

# The News of National City

## February 2018 Issue XVIII Vol. 2

| Inside This Issue        |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Upcoming Events          | 2-3 |
| Congregational News      | 4-6 |
| Campbell Building Update | 4-5 |
| Homeless Ministry        | 6   |

## Gentle Reminder **Passion and Promise**

February 14 isn't just about hearts and valentines this year, 2018 Valentine's Day is also Ash Wednesday. From the 14th of February until the 1st of April (no fooling!), the church will be observing the season of Lent.

Through the centuries the emphasis for Lent has focused on prayer and meditation. We are invited to take time to examine the parts of our lives that we often neglect. We are challenged to open ourselves in new ways to the Spirit's leading and transforming power.

The season of Lent begins with Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days. An underlying theme during Lent this year is the idea of **covenant**, which means an agreement or promise. At his own baptism, Jesus hears the Spirit naming him as God's beloved son. The implications of this affirmation compel him to seek insight through a sojourn in the wilderness. He emerges after 40 days ready to proclaim the good news that God's reign is near.

How will you spend the next 40 days of Lent to strengthen your faith? There are a number of ways that our church can help undergird your faith this season, including daily, personal reading of the Lenten Devotional, as well as the community gatherings of Lenten Study groups and weekly Sunday morning worship.

Speaking of the 2018 Lenten Devotional, I am so deeply appreciative of our Editor Diana Morse and her talented and generous sharing of her time and skills for another exceptional devotional guide. Forty-seven devotions lead us on a remarkable journey, written by many gifted persons at National City Christian Church. Take home an additional devotional and share it with a friend, or forward the daily e-devotion to all your Facebook friends!

Plan now to join us on Wednesday evening - Valentine's Day - February 14, at 7 p.m. to begin our sacred Lenten journey into the Passion and Promise.

- Stephen Gentle

### **Lenten Devotional Available, Studies Begin**

Ash Wednesday is February 14, and Lenten meditations written by our church community will be available with our 2018 Lenten Devotional. If you've signed up with Colleen Walsh, you will receive a meditation each day in your email.

Printed copies will also be available and the devotional will be available on the church website.

Lenten studies will also begin, using the devotional. Christian Pathways will be using it at the 10 a.m. Sunday classes; plans are underway for study groups in Gaithersburg, Falls Church, Vienna/Reston, and at the church on Saturday mornings. If you'd like more information, contact Teresa Swihart at [tisatcamp@yahoo.com](mailto:tisatcamp@yahoo.com).

### **Sermons**

#### **February 4**

5th Sunday After Epiphany  
*What Is My Reward?*  
Mark 1:29-39

#### **February 11**

Transfiguration Sunday  
*Transfigured*  
Mark 9:2-9

#### **February 18**

First Sunday in Lent  
*Forty Days*  
Mark 1:9-15

#### **February 25**

Second Sunday in Lent  
*Incredible News*  
Mark 8:31-38

# February Birthdays

- 4 Sara Imhulse
- 5 Matt Cahill
- 6 Glen Gerada
- 7 Erin Hedlund
- 9 Paul Heffron
- 13 Dick Gesell
- 14 Robert Ross
- 16 Carolyn Gesell O'Sullivan  
Alia Waheed Ky
- 17 Bill Stewart
- 20 Nett Brown
- 21 Ken Brooker Langston
- 24 David Robeck
- 25 Melissa Wilson\*
- 27 Lynne Morgan
- 28 Linda Sharp

\*Indicates student

For additions or changes,  
contact kwihart66@gmail.com



## Soups on - February 4!

Once again, we'll have the opportunity to buy a variety of wonderful soups made by Theresa Beaton and available on "Souper Bowl" Sunday on February 4 - in time to enjoy during the Super Bowl. The soup is \$10 and benefits our food pantry.

## Gospel Choir To Rehearse

The Gospel Choir will rehearse in the Music Suite at 7 p.m. on the following Tuesdays in February: February 6, 13, and 27.

If you are interested in knowing more about the choir or joining, contact Valeria Foster, director of the choir.

## NCCC Offers Prayer Call on Monday Mornings

All are invited to join the weekly conference prayer line for National City at 6 a.m. on Mondays. Simply dial 712-775-7031 and enter access code 371015. For more information contact Loretta Tate at 202-489-2020.

## New Season of Midday Concerts Begins with a Bang!

Our free weekly Music at Midday concerts begin a new season on February 2, with 30- to 45-minute performances scheduled each Friday at 12:15 p.m. The new season starts with four amazing and unique recitals: a celebration of Black History Month, a visiting German organist, a Marine Corps pianist, and a Nordic journey! Keep reading to find out more about these awesome concerts!

**February 2:** Craig Williams, organist at the West Point Cadet Chapel, will commemorate Black History Month with music based on African American tunes or composed by African American composers, including organ works by Nancy Plummer Faxon, Florence B. Price, Fela Sowande, Marilyn Rinehart, Carl Haywood, Antonin Dvořák, and Craig Williams.

**February 9:** Alexander Frey, from Berlin, Germany, will perform grand music for the organ, including works of César Franck and Gustav Mahler and film music by Wolfgang Korngold.

**February 16:** Pianist Christopher Schmitt, who performs regularly as a member of the President's own U.S. Marine Band, will perform music of great European composers, including Ludwig van Beethoven, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Frédéric Chopin.

**February 23:** James D. Hicks, from Morristown, New Jersey, will lead the audience on a "Nordic Journey: Organ Music of Nordic Lands," performing works of Mauri Vitala, Nils Lindberg, Christian Præstholt, and Jesper Madsen.

## Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, February 11, will be our next congregational meeting and luncheon when we receive the 2017 Annual Report. Also for our consideration will be a discussion regarding the 2018 Officiary and congregational budget. Sign up in at the Atrium desk today, so a place can be set for you at the luncheon table.

## Bible Study To Be Tuesday, February 6, at 11 a.m.

Bible Study sponsored by Disciples Women will be on Tuesday, February 6, at 11 a.m. in the Music Suite.

The study continues the theme *Freedom: Problem and Struggle in the Bible*. This month's topic is *Faith the size of a mustard seed*. Scripture is Matthew 17:14-20/21; Mark 9:14-29; and Luke 9:37-43.

Bring a sandwich to join in fellowship following the lesson.

## Ash Wednesday Service and LGBTQ Bible Study

Be sure to celebrate an early Valentine's Day and then join us on Ash Wednesday, February 14, as we begin Lent with the church's regular Ash Wednesday service at 7 p.m., followed by a brief LGBTQ Bible study from 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. All are welcome!

## Come and Sing for Holy Week and Easter

The Sanctuary Choir will be singing for worship services on Maundy Thursday (March 29, 7:30 p.m.), Good Friday (March 30, 7:30 p.m.), and Easter Sunday (April 1, 11 a.m.).

Holy Week and Easter offer the opportunity to participate in singing great music that expresses the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith. There will be four Saturday morning rehearsals between February 17 and March 31 to prepare.

If you have basic music reading ability and some singing experience and can attend rehearsals, please consider contributing your voice to the music ministry. To sign up or for more information, contact Dr. Michael McMahon at [mmcmahon@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:mmcmahon@nationalcitycc.org) or (202) 797-0103.

## Week of Compassion Offering February 18 and 25

This year we will collect the Week of Compassion offering on February 18 and 25.

The Week of Compassion offering is used to help when others are suffering by assisting with disaster response and humanitarian aid. This fund also assists with sustainable development and with the promotion of mission opportunities.

The church works with many partnership organizations in these efforts. Global Ministries, Refugee and Immigration Ministries, and Bread for the World are a small sampling of some of these partnership organizations. Disasters seem to strike almost daily and by receiving this offering the Church is able to offer assistance to those in need.



YADA's annual Christmas get-together was at the home of Shana and Alan Williams, where "great food, conversation...and our annual white elephant gift exchange takes place."

## YADA To Go Ice Skating February 24

YADA has scheduled ice skating at the National Sculpture Garden for Saturday, February 24, meeting at 5:45 p.m. They'll gather at the café for some hot cocoa and conversation, then head to the rink. They'll follow it all with dinner at 8:15 p.m. Come for all or part, as you're able. Contact Gentry Alexander at [gentry.alexander@gmail.com](mailto:gentry.alexander@gmail.com) for more information.



# Update of the Campbell Building Sale

Perhaps the most dramatic action that we've taken at National City in 2017 was to work with the National City Christian Church Foundation as it undertakes the sale of the Campbell Building. This building was only partially used, had major maintenance issues, and would have cost millions to bring into usable condition – and then we would have had to find tenants as the activities of National City itself no longer fill the building. After considerable deliberation and much prayer, the Foundation decided to sell the building. The congregation is well represented on the Foundation Board and the concerns of the congregation were front and center in the deliberations.

The first buyer did not follow through as anticipated and in an act of mercy, the second bidder called Dr. Gentle right at that time to inquire whether there might still be an opportunity. The Foundation entered into a purchase agreement – amended five times – with Rock Creek Properties, a local development firm with considerable experience redeveloping historic buildings in Washington, D.C. Rock Creek proposes to build offices for businesses such as architects who might enjoy the space. They proposed to add an additional half floor set back on the top of the building so that the building would preserve its historic character. The addition of new square feet could benefit National City financially.

Upon approval by the Foundation Board, Rock Creek set out to secure the historic and zoning approvals from the District of Columbia to allow the work to move forward. Indeed one of the last gifts that Bill Knight provided to National City was to shepherd these applications with the developer and secure both the use agreement and the historic approval to move forward.

Throughout the process the congregation continues to have input. We created a Moving Ministries Task Force ably chaired by Alan Williams, our Vice Moderator, and greatly assisted by our member and architect Ann Neeriemer. The Moving Ministries Task Force worked with the nursery and the Hispanic congregation who were the first to move to temporary space. The children are now visible in the lobby of our second floor offices and the Hispanic congregation has made a home in the Community Room. We all enjoy the lively spirit and music, we see each other more, and it helps us to be one congregation with three services. We are continuing to work on how we will provide space for congregational meals and other services. The Foundation acknowledges that the

remaining building will need renovation to accommodate the needs of the congregation in its new configuration and has agreed that the proceeds of the sale will provide this investment. The Foundation has determined that some of the money from the sale will go into the permanent fund of the Foundation so that they will continue to support the work of National City into the future. We are exploring options for a low-interest loan from the denomination to cover the renovations that could be paid for with the earnings on the money so that the principal would stay intact. The Foundation is committed to insuring that the money is there for the future and committed to making the renovations needed to insure that the congregation can continue to thrive and grow.

In late December 2017 Rock Creek came to us and asked to start on remediation of hazardous materials and demolition of the interior of the building to create a shell ready for construction. Your Campbell negotiating team agreed with Rock Creek to permit their early entry into the Campbell Building for interior demolition and remediation of hazardous materials. According to Rock Creek, the early entry work will facilitate design and construction planning and should help to expedite the approval process. In exchange for the right to begin demolition and remediation, Rock Creek agreed to release to the Foundation \$250,000 of the earnest money if Rock Creek decides to begin that work during the Approval Period. As our most able negotiating team leader John Arterberry wrote in his update, *“Your Campbell Building negotiating team is pleased to bring promising year-end news on the building's pending sale contract. Rock Creek has provided notice that it is preparing to begin interior demolition work. Under our agreement with Rock Creek, that notice triggers a requirement that Rock Creek release \$250,000 of its non-refundable \$500,000 earnest money deposit. Your negotiating team views this development as a significant step in Rock Creek's commitment to this project and intention to close on the purchase of the property.”* The fund transfer occurred on December 26, 2017, into the Foundation's permanent endowment fund.

National City Christian Church is entirely out of the Campbell Building. The Chaplain's Window has been removed and is safely crated in our possession. Rock Creek Properties paid for its removal at the cost of \$1,800. They have given us the check and we will pay the stained glass company.

*Continued on page 5*

## Update of the Campbell Building Sale Continued

The construction fence is up and the Campbell building is secured. Rock Creek reported to the Foundation on January 17, 2018, that the abatement would be complete in approximately 12 weeks. We continue to see significant progress as we navigate the stages of the sales contract. We recognize, however, that completion of the Approval Period hinges on Rock Creek's success in obtaining various regulatory and zoning approvals, a time-consuming process that could extend another 21 months. We

remain optimistic that this process is moving toward the successful closing of the sale.

Rock Creek is meeting with the negotiating team monthly to keep the Foundation informed of progress. Please let me know if you have questions that you would like us to pose at those meetings. Rock Creek demonstrates a clear commitment to working with us and to creating a high quality neighbor.

- Jane Campbell



### Child Dedication of Logan Lund

We were privileged to witness the child dedication of **Logan Lund** at the 11 a.m. service on December 31. Logan is the son of **Charles Lund and Susy Sanchez** and was joined at the dedication by family members and friends as well as the congregation.

### Service in Celebration of the Life of Willie Alexander was Held on January 22

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of **Willie Alexander**, whose service was held at National City on January 22. Willie died on January 15, and as many mentioned at his service, this civil rights attorney died on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

A long-time and active member of National City, Willie was recognized as "a calming force in his style of leadership." He served as a deacon and an elder during the Gospel Worship Service and was actively engaged with the food pantry, feeding the homeless weekly.

He was a graduate of the Howard University School of Law class of 1976 and editor-in-chief of the Howard University Law Review after graduating from Long Beach State University in Long Beach, California, in 1973. He was born on September 1, 1951, and grew up in Aiken, South Carolina.

He began work at the U. S. Security and Exchange Commission in 1976 and later moved to the U.S.

Department of Labor where he worked actively in civil rights for several decades, retiring in 2009. While there he was a well-respected colleague, speaker, and workshop presenter. In 2002 he was selected to serve as the Chief of the Office of External Enforcement. Prior to joining the Civil Rights Center, Willie spent over 20 years as an attorney with the Department of Labor's Office of the Solicitor and during the last eight years served as Counsel for Litigation in the Division of Civil Rights where he litigated many types of civil rights cases, handling some of the most seminal legal issues.

He is survived by his two daughters, Jenniffer Dawn Bennett Alexander Jones of Athens, Georgia, and Ann Alexis Bennett-Alexander; two grandchildren of Athens, Georgia; his brothers Benjamin Hartonia "Tony" Alexander of Statesville, North Carolina, and Hans Kimbrel Alexander of Anderson, South Carolina; as well as a host of other extended family and many, many friends.

Inurnment will be in the Columbarium of National City Christian Church in a private service at a later date.

### A Special Thanks To All Who Supported Rumi Forum

A great big "Thank You!" is extended to all who came out to support the "Responding to Hatred and Extremism: Solutions from Faith Traditions" event with the Rumi Forum that took place on January 10 here at National City. A special thanks is extended to Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle for his support, Morris Jackson who came to the church during his vacation to make sure everything ran smoothly, and Betty Crudup who stepped in on that evening to decorate and warmly welcome all of our visitors.

If you were not able to attend, you can watch the program on the following web page: [rumiforum.org/responding-to-hatred-and-extremism/](http://rumiforum.org/responding-to-hatred-and-extremism/)

- Beverly Goines

# Welcome Home Tony!



Dr. Gentle and Tony receive donated blankets which Tony helped distribute as well as working with the food pantry.



Tony Johnson, an associate member at National City, has returned to the metro DC area after several years away from us to start a new ministry called “My Neighbor Ministries.” Tony will be using National City as his “headquarters” as he works collaboratively with our food pantry ministry and other neighborhood churches to effectively address the needs of the homeless and working poor.

When he joined in 1999, Tony soon became active in our own ministries and began assisting Bill Travis and Josie Grinner in outreach ministry to the poor and homeless. His passion for this work led him to the year-long Servant Leaders School Discipleship program where he immersed himself in the homeless community and interned at N Street Village.

After completing the program, Tony relocated to Baltimore, Maryland, and continued his work by joining the Sisters of Mercy community and volunteering with Mercy Corps. As part of his responsibilities, Tony worked with the AIDS Interfaith Residential Services (AIRS) which provides services and housing to HIV persons living in the community. While serving at AIRS, he was offered a position through AmeriCorps as a Faith In Action Volunteer Coordinator.

During his eight years of service, Tony built a coalition of five churches and 200 volunteers in the Baltimore metro area serving AIRS and the homes of AIRS clients. He also served on the Maryland AIDS Administration Faith Advisory Board.

Tony resides in Silver Spring, Maryland, and as a choreographer has created over 200 works focusing on his own spiritual journey and meditations on the gospels.

- Steven Baines

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## Food Pantry at Christmas

Wednesday, December 20, 2017, was a special day at National City.

When the doors of the atrium were opened to our Food Pantry participants, they were given the usual bag of food. They also were met with boxes of apples, oranges, and bananas, bowls of candy, and stacks of little pies.

We had piles of hooded sweatshirts, sweat pants, and thermal underwear. Everyone received a bag with hats, gloves, socks, and a health kit. We had some book bags and tote bags for them to carry their gifts.

Everyone was given a Christmas card signed by a member of National City Christian Church inviting them to come to church.

Two hundred thirty-seven people walked in our doors looking for food. When they left, they were filled with gratitude and at least some Christmas spirit.

We were able to do all this because of contributions from members of National City as well as The Heart Sing Foundation and House of Ruth.

We work all the time on this project. If you would like to help in any way, we are always collecting sweats, hats, socks, gloves, items for health kits, as well as shelf-stable foods. (Some of you may have received items for Christmas you don't want or need.) This is a whole church mission. We need more volunteers, more food, more money, and more prayers that we are doing our part. If you would like to help, contribute, or just have questions, contact Laurese Dancy, Lorraine Magnussen, or Barbara Boward.

The work is great; the rewards are greater.

- Lorraine Magnussen