

### The In Between Time

We have observed Thanksgiving and are looking forward to Advent; so, we are in the “between time”, Thanksgiving and Advent. The waiting, the meantime serves a purpose; trust the process even the delays and detours. Our tradition of giving thanks for Jesus, family, friends, health, vocation and community and being grateful to be on this journey together is the start to re-imagining the “between time” journey.

Advent means ‘coming’ or ‘arrival.’ During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. We anticipate God coming not just among or near us, but “the Word was made flesh” and dwelled among us. As we start this journey, we start with personal examination and communal discernment: “revisiting who we are and whose we are,” reflecting on the transformation Christ brings and the exceedingly abundant love given to us.

May Advent 2023 be “re-imagined” within our hearts, minds and spirits as various members and leaders of the Virginia Council of Churches write weekly meditation/reflections beginning Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent.

This Keeping in Touch includes: prayer concerns, reviews of Bishop Phyllis Blair Milton’s installation as Bishop of the Virginia, Synod ELCA; the ordination to Christian Ministry and installation of Rev. Patrice Smallwood; a summary of the VCC 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Day.

### Prayer Concerns

The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton, immediate past General Minister of VCC had an emergency visit to the hospital last week; Jon’s spirit is up, and he appears to be on the mend. Please keep Rev. Barton in your prayers. You may contact Rev. Barton at [jonbarton52@gmail.com](mailto:jonbarton52@gmail.com).

### The Rev. Dr. Phyllis Blair Milton Installation as Fourth Bishop of VA ELCA

The Rev. Dr. Phyllis Blair Milton was installed as the fourth Bishop of the Virginia ELCA Synod on Saturday, October 21, 2023 at the First Presbyterian Church, Waynesboro, VA. Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Synod Bishops from around the ELCA and ecumenical guests celebrated and participated in the installation service. Former members of the VCC Coordinating Cabinet participated in the installation service: Bishop Robert Humphrey, Bishop James Mauney and Bishop Richard Bansemmer; current members of the Coordinating Cabinet who participated include Bishop Susan Haynes, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia, and VCC Coordinating Cabinet Secretary: Rev. Sheresa Simpson-Rice, Rev. Terrie Sternberg, ELCA; also present were NGE members-Now Generation of Ecumenists: Rev.’s Alexis Sheppard-Witt and Joel Neubauer and Rev. Mary Anne Glover.

On Friday evening, a reception was given by the “Wakanda” Synod; this is an unofficial synod, a fellowship of people of color in the ELCA. The fellowship and food were “delicious”!



"Wakanda" Synod, a fellowship of people of color in the ELCA



Bishop Phyllis Blair Milton & Presiding ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



"Laying on of Hands" Apostolic Succession



Bishops of the ELCA Church &  
Bishop Susan Haynes, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia



Rev. Mary Anne Glover, Rev. Alexis Sheppard-Witt & Rev. Joel Neubauer  
Members of VCC's Now Generation of Ecumenists





Rev. Sheresa Simpson-Rice, VCC Board Secretary &  
Rev. Terrie Sternberg, Member of VCC's Coordinating Cabinet & RFD Board

The Rev. Patrice Smallwood Ordination to Christian Ministry and Installation as Youth Pastor

Minister Patrice Smallwood was ordained to Christian Ministry on Sunday afternoon, October 1, 2023 at the Macedonia Christian United Church of Christ, Norfolk, VA. Rev. Smallwood is an active participant with the VCC's Next Generation of Ecumenists and the RFD Board. The Eastern Virginia Association of the United Church of Christ and the ecumenical church were fully represented at this service. The preacher for the occasion was the Rev. Dr. Linda Clark; other VCC participants included: the Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Patricia Crawley Ricks; former VCC President, Rev. Dr. John Myers; NGE participants: Rev. Hugo Morrison and Rev. Dr. A. Jerome Danage, Sr. Rev. Smallwood's family and ministerial colleagues ushered the manifestation of the Holy Spirit for a memorable moment in her ministry.



Lining up of Clergy Procession led by Rev. Dr. Patricia Crawley-Ricks



Rev. Patrice Smallwood &  
Rev. Dr. Linda Clark, Preacher for the Ordination Service



Laying on of Hands led by Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk



Family Member of Rev. Patrice Smallwood &  
the Presentation of Flowers to Rev. Patrice Smallwood

Virginia Council of Churches 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Day – Great!

The Virginia Council of Churches 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Day on November 2, 2023 was a grand day! The First Baptist Church East End, Newport News, VA under the pastoral leadership of “NGE” Now Generation of Ecumenists participant , Rev. Jamaar Jones was the host congregation. The guest choir, the Booker T. Washington High School Choir under the leadership of Mr. Odell Ziegler, IV was stellar with a varied selection of gospel selections. The choir was comprised of freshman through senior participants; the choir was focused and disciplined exemplifying their strong, vocals ranges. Here is one example of one song the Booker T. Washington High School Choir presented: [CLICK HERE](#).





Booker T. Washington High School Choir  
Under the Leadership of Mr. Odell Ziegler, IV



Member of the Booker T. Washington High School Choir &  
Macedonia Christian United Church of Christ

The “Now” Generation of Ecumenists presided the day’s program with a spirit of excellence and humor. The following NGE participated: Rev. Jamaar Jones, Rev. Patrice Smallwood, Rev. Nicholas Forti, and Rev. Alexis Sheppard-Witt. The Bishop Susan Haynes, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia preached/taught on “Celebrating the Church WeHave Today-Making Way for the Church God is Giving Us.” Bishop Haynes gave life-giving and transformational insights on the present reality of church and the process God is leading to bring the church to the future.



Rev. Jamaar Jones, Host Pastor, First Baptist Church East End  
Member of the Now Generation of Ecumenists



Rev. Patrice Smallwood, Member of the Now Generation of Ecumenists





Rev. Alexis Sheppard-Witt, Member of the Now Generation of Ecumenists



Rev'd. K. Nicholas Forti, Member of the Now Generation of Ecumenists



Bishop Susan Haynes, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia



Bishop Susan Haynes



Rev. Annesto Younger, VCC Minister of Music &  
Rev. David Shumate, Past Present of VCC

The Rev. Msgr. Joseph P. Lehman, III sister, Anne Hart, Lehman family members and members of parishes Father Joe served in Williamsburg and Roanoke were present to receive the Lifetime Ecumenist Award posthumously on behalf of Father Lehman, III. Smiles, hugs and tears were prevailed during this part of the day. Father Joe's legacy will continue through the VCC's Father Joseph P. Lehman, III Fund and the "Now Generation of Ecumenists" who Father Joe worked with in planning VCC's program.



Presentation of the Lifetime Ecumenist Award to  
Rev. Msgr. Joseph P. Lehman, III (posthumously)  
by Rev. David Shumate & Rev. Dr. Leo Whitaker  
accepted by Anne Hart, sister of Rev. Msgr. Joseph P. Lehman, III



The Rev. Mary Anne Glover was the 2023 Faith and Action Award recipient; since 1988, Rev. Glover has been active in the Ecumenical Movement; while fulfilling assigned ministerial responsibilities, Rev. Glover actively participated and led in the ecumenical arena. She has participated and volunteered with several state council of churches, U.S. Office World Council of Churches, Church Women United and the World Council of Churches, Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland. Ecumenism is the strongest part of Rev. Glover's pastoral identity.



Presentation of the Faith In Action Award by  
Rev. Dr. Patricia Crawley-Ricks & Rev. Dr. John Myers



Presentation of the Faith In Action Award to Rev. Mary Anne Glover



Presentation of the Faith In Action Award to Rev. Mary Anne Glover

2023 was the inauguration of the VCC Attendance Staff Award; Rev. Dr. Leo Whitaker, moderator of VCC Coordinating Cabinet, presented this award to the Bishop Susan Haynes, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia, whose denomination had the most registered participants for the day. Bishop Haynes will keep the VCC Attendance Staff Award for the year, then the staff will be passed to the denomination with the highest attendance in 2024.



Presentation of the VCC Attendance Staff Award

May we all see Christ anew during Advent 2023!

With much anticipation,

Rev. Mary Anne Glover  
General Minister,  
Virginia Council of Churches