

illumine

enlightening and celebrating where God is at work in our midst



A PUBLICATION OF
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
Transfiguration

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Worship Service Times

Wednesday | 6:00 p.m.

Thursday | 12:00 p.m.

Saturday | 5:30 p.m.

Sunday | 9:00 a.m.* and 11:15 a.m.*

*Childcare available for children
6 weeks to age 5.



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Illumine is a quarterly publication of Church of the Transfiguration. The word itself has two meanings: to light up or brighten and to enlighten (someone) spiritually or intellectually. The goal behind this magazine is to tell the stories of this congregation, highlight new ministries, and celebrate where God is at work in our midst.



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Cover photo by John Makowski



From the Rector

Revering Mary, Defending Women

One of my favorite images of Mary and Jesus is by the graphic artist Parker Fitzgerald of **ninebreaker**.

I have always loved the Irish aesthetic of the image, with its direct homage to the Book of Kells and other ancient Celtic illuminations. But the thing I focus on most when I use the image for devotion is the fierceness of Mary. She radiates with intensity and strength, which are characteristics that she must have possessed in abundance, alongside faith and courage. Too much Christian art has domesticated this remarkable woman, making meek and docile the one who literally carried God within her own body. In case we forget, it is from Mary's lips that we hear the ancient song of revolution, Magnificat, with its message that God is exalting the humble and casting down the rich and mighty from their positions of power (Luke 1:46–56). Throughout Christian tradition, beginning with the angel Gabriel's initial greeting, Mary has been hailed as favored by God, queen of heaven, unique among all of the faithful.

For Christians, our devotion to the fierce and courageous mother of Jesus should compel us to deeper respect and appreciation for all women. If God is willing to enter into the world through a woman,



"Madonna and Child" by ninebreaker

that should reveal God's estimation of the dignity and capability of all women. And yet even in 2017, women remain vulnerable and threatened around the world, including right here in our nation. They continue to be paid a fraction of what men earn, are dramatically underrepresented among leaders of corporations and governance (there are actually more Fortune 500 company CEOs named John than there are women combined), continue to suffer frightening rates of abuse and assault, and, as recent news has demonstrated, are targeted by predatory men in positions of authority far too often.

The sad reality is that Christians are too often a part of the problem, rather than the solution. Just recently, in an effort to defend a senatorial candidate who has been accused of sexual misconduct with teenage girls, a prominent Christian supporter of that candidate manipulated the Bible into defending the propriety of such relationships. "Take the Bible," he said. "Zachariah and Elizabeth for instance. Zachariah was extremely old to marry Elizabeth and they became the parents of John the Baptist. Also take Joseph and Mary. Mary was a teenager and Joseph was an adult carpenter. They became parents of Jesus."

It seems an odd thing to need to say, but with the foundational morality of our society under increasing threat, even the obvious deserves repeating: Christians don't use Mary and Joseph to defend molesting children. It is not only ridiculous to link the story of Jesus' parentage to such abuses, it is downright blasphemous. Mary was not a victim of molestation, but a willing participant in God's plan of salvation. Joseph was not Mary's sexual partner, but a brave companion and protector. Sexual relationships between adults and children are wrong, and we must clearly rebuke any effort to defend such behavior, especially when it involves the perversion of our faith and Scriptures.

We must also be clear in standing against all abuse of women, under any circumstances. I am a proud member of HeROs ("He Respects Others"), the auxiliary of Genesis Women's Shelter that strives to help men become part of the solution to domestic violence. HeROs' operating principle is that men are the overwhelming cause of violence against women, so men must be active in helping end it. As a father of two daughters, I am horrified by the fact that one out of five women are raped in their lifetime, and I'm appalled that the response women often receive when they report abuse is doubt and deflection. Our societal toleration of the abuse of women is entirely unacceptable. As Christians, we must be part of fulfilling Mary's prophetic vision in order to turn our sad current reality on its head. We must be leaders in defending the vulnerable and standing for the dignity of all.

This Advent and Christmas, I invite you to remember the fierce and courageous mother of our Lord. Pray Mary's revolution song with me, and hear her words anew. And allow the one who grew inside of her to stir up in you the conviction to protect and defend women and girls everywhere. 🙏

—Casey+



First Informed Communion Retreat

Who calls you to the table at Holy Communion? How did the Holy Eucharist begin? What does the food you eat at this meal do for you?

By Cindy Hauser

The Episcopal Church practice of an open table is extended to all baptized persons, regardless of how old they are, and many of our children at Transfiguration have been receiving the Eucharist with their families from a very young age.

There does come a time when guided instruction about why we do what we do during communion is helpful and necessary. To answer this need, Transfiguration offers an annual First Informed Communion Retreat, designed to help children to connect more deeply with the Eucharist.

This year's retreat was held on Sunday, October 22 for baptized children ages six and up and at least one of their parents. The three-hour retreat was facilitated by a number of people: youth volunteers, members of the Altar Guild, Godly Play teachers, clergy and me. We began our time together by talking about important meals and celebrations and participating in a "show and tell" about the day they were baptized. James Mazur, age 6, shared that the most important part of the day for him was "talking about my baptism because it made me think about how I'm part of God's family." His mom, Meghan, said "Hearing everyone's stories about their children's baptisms was so touching. It reminded me how important it is to raise our children in community with other faithful parents."

Godly Play teachers told three stories, each one illustrating who calls us and who is called to the Communion table, how the Eucharist began, and the sequence of liturgical actions within the Holy Eucharist.





PHOTOS BY ROBERT HACKER AND CINDY HAUSER

Brennan's favorite part of the retreat was "listening to the three stories. I really liked the Good Shepherd story because the sheep followed the Good Shepherd."

Next, members of the Altar Guild led participants on a tour of the Nave and Sacristies, followed by instruction in the church by Mother Erin Jean Warde on what happens during the Eucharist and how to receive communion. Wendy Cone said, "I loved having Mother Erin and Whitney Holley explain all the steps in the Holy Communion process: the set up before the service and the why behind it." Kids were able to ask questions and have them answered while standing with the elements around the altar. Children remarked that they were glad to know "how to use the bread and wine correctly" and that it made them feel good to "understand the Holy Communion." They even learned "that the sanctuary lamp is always burning, except on Good Friday when Jesus died for us."

Finally, we concluded our time together

with parents and children exploring the meaning of symbols associated with the Eucharist and used some of these symbols to create hand-painted chalices and to stamp bread used at the first informed communion service on November 5. Sophie shared that she most enjoyed "making the chalice because I was excited to use it in church."

All of the participants had different "favorites"—story-telling, painting chalices, being up at the altar, but for everyone, the afternoon meant sharing together in Christian community and learning and connecting more deeply with an understanding of the Holy Eucharist. Truly, the more we understand what is happening in worship, the more engaged we are while worshipping.

We welcome people into the Body of Christ through baptism and the spiritual food we eat at Holy Communion feeds our souls. We grow strong in heart, mind and spirit with this food to live as members of the Body of Christ. Alleluia, Amen! 🙏

REFLECTION

By Christina Jump

Going through first informed communion with each of our children led to two very different and equally memorable experiences, very much like the two children themselves.

My daughter pushed the depths of Fr. Michael's knowledge in that way only a sincere and stubborn child can, and got frustrated that there wasn't time for all her follow-up questions. She and I also shared a light and tender moment viewing the invitation to her baptism, and the photos of her squirming to see what that same Fr. Michael was doing to her forehead.

My son took a more observant approach, and while interested was largely silent during the class leading up to his big day. His smile, however, was as big as the cake at what he affectionately called his "after-party."

And, we still take time to admire the chalices each kid made, prominently displayed under lights in the dining room cabinet for them to remember and all to see.

Our kids probably missed a nuance here and there; in fact, I'm sure they did. But they also learned, and felt loved, and most importantly felt like they were let in on the secrets of the church. They got to see behind the curtain, and with that they let the church into their hearts in a whole new way.





The YAM had its First Annual Christmas party on December 2. Deacon Shea introduced our 2018 theme, The Liturgical Calendar, with a discussion of Advent.

Young Adult Ministry

By Allegra Hale

The Young Adult Ministry (YAM) is for persons in their 20s and 30s. Our ministry aims to build community

for young adults at Transfiguration by hosting events that are casual and welcoming, as well as informative. We welcome friends of all faiths and backgrounds to join—the more the merrier! Please contact us at FigYAMinistry@gmail.com to sign up for our email list to stay up to date on our latest events.

In 2018, the YAM will host our monthly Bibles & Brews at the Flying Saucer Emporium in Addison. Bibles & Brews is a fun event that blends a thought-provoking often theological discussion with great food and drink! Our theme for 2018 is The Liturgical Calendar. Each month we will learn more about what each season of the church means and how and why we observe it the way we do.

Ministry Spotlight

Save the Dates for Our First Four Bibles & Brews

January 14	Epiphany with Canon Dr. Jeremy Bergstrom
February 24	Lent with Father Casey Shobe
March 18	Holy Week with Mother Erin Jean Warde
April 14	Easter tide with Deacon Shea Gilliland

Each month we also have a brunch following the 11:15 a.m. service. Typically we meet outside of Roper Hall at 12:30 and decide where to go together, but sometimes a special event is planned.

The YAM Committee is led by Allegra Hale and Colleen & Will Carson with the help of Staff Liaison Deacon Shea Gilliland. We would love to answer any questions or hear any event or outreach ideas you have. Contact us at FigYAMinistry@gmail.com or find us on Facebook under Transfiguration Young Adult Ministry. 🙌



Youth Ministries

To Seek and Serve
Christ
in all persons

The search for a new Director of Youth Ministries will soon get underway. This fall we have been blessed with the interim leadership of Alina and Jared Williams, along with the continued commitment of many wonderful volunteers. Now it's time to turn our attention to the next permanent director! A search committee is currently being formed, which will consist of roughly seven individuals, both youth and adults, who will work with Fr. Casey to guide the process. In January, they will facilitate two "listening sessions" with youth, parents, and volunteers, to hear feedback on how things are going and hopes for the future of the ministry. The committee will then take that information and craft a job description, which will be posted in February. Applications will be received in February and March, candidates interviewed in March and April, and, God willing, a finalist selected and called by the end of the program year in May. Stay tuned for more information, as firm dates of listening sessions and other ways to participate will be forthcoming!





Update from Our Seminarian *Christopher Rodgers*

Greetings from the Old Dominion and Virginia Theological Seminary!

As I write this, the season's first snowfall is melting away and exam week marks the time in-between the fall semester's conclusion and the spring semester's arrival. It serves as a subtle reminder that we live in the "already and not yet" of Advent—Christ's first coming as God with us, Christ ever present as God's Eternal Word, and Christ's imminent second coming to complete God's Kingdom. I feel properly preparing simultaneously requires us to ponder the present, to reflect upon the past, and to anticipate the future.

In other words, a perfect time to share with our Fig family about my journey to the priesthood! It's hard to believe that we left Big D two years ago to start this seminary adventure and that next semester will be my last one as a seminarian. Looking back at the terrain traversed brings several experiences into bright relief. The VTS daily rhythm of prayer and study has been a formative spiritual gift. In chapel, I am constantly reminded of the efficacy of the Daily Office's discipline as I am drawn closer to God. In both chapel and liturgies, I am learning how to plan, to conduct, to explain, and to lead Episcopal worship. Also, as someone who has very little musical background, I have been grateful for the opportunity to take classes in liturgical singing and the sung service so that I may chant with confidence. For my other electives, I have focused upon Episcopal tradition and identity as rooted in our Anglican heritage.

Field education at Saint Monica and Saint James (SMSJ) in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, D.C. has taught me what it is like to be an ordained liturgical and spiritual leader. I serve at the altar every Sunday (i.e. acolyte, crucifer, thurifer, etc.) and every other Sunday as subdeacon, where I process the Gospel, chant the Gospel's opening and closing sentences, read the Gospel, set the table, serve the chalice, and lead prayers of the people. I

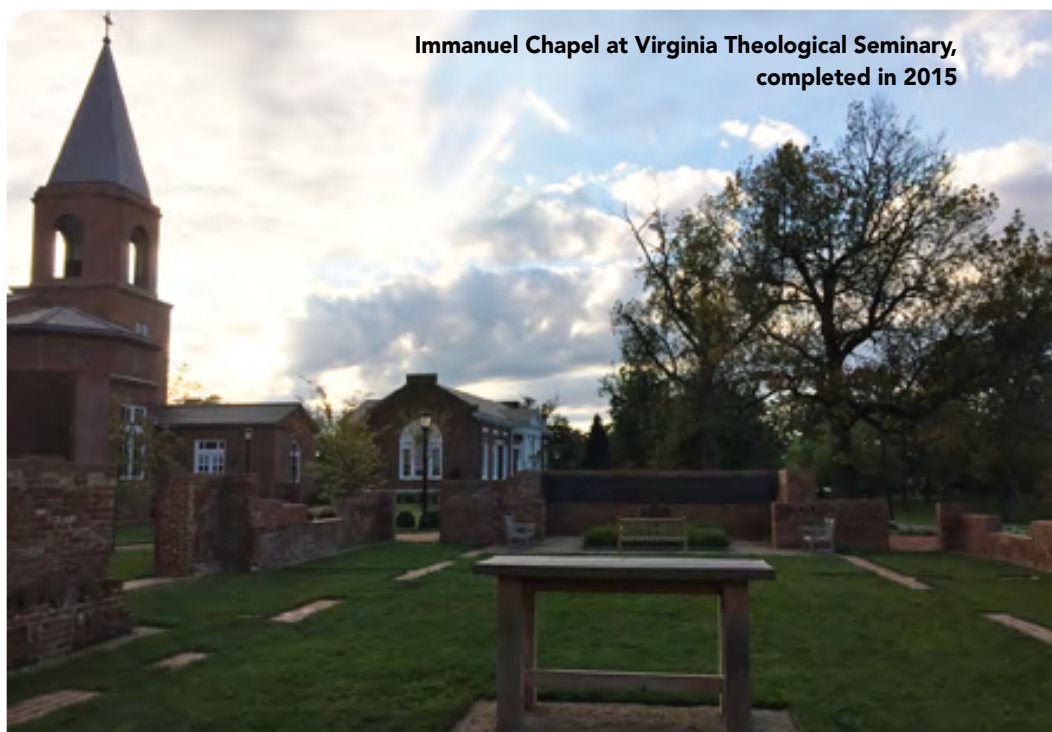
also preach about once a month. These have been fantastic, new opportunities at an Anglo-Catholic, urban parish located in a regenerating neighborhood between Eastern Market and Union Station.

My Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit at Children's Medical Center in Dallas last summer empowered me to minister to the spiritual as well as emotional needs of sick and dying children along with their families. It helped me to pray for people extemporaneously and to talk to people about God in a secular, hospital context that was outside of the Episcopal tradition. I do not always know why things happen to people but I do cling to the fundamental truths that God is with them, God is for them, and God loves them in their worst moments.

Two social justice ministries have made a deep impact on me. First, volunteering at N Street Village Women's Shelter, Logan Circle, Washington D.C. showed me how a Christian community can witness to God's Kingdom by ministering to both the material and the spiritual needs of the least among us. Started by a Lutheran church, this homeless and abused women's shelter provides walk-in meals, laundry, showers, medical as well

as dental care, mental health counseling, job training, and emergency as well as means tested housing. Many of N Street's clients routinely worship at the Lutheran church across the street and those in need of overnight shelter stay in rooms provided by the parish on its third floor. Such successful outreach ministers not just to material needs, but also the spiritual needs of human dignity, self-esteem, and self-respect that reminds people they are made in the image of God and worthy of Christ's saving action. Second, volunteering at Catholic Charities in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia reiterated these crucial lessons in ministry. Catholic Charities provides comprehensive services to those in need via a soup kitchen, temporary housing, food pantry, financial assistance, thrift store, and medical as well as mental treatment. Despite its large footprint as a community charitable center, the overarching message centers upon Christ-like self-sacrifice in word and deed on behalf of God's children. The charge "...to do justice...to love kindness...and to walk humbly with [our] God..." (Micah 6:8) fundamentally means that we also witness with care as well as regard for souls on behalf of Christ.

Continued on next page



**Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary,
completed in 2015**



Inviting Friends for Christmas

By Mike Harvey

Those of you who are my friends know that I sell real estate in the Dallas Metroplex.

One of the perks of the job is that I work with transferees that are being relocated to the Dallas area. During the process, one of the many questions that I ask prospective buyers is, "Is a place of worship important to you and do I need to point out churches or synagogues during our search?" This comes easily for me since I do it on a daily basis. But for those who don't have that type of regular opportunity as part of their jobs, it can be very challenging and at times uncomfortable to invite someone to church.

One thing that I have learned is that people want to feel included. As we all know, the holiday season is upon us and most of us have fond memories of Christmas Eve at church. When I was growing up, my family always had a big breakfast after the midnight service that would last until about 3:00 a.m. We always included new people, some whom we had just met, or others who may have otherwise been alone. Maybe it is those memories of welcoming others while celebrating Christ's birth,

but I always have a special place in my heart for the Christmas Eve service. (And yes, I always cry at *Silent Night*!)

For many years, my wife Pam and I have reached out and invited friends and acquaintances to join us for Christmas Eve at Transfiguration. One year it was a client who had recently gone through a divorce. One year it was a friend who had lost touch with her son. I could name several others. I cannot tell you how rewarding it was to have them join our family and feel so connected and included. They thanked me every time I saw them. To this day, they call and ask what time the service begins. It was so easy to make the call and make the invitation.

If you look around, you will find all sorts of opportunities to invite friends, your kids' friends, neighbors and, yes, even family members. A great prelude to an invitation is to mention how wonderful and uplifting the service can be and how the music is sure to conjure up old childhood memories. It will be one of the many blessings for them and for you that you will experience during the season. To learn more about Christmas services, visit www.transfiguration.net/christmas. 🙏

Continued

Returning to Transfiguration as an intern this past summer allowed me to see and to better understand the staff side of leading a large parish. Although I had extensive experience as a lay leader, attending all staff meetings and pastoral care meetings taught me about the spiritual best practices and behind the scenes work required from clergy and lay staff to sustain shared ministry. For example, every meeting began and ended in prayer. Also, the staff had daily Morning Prayer on weekdays before the workday started. As a large parish, the Fig has many people in various pastoral ministries, so it takes deep collaboration and hard work to coordinate among clergy and lay persons to care for everyone. It was also a profound privilege to preach four times at the Fig's weekday services.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention that my wife Jennifer (Tuck) has not only enjoyed working at the Federal Reserve Board in Washington D.C., but has flourished in her new position. God has definitely graced us with this opportunity, as it has made seminary possible these last two years. As y'all know, she is a Christian minister as well as leader in her own right and has shared these gifts and sung in the choir at SMSJ.

Looking forward, I have ordination exams the second week of January, followed by looking for a job placement, graduating in May, anticipating ordination to the diaconate, and getting ready to move somewhere. It will be a whirlwind beginning to 2018!

Please know that your love, prayers, and financial support sustain us on our shared journey. Likewise, y'all are ever present in our daily thoughts and prayers...

Your Timothy,

Topher

Robert Christopher Rodgers,
Candidate for Holy Orders 🙏



Field Ed Church, Saint Monica and Saint James.



PHOTOS BY RICHARD ALAN ANDERSON AND CASEY SHOBE

Christ Has No Hands But Our Hands

By **Chris Johnson** (seated next to Fr. Casey above)

It's hard to believe that it's already been a year and a half since I first started attending Transfiguration.

After moving from Houston to Dallas to begin graduate school, finding a church here was a top priority. Luckily, the process didn't take long. My first service at Transfiguration was on a Wednesday evening, and after much assurance from the seven others in attendance that there would be both music and more congregants at the Sunday service, a few days later I returned. What I experienced on those two visits was enough to confirm that I had found the right community for me.

Looking back, there were two aspects of my first impressions of Transfiguration that made me feel that I had found a place to call home. The first was the overwhelming friendliness, inclusivity, and openness of the congregation. The second was a community-wide approach to service that was serious about helping the hungry, the sick, and the poor.

Now, the continued commitment to provide aid to those affected by Hurricane Harvey stands out as one more instance of this church making the choice to actively demonstrate the way in which we hold service to others as being an essential part of the Christian life. So far, I have gone on the October and November trips, and in a very real way, I have seen them as a microcosm of the Church as a whole. We are individuals with different skill sets, different backgrounds, different personalities, and yet we all come together as one unit doing meaningful, effective work. Though we are many parts, we are one body—a body that is actively working to improve the lives of people who are in severe need of aid.

Very few of us have skilled experience related to the tasks we perform, and in spite of that, together we are able to make significant strides to help these people get back on their feet. It is certain that there is still a great deal of work that remains to be done. But I know it is equally certain that we will continue to make real progress, bit by bit, in taking steps to accomplish these essential tasks.

Yet even as much of what we do is serious work, there is serious

levity and serious fun on these trips. The effort and energy spent on the volunteer sites are matched by the laughter and humor shared over meals and in car rides. Whether meeting people from Transfiguration for the first time, or getting to develop already established friendships on a deeper level, the relationship building has been a source of great joy on these trips.

Members from other churches in the Diocese of Dallas have also been an integral part of these trips, and it has been wonderful getting to know them as well. To borrow a phrase I would generally associate more with my college experiences rather than my church experiences, we work hard, but we play hard, too.

These volunteer efforts remind me of a short story I read some time ago whose source I cannot now find. Essentially, it tells of a train accident which left many passengers and bystanders hurt and needing medical care. One of the uninjured passengers was a physician, who lamented, "My instruments, my instruments—if only I had my instruments!" The healer was present, those needing aid were present, but the means of providing that aid were absent.

Witnessing the aftermath of any disaster is painful. And as someone who has lived most of my life in the area affected by Harvey, seeing the effects of this hurricane was an especially difficult experience. But by the same token, it has been especially meaningful to see the response of this community helping and responding to the needs of this tragedy as instruments of God. "Christ has no hands but our hands," and our choice to answer this call has given relief and hope in places that are in ample need of both. Homeowners, their families, and their communities are grateful for the work that we are doing. We are making a meaningful difference in each of their lives and I am eager to see the impact we will continue to have going forward. 🙏

Along with the diocese, Transfiguration is planning more spring hurricane relief opportunities. Keep an eye on the Notices and e-news to learn more about dates once they are set, and how to be trained to participate.

Hurricane
Relief
Work



Reflections on Curacy

By Deacon Shea Gilliland

Over the past six months, I have found myself using this phrase over and over again: "Back in seminary..."

These last few months have been a whirlwind; since June, I've moved across the country from North Carolina to my home state of Texas, started my job as Curate here at Transfiguration, been ordained Deacon, found out my wife, Summer, and I are having another baby (due in February!), and made so many new friends at this wonderful parish.

Life has changed in so many ways, and it feels like my "seminary days," which were only a few short months ago, are long, long behind me. In seminary, students preparing for ministry learn a lot of theology and theory that will prepare them to be effective ministers of God's people. I've written thousands of words on moral theology, church history, preaching theory, and the like. But one thing I have learned here at Transfiguration is that there is a difference between writing a paper on the theology of reconciliation and providing pastoral care to someone who is considering divorce. There is a difference between spending time in the Divinity School library, reflecting on the nature of the atonement and the Christian belief in the Resurrection, and preaching the funeral of a beloved parishioner, or providing pastoral care to the bereaved.

In other words, I am deeply thankful for the way in which Transfiguration has provided me the opportunity to learn in practice what the classroom taught me in theory: to learn God's love is manifested *to* us, *through* us. The practice of ministry here over the last six months has helped me to experience first-hand what I already believed to be true;

namely, that God is love, that Jesus Christ is present where two or three of his people gather, that the Church, Christ's Body, is called to present the love of God to the whole world.

I have been given many practical opportunities to hone my personal ministry. These include opportunities to develop my preaching skills during our weekly worship, to grow as a teacher through my involvement in Sunday morning Adult Formation and The Way, and to exercise pastoral care for the beloved members of this parish through



Summer and Olive

pastoral counseling of individuals and hospital and home visits.

I have been particularly blessed by the privilege of serving as clergy liaison to the parish Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministry is the one-to-one lay caring ministry that takes place in congregations that use the Stephen Series system. Stephen Ministry

congregations equip and empower lay caregivers—called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. As clergy liaison, I have provided prayerful support to our fantastic team of Stephen Ministers who meet weekly with the suffering in our parish in order to provide the love and care of Christ to them. I continue to work to recruit more Stephen Ministers, in order to make a wider impact at our parish. I am also joined by several Stephen Leaders in planning to host an informational workshop on Stephen Ministry early next year.

I have also had the opportunity to assist the parish's Welcoming ministry. In cooperation with Ellen Dingwall and our fantastic team of Welcoming volunteers, I am excited about some of the goals we have set in place to grow this important ministry at Transfiguration in the coming year. If we are to truly live up to our mission to seek and



serve Christ in all persons, it is imperative that we maintain and further cultivate an atmosphere of welcome. To this end, we are even now developing a core Welcoming Leaders team and beginning to implement specific goals each weekend that we hope will aid in our expanding mission.

Yet another avenue of growth that Transfiguration has provided me is our Young Adult Ministry. I have been privileged to work closely with the chair and team of volunteers who plan monthly Young Adult events (such as Young Adult Brunch, formations series, and service projects—recently we volunteered at the Dallas Humane Society), as well as envision how to foster and maintain a thriving Young Adults group here. One aspect of this ministry that I am particularly excited about is our coming formation series on the Church Year, in which we will discuss the different seasons of the liturgical life of the Church and how they can help to foster a deeper spirituality and intimacy with the Lord. This series will take place over the course of next year, and will materialize in the form of events such as "Bibles and Brews," where we meet to for discussion and fellowship over drinks at a local pub, or at events such as our recent Advent Party, during which I gave a short talk (in between white elephant gifts, cider, and Elvis Presley Christmas Carols) on the spirituality and liturgical theology of the Advent Season.

These are just some of the many ways in which Transfiguration continues to provide a learning ground for my ministry. I am deeply thankful for all of the ways in which this parish has supported me over the course of the whirlwind that has been the last six months, and for its continued outpouring of love and kindness to my family and me.

In St. Luke's Gospel, we read that the Blessed Virgin Mary, in watching her son grow, wondered at the unfolding of the life and mystery of Jesus in her midst. With Our Lady, I will "treasure these things and ponder them" in my heart, as we seek to demonstrate and unfold the life of Christ to one another. 🙏

ORDINATION

Christopher Thomas



Left: Christopher is vested by the Rev. Terry Roper and the Rev. Courtland Moore. Right: Bishop Scott Mayer lays hands on Christopher during the ordination service.



On Thursday, October 19, Christopher Thomas, former Chief Administrative Officer for Church of the Transfiguration, was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons as a transitional deacon. The

evening represented the culmination of years of effort toward living out the call to ordained ministry that God placed on his life.

Christopher's career began in the church 24 years ago, as he sought to bring his skills and education in the area of administration to bear in church. He spent 14 years as the administrator of Christ Church Cathedral, in Houston, where he exercised his gifts in "second chair" ministry. Although he experienced stirrings to do deeper theological study, the pivotal point in Christopher's call story occurred during his time as the Director of Administration for Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, in New York City. His position necessitated leadership in building relationship in ways that opened his mind and his heart to the next step on his spiritual path, and started the long journey from call to ordination.

It was as a student at Brite Divinity School that Christopher developed his passion for ministry around issues of diversity and social

justice, and the critical nature of building relationships between people and communities in humanizing those issues. Christopher's rule of life is grounded in the very heart of our Episcopal tradition, the baptismal covenant. Two simple, and yet foundational questions become the litmus test for how we exist in relationship, how we participate with God in co-creating God's kingdom in the world around us. "Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself," and "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" And the only reasonable answer is, "I will, with God's help."

The ordination service at St. Luke's in the Meadow Episcopal Church in Fort Worth represents a major milestone in Christopher's journey toward God; as that goal is fulfilled, God now opens up ways that this call will be lived out in a hurting and broken world. 🙏

Christopher is now serving part-time as a Curate at St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church in west Fort Worth.



Christopher with Joel Martinson and Meghan Mazur, who sang at the service.

Why Transfiguration?

Robbi Dietrich

“I think my time at Transfiguration has helped me listen to, learn from, and respect the tribes we serve, understanding there is strength within groups where diversity of backgrounds, culture, skills, experience, and beliefs are included.”



I have been a part of the Transfiguration family since 1992, experiencing over the past 25 years some of the most joyful times of my life, the most heartbreaking ones, and all the others in-between with this wonderful community of faith.

I transferred to Transfiguration from a parish in Plano where I live, because I wanted a more inclusive community of faith, one where all people are welcomed. My children were 1½ and 4½ when we became part of Transfig, and grew up here starting in the nursery, and participating in Sunday school, First Informed Communion, Confirmation, summer mission trips, youth pilgrimages to Europe and many other activities.

Maggie graduated from the University of Arkansas where she met her husband. Father Godwin married Maggie and Christian at Transfiguration in February 2010 with our Wedding Guild providing wonderful assistance. Matthew met his wife at Oklahoma City University where they majored in music. Father Godwin traveled to OKC in July 2012 and married Matthew and Jessica. I still receive requests from family and friends attending the weddings for a copy of his homilies as they were so beautifully written for each young couple by a trusted and loving member of the

clergy who had been a part of their lives as long as they can remember. Prior to their weddings both couples benefited greatly from Christian pre-material counseling provided by a member of our parish. When my 23-year marriage ended in divorce, my Transfiguration family ensured that I remained connected to this parish under the new family dynamics.

I served for seven years as an assistant Sunday school teacher getting to know many of the children of this parish who are now adults, some with their own children. I've been a part of several special projects, including the Youth Commission and strategic planning that led to the construction of our new building, and I served on the Vestry for three years. It's encouraging to see firsthand how the skills and experience of a diverse group of people contribute to the operation of the parish in support of our mission to seek and serve Christ in all persons. I am currently a trustee of the Dallas Episcopal Foundation. I've enjoyed working with people from other parishes, finding common ground, and advancing God's kingdom in our diocese by faithfully partnering wise investments with purposeful giving.

Although I greatly benefitted from 30 years in the corporate world, I wanted to spend the last segment of my career working for “a higher purpose,” and am now

leading a national non-profit organization focused on helping the poorest of the poor in our country—Native Americans living in reservation communities, many so remote and isolated that the American public has typically never heard of them, much less visited. These communities face some of the toughest conditions and highest needs in the U.S. with chronic shortages of food and clean water, the highest unemployment rates in the country, and little access, if any, to the basic community services we take for granted such as electricity, telephone service, Internet connectivity, accessible health care, public transportation, and fire and police protection. I think my time at Transfiguration has helped me listen to, learn from, and respect the tribes we serve, understanding there is strength within groups where diversity of backgrounds, culture, skills, experience, and beliefs are included.

I am less active in the activities of Transfig than in the past, but have never felt more connected as my journey to be all that God wants me to be continues. The inspiring lessons from our clergy, the beautiful music, the comfort of the liturgy and familiar faces have made this parish home to me. I am grateful for the blessing of worshipping here with our incredible leader, Father Casey, the staff, and with you, my community of faith. 🙏



Nourishment for the Soul

Congregational Retreat

By The Rev. R. Casey Shobe

Sometimes the thing we need most in order to reinvigorate our relationships with God is to go on retreat.


The act of getting away from our homes and escaping our routines can help us break free from staleness in our lives and come to new realizations about God's presence. We get so little down time in our hectic schedules, with even weekends filled up with activities, that the experience of spending a few days in peace and enjoyment can be deeply soul-nourishing. This is why the Vestry decided to include retreats in our long-range strategic goals, as over the next five years we hope that everyone in our church will more regularly experience the life-giving nature of holy rest. Keeping the Sabbath holy is perhaps the most flagrantly violated of all the Ten Commandments, yet God commands

us to rest because it is something we need as human beings. Even monks go on retreat!

This April you are invited to go on an all-parish retreat to Camp Allen, the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center of the Diocese of Texas. In the beauty of the Piney Woods, we'll get away with God and each other for a whole weekend. There will be three "talks" by author and preacher Danielle Shroyer to stir our spiritual imaginations, but also plenty of time for walks, quiet conversation, and prayer. There will also be camp fires, games, activities for children and youth, and fellowship among our community. Camp Allen has beautiful facilities and a palpable sense of peace and holiness that foster spiritual growth. In fact, Camp Allen is among the most special places in the world to me. I truly gave my life to Christ at Camp Allen in high school and worked there in college. It is as much a "home" to me as any place I know, and it

feels like God wraps me up in a hug every time I drive onto the grounds. I have been on many retreats there over my life, personal and congregational, and every time I come away feeling rejuvenated and refreshed.

This retreat is designed for all ages, and we have planned for options in accommodations. The Conference Center has lovely individual hotel rooms, while the camp site has more basic bunk beds in large rooms. Registration costs will depend on which you prefer. Meals will be simple but portions generous, and the fresh air will also be in abundance.

As a wise monk once said to me, "A retreat is not an advance." Let's stop all the constant "advancing" we busily do all the time, and instead go together on retreat. Your soul will thank you for it. 

Make plans to join us April 27–29 at Camp Allen. More details and registration will be available this spring.



Fall

AT TRANSFIGURATION



We Give Thanks for

Bracken Reece, our Director of Operations, who donated over 100 lbs. of beef to Austin Street Center from his own cattle herd

Anne Bienfang, who provided a coupon for our Austin Street ministry that saved us \$800 on food for the Thanksgiving Eve Meal, and for nearly **50 volunteers** who served dinner to our homeless friends at Austin Street

The **iParent ministry** for families with children living at home that baked 75 pies for that same meal, with nearly 50 volunteers showing up to craft homemade pies with love

Pam and Paul Sternweis and Deborah Diehl for shepherding the Salvation Army Angel Tree gift-giving process for 250 children and homebound people this Christmas

Robert Hacker and John Makowski who are present to take photographs for many of the most significant moments in the life of the congregation, and do so out of their desire to serve

Whitney Holley who stitches the little baptismal stoles for newly baptized babies

The Transfiguration Choir for all their amazing hard work and dedication to provide glorious music to enhance our weekly and seasonal worship

The volunteers who have traveled down to Coastal Bend area of Texas to participate in Hurricane Relief Work, especially team leaders (**Keith Bogdan, Jon Herber**) and those who have gone multiple times (**Richard Alan Anderson and Chris Johnson**)

Our guest speakers for The Way this semester, who help those preparing for confirmation or desiring to learn more about the faith to ask deep questions and consider the church from many angles

Nancy Destefano and Al Blackwell for spearheading The Second Half class, a new ministry that explores aging and spirituality for those in the second half of life

Rae Ann and Bruce Posner for running the Youth Garage Sale this year during a time of transition for our Youth Ministries

Delynda and Kipton Moravec, who stepped in to direct a new script for this year's Christmas Pageant

Krista Cavin, who planned our Alternative Gift Market with nonprofit vendors on the First Sunday of Advent

PHOTOS BY ROBERT HACKER, JOHN MAKOWSKI, ROBERT DOYNA, AND CASEY SHOBE



STEPHEN MINISTRY



Presenter
Tiffany Wright

**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 3, 2018
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Hosted for local congregations by:



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
Transfiguration

*Come learn more about this
important caring ministry!*

Free to attend for members of Transfiguration.

Visit www.transfiguration.net/stephen-ministry for more details