elizabeth McCarthy (St. Luke's, Hot Springs)**

**Concerning: Sudan Divestment**

**Be it resolved** that this 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia urge the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia to pass House Bill 556 ("Retirement System; investments related to Sudan") as well as Senate Bill 87, both of which would divest all Commonwealth funds from corporations that support the genocide in Darfur; and

**Be it further resolved** that this Council urges the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and the members of this diocese to examine their own investments and divest from any companies that support the Government of Sudan in its genocidal actions in Darfur.

*Resolution #7 is found at <http://www.dioswva.org/files/Resolution%207%20%28Divestiture%29.pdf>*