2020 Annual Appeal

“...none in this Country to be compared to it...”

In August 1734, Robert Carter’s eldest son John wrote to a London merchant of the extraordinary new church he and his brothers were completing for their father, saying there “is none in this Country to be compared to it.” Indeed, John Carter understood then what we well know today: Christ Church is unique among colonial Virginia churches, revered around the world for its architecture and state of preservation. But John added something to his letter that we also know well: “the Expence occasioned thereby has been very considerable.”

This year, the coronavirus has presented new challenges, but the pandemic shows us now more than ever that history matters. History can inform, inspire, and heal. History builds perspective, and community. Advertising, marketing, communications and administration. She served as Vice President of Advertising & Sales at the Richmond Times Dispatch and was Communications & Marketing Director for the Better Business Bureau of Central Virginia. She also has experience as a parish administrator for several local churches. Paula is a resident of White Stone. Welcome, Paula!

Thank You, Trish

In December, Office & Burying Ground Manager Trish Geeson will retire after 14 years with the Foundation. Trish brought tremendous dedication and passion to her position. Always willing to do any task great or small that supported our mission, Trish became a dear friend to hundreds of volunteers and visitors alike.

“It has been such an honor and a privilege to work for and alongside the amazing and dedicated staff and volunteers at Historic Christ Church,” said Trish. “The unwritten benefits of working here are that there is no such thing as a typical day and there is always an opportunity to learn something new.” We will miss you, Trish!

Virginia Humanities Grant

FHCC was one of 110 museums, libraries, historical societies, and other cultural nonprofit organizations across the Commonwealth to receive funding from Virginia Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan of 2020. Thank you, Virginia Humanities!

Virginia Humanities
Staying Connected in Historic Times

Coronavirus may have temporarily closed HCC&M in mid-March, but volunteers and staff remain busy with a host of projects. High on the list are several important campus improvements: revitalization of the herb garden, a security system upgrade, new windows and shelving for the research room, a service day with Bartlett Tree Experts (see page 3) and the cleanout and conditioning of the Bayne Center basement. Volunteers also worked in the office by answering phones, sending notes, updating files and greeting visitors.

Virtual programs like the HCC&M Readers Book Club, our Public Reading of the Declaration of Independence, and weekly History Mystery contests have engaged new audiences. A new page on our website – History at Home – invites users to explore educational programs, musical performances, children’s activities, oral histories, research materials and more. And recently volunteers have returned to lead tours on a by-appointment basis.

Herb Garden Revitalization

Master Gardeners with the Virginia Tech Virginia Cooperative Extension joined the HCC&M Herb Garden Committee to combine their talents to revitalize the herb garden. Clockwise from the left are master gardeners Helen Johnson, Gail Cooper, JoVen Perkins and Marge Gibson, with Herb Garden committee chair Val Verburg.

Bayne Center Basement

Buildings & Grounds chair John Boxden has worked tirelessly to clean up the Bayne Center basement. With help from his grandkids and Larry Galgano, John removed all the old wood shelving and installed a new PVC backboard to combat moisture. Once the space is treated for mold and properly sealed and conditioned, new metal shelving will be installed to store collections, bathroom and kitchen supplies and other items.

Northern Neck History Fair

School closures and challenges of a historic quarantine did not stop local elementary students from creating some amazing projects for the 19th-annual Northern Neck History Fair. Participants presented their projects virtually, judges reviewed and scored them via email, and students learned who won through a Zoom meeting instead of the traditional awards ceremony at HCC&M. Here Lily Lewis displays her colorful exhibit “What Girls Did in the Colonial Time Period for Fun,” which earned second place and $75 courtesy of Chesapeake Bank, who sponsors the annual contest along with Connemara Corporation and Anna’s Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria of Kilmarnock.

Northern Neck Scavenger Hunt

HCC&M joined 17 museums across the Northern Neck in a socially-distanced scavenger hunt where participants visited each site to photograph an item visible outside and then answer a historical question from the museum’s website. One of the first families to join the fun at HCC&M was the Weisman family from King George. Mike and Christine Weisman with their daughter Zoe tried to visit all 17 sites in one day!

Go to YouTube to see our Memorial Day Tribute and Reading of the Declaration of Independence:
Memorial Day — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbwvDg79o20
Declaration — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6BIF8_zAvww

Memorial Day Tribute

Instead of Taps echoing from the ceiling vaults, this year the traditional notes for the Memorial Day service rang out from the entrance. Here Charles Lawson of The Highlander Studios in Kilmarnock captures bugler Donnie Goodman of Richmond, who volunteers for Bugles Across America, an organization that fulfills requests to have Taps played at funerals, memorials and other events.

Virtual Declaration

FHCC Board Member Regina Gaskins Baylor prepares to read a part of the Declaration of Independence by the Kelley burial plot as Charles Lawson of The Highlander Studios in Kilmarnock reads his camera. This year’s reading became a virtual event, with volunteers and friends from the event’s cosponsors — the Cobb Hall Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Richard Henry Lee Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution — reading different passages at various points around the church and churchyard that Lawson assembled into a video.

Pitching In

Volunteer Missy MacKimm shows off the latest FHCC Board of Directors Minute Book, where she organized minutes from recent meetings. Missy and other volunteers have been invaluable in helping staff in the office, burying ground, campus improvements and other areas.
The Garden Club of Virginia's (GCV) relationship with Historic Christ Church began over a half century ago. In 1965 the GCV selected Christ Church for its annual historic landscape restoration project. Under the direction of landscape architect Ralph E. Griswold, the GCV created the cedar alley, circular driveway and modern burying ground west of Christ Church.

This year the GCV celebrated its 100th year. To commemorate this milestone, the GCV selected sites around Virginia for a service day with Bartlett Tree Experts. In April, Brandon Frazier and his team from Bartlett’s Northern Neck office spent a day at Christ Church, pruning the large oaks in the churchyard and other trees that needed attention. GCV Restoration Committee liaison Dianne Spence and Foundation for Historic Christ Church’s slate roof in 2015–2016. The MCWB directed the restoration of Christ Church's slate roof in 2015–2016.

The Garden Club of Virginia Centennial Project

MCWB is working with engineers to finalize designs for a moist-

RISING DAMP PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

Field work for the Rising Damp Mitigation Project kicked off in April when Carla and Eric Kuchar with the firm of Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects (MCWB) spent a day taking laser 3-D scans of the church and surrounding landscape. These scans help create incredibly accurate topographical surveys, scaled elevations and digital images that document existing conditions and will help guide installation of the stormwater drainage system.

The Foundation selected MCWB to manage the rising damp project following a request for proposals in February. MCWB directed the restoration of Christ Church’s slate roof in 2015–2016. The firm has specialized in historic preservation for nearly four decades, with projects at Monticello, Mount Vernon, University of Virginia, Montpelier and other National Historic Landmarks among its portfolio. MCWB is working with engineers from the Charlottesville consulting company 2RW to finalize designs for a mois-

Read the FHCC Board of Directors resolution on the Garden Club of Virginia: ChristChurch1735.org/foundation/gcv

The Garden Club of Virginia’s Restoration Committee Papers — Virginiahistory.org/collections/garden-club-virginia

A member of the Bartlett’s team trims a limb on the red oak in the southwest corner of the churchyard.
By Jill Worth, FHCC President

All of us at FHCC looked forward to 2020. We had ended 2019 in such a positive manner and had planned an even stronger calendar of events for the upcoming year. In late February two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Alan Taylor began the programmatic year and, despite miserable weather, there was a large turnout.

In March FHCC appointed Robert Teagle as our new Executive Director. Three days later we realized that the COVID-19 pandemic was not going away and we, like other similar organizations, closed the campus.

Who'd have thought it? And, frankly, who'd have thought that we'd still be dealing with this catastrophic situation months later. But we are. And we at HCC, like many others, are learning to operate in new and innovative ways.

A closed campus does not mean a closed organization. Much is going on…

Despite testing positive for COVID, Robert continued to work — from home, of course. He is now completely recovered and back at full speed. Trish fell and severely broke her arm, but she continues to be the one-armed bandit in the office, aided most days by volunteer office help. Our volunteers are AMAZING.

Speaking of volunteers, some of our docents indicated that they would feel comfortable participating in a modified visitors’ program — by appointment only! Visitors call ahead, group size is limited to “family” groups traveling together, and docents and visitors wear masks at all times and maintain proper distances. The museum and gift shop remain closed, and we offer no restroom facilities. Visitors who “just show up” are encouraged to tour the churchyard, and they receive a brochure and a bookmark directing them to our online virtual tour.

Committees continue to meet, some via conference calls, some via Zoom and some in person outside under the breezeway between the Chase Center and Carter Center. The HCC&M Readers book group holds regular Zoom meetings with participants joining in from several states. Research Committee members make appointments to use the research library and continue to answer public inquiries.

FHCC has a new staff member, Paula Stallard, who joins the FHCC team on November 2 as the Assistant Director for Administration.

We also have a new event for 2020: Check out the front page for our “Colonial Tavern Fare” fundraiser. Please participate and encourage friends and neighbors to join in the fun, and, incidentally, support FHCC. The circumstances have changed in this last year, the need to support the mission of the Foundation for Historic Christ Church and to continue to preserve our unique historic property remains the same. These are difficult times for everyone, but with your help we can get through 2020 and be ready for a new year. Won’t you please give as generously as possible?

Please take care and stay healthy!

Jill