

Connections



Rector's Reflections

The Rev. Brian Shoda

June is a special month for me as it was on June 6, 1987 that I was ordained a priest for the Roman Catholic Church in West Virginia. I served in that capacity until 2013 when I switched over to the Episcopal Church to serve in the Diocese of West Virginia. This move came at great cost to me, especially in the friendships that I had established over the years. Many people could not understand my leaving the Roman Catholic Church and many have wanted to know why I did it. Once I had made this decision I could not speak to my former people officially as I was barred from doing so by my bishop at the time. I would like to make some explanation in this column as it is on my mind.

I was very conservative as a Catholic, in fact I was often called a 'Papal Redneck', a term that I appreciated. However, my emphasis has always been on the people and it was that relationship that moved me into my new denomination. I did not like the fact that the Catholic faith only ordains unmarried men. I worked hard for vocations and saw many good candidates turned away because they wanted also to get married and have a family. I came to dislike the fact that only Roman Catholics in good standing within the church were allowed to receive communion. A dangerous question for Catholics to ask is, 'What would Jesus do?' I don't think He would turn them away from the table.

I also disliked the challenges and sometimes humiliation that people had to go through to get an annulment of a previous marriage. We all make mistakes and we all know people who have been divorced. Many remarried and are very happy and productive today. If they could not or did not get an annulment, they were not allowed to receive communion because they were 'living in sin' in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. After I joined the Episcopal Church I saw that women priests were every bit as good as male priests. The role of women is greatly

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The Episcopal Church

Listen for Jesus' movement in our lives and in the world. Give thanks. Proclaim and celebrate it! Invite the Spirit to do the rest.

"God is even kinder
than you think"

St. Therese

St. Mark's

Window restoration has begun with the selection of Epiphany Studios! Watch for beautifully restored windows by the end of the summer.



Window Restoration to Begin

After much investigation, discussion, reflection, and financial planning a company has been engaged by our vestry to restore our beautiful stained glass windows.

Epiphany Studios, Inc. of Front Royal, Virginia has been selected to restore the glass, leading, and window frames. After restoration the window frames will be painted inside and out. The final step of the project is to install protective glass outside each window. This protective glass will be sealed and vented to prevent future discoloration. Epiphany Studios provides a 10-year guarantee covering defective materials and workmanship on their work.

The benefits of this project are many. Once completed our severely compromised windows will be restored to their original beauty. No more cracks, holes, or bowing to the point of collapse will exist. Insulation from sound, heat, and cold is an added benefit and may very well reduce our energy costs in the future.

Our total investment will be \$47,255 paid in fairly quick installments as the project is expected to take about three weeks to complete. More than half of what is needed has already been raised and we thank everyone who has faithfully donated to this effort. Fundraising efforts will continue.

Please consider making a donation to this project, especially if you have not done so thus far. All donations will be gratefully received.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

The Diocese of West Virginia

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer,
Bishop of West Virginia

Clergy and staff

The Rev. D. Brian Shoda, *Rector*
Margaret Place, *Organist*
Kim Kelly, *Sexton*

Vestry and officers

Arlene Verge, *Senior Warden*
Judy McBee, *Junior Warden*
Sandy Buzzerd, *Treasurer*
Susie Barker, Beth Curtin, Melinda Golden, Kim Kelly, Linda Lockhart, Swanee Shedd, Cindy Stull

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Upcoming dates to remember

June 4 (Monday) – Lori Higgs's birthday! 🍰

June 5 (Tuesday) – Game night at 6:00 pm

June 6 (Wednesday) – Father Brian's anniversary of being ordained a priest!

June 15 (Friday) – St. Mark's volunteers at Starting Points Community Kitchen, contact: Arlene Verge

June 19 (Tuesday) – Linda Lockhart's birthday! 🎈

June 28 (Thursday) – Phil Redmond's birthday! 🍰



Getting to know you

Swanee Shedd

Swanee's cheerful and exuberant nature is evident even in a short conversation.

She was born in Winchester and spent all her young life in Round Hill, Virginia. Round Hill was a small community, located between Washington, DC and Winchester, which only offered an Episcopal service once a month. On the *off* weeks she worshiped with the Baptist congregation in town.

Loudoun County had been home to Swanee's family for a very long time. One of her great-grandfathers is buried in the county's Quaker cemetery. Her interest in Virginia and love of Loudoun County history in particular encouraged her to participate in the development and planting of St. David's Episcopal Church in Ashburn. There is a wealth of information that Swanee can share about this wonderful experience if you ever have the chance to chat with her about them.

Her high school years were filled with fun. The yearly Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester created many cherished memories. When her high school years came to an end she was off to France for a year to live with her aunt and uncle. Her trip home in 1st class on an ocean liner capped off a wonderful time. It also kindled a love of travel that has stayed with her throughout her life.

Her trips have included a tour of England and Wales; a pilgrimage tour to Scotland and

Wales; a church trip to Holland; a visit to Germany; and possibly most memorable, time in the Holy Lands that included a few days in Turkey and the Greek Isles.

Today Swanee is happy to live in Berkeley Springs with her sheltie, Booty Boots and jet-black cat, Jetty. Her son Michael and his family are also in Berkeley Springs and daughter, Lindy lives in Baltimore. Swanee especially enjoys her 4 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. The youngest of whom, Rose, is a joy to take care of on occasion.

Since joining our community she has become active in Knitwits, a knitting group in town; the senior center; aerobic swimming; the garden club; the local Red Hatters; and the 55 Club. Whew, all that would keep anyone busy, but that's not all. As a member of our congregation she serves on the vestry.

Swanee is quick to say that she loves the way the St. Mark's family has made her feel very welcome. It has been our joy to have her join us and we are thankful for the gifts she brings and shares with us all.

Join

We are not meant to stand on our own, but to be joined with others into a structure that is greater than its individual parts. We often fail to understand this in our day. We are constantly being encouraged to form ourselves, to focus on our own individual achievements and successes. But one stone cannot make a house, or even a wall. We must be joined together if our lives are to have meaning.

-Br. David Vryhof
Society of Saint John the Evangelist

Vestry Update – May vestry meeting

Arlene Verge, Susie Barker, Beth Curtin, Melinda Golden, Linda Lockhart, Judy McBee, Swanee Shedd, Father Brian Shoda, and Sandy Buzzerd were present at the meeting.

Updates on old business:

- A \$1,000 donation by the family of Ruth Johnson will be added to the Stained Glass Restoration fund as well as the profits from the May Yard and Bake Sale.
- Father Brian and Judy McBee met with Epiphany Studios representatives to get a proposal for what needs to be done to repair the church windows. Their assessment is that the lead is in good shape and the bowing is easier to fix than we originally thought. Braces would be used to support the glass and it should not take away from the appearance of the windows. They would also rearrange some of the windows to make the smaller windows with color borders more uniform. Their total cost to repair the windows, scrape and paint the wood, remove and dispose of hazardous waste, and install a glass covering on the outside of the windows with the same glass as is used in a car windshield would be \$47,254.97. After discussion a motion was made and seconded to accept the Epiphany Studios bid and move forward with the project. The motion passed unanimously. Work is to begin in June.
- Fund raising efforts will continue to fully fund the project.

Announcements and general information:

- Our next game night will be held on Tuesday, June 5.
- No vestry meeting will be held in June.

Rector's Reflections – continued

enhanced in this church. I have come to have a new respect for people who are living alternative lifestyles such as gays, lesbians, and transgender people. They are God's people as well and worthy of the love God gives to all his children.

This is a short list of things, but I wanted to share them with you. I know that I am where I need to be. I love the Roman Catholic Church, but it needs to change in my opinion and I know that it won't do it in my lifetime. The Episcopal Church is filled with dignity, diversity, and the same desire to serve God and love God's people. I'm glad I 'came over'.

God Bless! *Fr. Brian*