



The WORD

February 2026

Dear St. Timothy's Family,

The colloquialism goes: "If you want to hear God laugh, tell him all your plans."

Or in the original Yiddish: *Men tracht und Gott lacht* ("Man plans, God laughs.")



I thought about that expression throughout this recent "snow event." Back in December, the Vestry, Staff, and I had dusted off the "Inclement Weather Policy" for St. Timothy's. It's included after my message here and it's a standard run-down of how the church should operate in the event of bad winter weather. I remember thinking, and even *planning* in my brain, that if indeed we were to have bad snow, that there would be NO WAY that we would ever fully cancel our Sunday services from the church. I thought that the snow would never arrive in such a time, or in such an amount, or in such a..... that we would at least have a skeleton crew in our sanctuary. *And then God laughed.*

I am writing this message, actually, before the snowstorm hits, and you will receive it as the storm is, hopefully, receding (although there are calls for another in early February.) I hope that everyone has had a safe experience with the snow and that we can resume our in-person church services this weekend and gather together for our Annual Meeting and Vestry elections.

In the meantime, I wanted to use this space to write, broadly, about how the church leadership has made decisions during this "2026 Snow Event" (catchy name pending). I do so to shed light on all the good work that happens behind the scenes and how we as St. Timothy's work together for the safety of all.

In these situations, communication between myself and the Wardens intensifies. Rick Wilson (Senior Warden), Rob Huizar (Junior Warden), and I have a text chain *and* an email thread, *and* we speak by the phone *and* in-person in the leadup to this sort of thing. I give thanks for their counsel and judgement. Generally, I don't like to make such decisions in a vacuum or by myself. And, if I do have to make the decision on my own, I include them as soon as I can. Absent sensitive pastoral considerations (and the minutiae of church happenings), I generally try to tell the Wardens *everything*. I learned this from my former boss and mentor. It tends to make Vestry meetings more boring but is a good rule of thumb in parish life! I share this not to implicate them in every good (or bad) decision that I make, but rather to let you know the type of collaboration that exists in a healthy church.

The full Vestry is, of course, the next 'concentric circle' of information and decision-making. Weighty decisions are made over the span of months at our monthly in-person meetings but, as with the wardens, I

query the Vestry via email and in-person often in the interim. Additionally, the staff meets every week in-person, and we discuss matters around the Conference Table in C-1. Often, I will put forward a situation that needs guidance. Then, Allyson, Philene+, Deb Stolar, and Todd and I will come to a decision together. At other times, the Wardens and I have already come to a decision and the job of the Staff is to execute it. The balance between those two scenarios is the “secret sauce” of leadership and I am still learning the proper mixture.

In terms of the snow, the decision-making involves no small degree of drama and stress as there are safety concerns and, in this case, the looming event of the Annual Meeting/ Vestry Elections. Honestly, the fact that the snow was to arrive on the day of the Feast of St. Timothy where we were poised to gather together as a parish body in a legal/ canonical setting meant that I was *more desirous* to cancel in-person church and postpone the Annual Meeting. As I said at some point, “I don’t want to have an Annual Meeting by myself!”

In the days leading up to the arrival of the snow, it was clear that folks could/would not be able to get to our building. So we (Wardens/ Vestry/ Staff) started to triage through what needed to be decided and then communicated to the larger parish. I cannot tell you how much help I received in that process and how lucky I am to have wise wardens and caring staff. It’s a lot of work **not** to have church on a given Sunday. But all the appropriate people stepped up to the plate and acted in concert to help. A partial list:

- 1) Rick Wilson, with all his decades of experience in church matters, is the perfect Senior Warden to have in these situations. He has seen everything. We talked through how the Bylaws don’t specifically state what to do in this situation, but we could judiciously postpone the Vestry Election and Annual Meeting to a later date.
- 2) Rob Huizar (a self-proclaimed “weather nerd”) provided expert advice on the incoming snow storm and also helped think through having the first Vestry Meeting of the year via ZOOM (without having “seated” the new Vestry.) As any teacher knows, unfortunately, there will always be something “due” on the other side of snow cancellations!
- 3) The Hospitality Ministry successfully coordinated all the preparations for the lunch to be held at the Annual Meeting. A Chicken Salad Chick order for 100+ folks was expertly postponed by Michelle Cowherd while Brooke Nunnally/ Carolyn Hamm/ MOST worked to anticipate the needs for the gathering.
- 4) Worship itself is the most important thing we do as a faith community and so we worked hard to insure that there was both a service on Sunday morning (ZOOMed from the Cowherd household!) and that we did not “miss” our Patronal feast and the special liturgy that we had planned for 1/25. We essentially “pushed” that week forward to 2/1 (with apologies to the 4th Sunday of the Epiphany.) Our Oboist was rescheduled, preaching assignments were rearranged, and bulletins were modified.
- 5) Buildings and Grounds also is of great significance, of course, during this time. Andy Hamm provided sage advice, as always, on how to protect the building from inclement weather. He helped me coordinate with the company that plows our parking lot and does yeoman work turning off the water and protecting our pipes. I don’t know what we would do without him.
- 6) Communication is another area that, when done right, can calm anxiety... but, when done wrong, can exacerbate matters. I give thanks for Deb Stolar and her ability to craft our messaging and be ready at a moment’s notice for any changes. She has the difficult job of communicating to our disparate groups (both church and non) about cancellations and postponements. Allyson Showalter, as Director of our Pre-School, also provides key counsel in determining whether the Pre-School will open or not. Given that they meet every weekday, she must sometimes make decisions that not all agree with.

Therefore, I don't envy, for example, the Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools and the weight that she must feel in making these sorts of decisions that will affect millions. St. Timothy's is an organization with 8+ acres, 150 or so on a weekend, 60 or so on a weekday.... and it's plenty complicated! I give thanks then for all the planning and wisdom that goes into our collective "hive mind" at St. Timothy's. I do so with the recognition that we are all guided by the loving, and sometimes laughingly so, heart of our Almighty God.

God Bless,

Charles+

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Herndon, VA **Inclement Weather Policy**

- **Introduction**

On those days when the weather and travel is bad, it is our recommendation that those who feel they are able to travel safely to the church should come, and those who feel they cannot should stay home.

- **Weekday Closures**

In case of weekday inclement weather situations, it is the policy of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church and Pre-School to follow the lead of [Fairfax County Public Schools](#) for delayed opening and campus closures for all weekday events. The Pre-School Director will also use their discretion if a deviation is needed from the FCPS announcement.

- **Saturday Worship**

Saturday evening worship services will be cancelled if a State of Emergency has been called or VDOT recommends that no one other than emergency personnel may travel. Otherwise, Saturday Worship will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Rector, Senior Warden, and the liturgical ministers for the Spanish-speaking service. It will then be communicated to Saturday night worshippers.

- **Sunday morning**

- Sunday worship services will be cancelled if a State of Emergency has been called or VDOT recommends that no one other than emergency personnel may travel. Otherwise, Sunday Worship will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Rector and Senior Warden. If any decision is made, then it will be communicated via a parish ENEWS email no later than 7:00 am—including the decision to have only one service that day. See sample here: [Inclement Weather Notification for Sunday, February 22, 2015](#).
- If the weather is such that clergy and St. Isidore's can still get to church, we will livestream from an empty church.
If the weather is bad such that clergy and St. Isidore's cannot get to church, clergy will livestream from home.
- If the weather is bad enough that Clergy livestream cannot broadcast from home, we will provide a link to National Cathedral only. See sample here: [In Person Services, 8 & 10 AM Services Cancelled due to inclement weather](#).
- Note that attendance, of course, is never compulsory – all liturgical leaders (including choir members, musicians, altar guild, hospitality leaders, and liturgical ministers) should carefully decide for themselves whether they may travel safely.

From the Service Ministry

Thank you St. Timothy's for hitting the ground running in 2026! You've already helped to fill the shelves at the LINK pantry and made 200 snack packs for the community shelter. We are still looking for a group to provide a meal to the North County Hypothermia Shelter on February 28th. We have one volunteer, but he needs help! Also coming soon:

- Haiti Agape, February 8, 15 and 22nd
- Lenten Outreach Project, March 1st thru April 2nd

Please remember in your prayers, those who must work while we are snowbound and those who are unsheltered.

There will be more information about each of these events in the weekly eNews, so stay tuned for further developments.



Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Hamm

Agape for St. Mathieu's School in Chapoteau, Haiti

Over three weeks in February, you will hear about the relationship between St. Timothy's and a small Episcopal school, St. Mathieu's, in the rural village of Chapoteau, Haiti. That relationship started in 2010, when we sent 15 children to school, and continues today, where we provide the sole financial support to a school of 250 children, 10 teachers and 4 administrators. Our funds pay the salaries of the teachers who work in conditions that we would consider primitive, and they do it with professionalism, dedication, and joy. The building is of cinder block construction, has no electricity, running water, or plumbing. The teachers walk to school wearing shirts and ties and the children in uniforms, often carrying their shoes to keep them clean. It is a beautiful sight.

During our Agape (which means love) you will hear about the role of the Episcopal Church in Haiti, the importance of education to Haitian children, and how St. Timothy's developed its relationship with Chapoteau. You will hear from our Seminarian, Marie Esther, and her journey from Haiti to the United States and what that has meant to her. The purpose, of course, is to raise money. In 2025 we contributed

\$25,000 toward the teachers' salaries. This funding level has remained about the same for several years. This year, Father Kesner Gracia, the Priest in Charge, has requested a budget of \$37,000. The school currently includes curriculum for primary grades only; the school would very much like to add secondary classrooms.

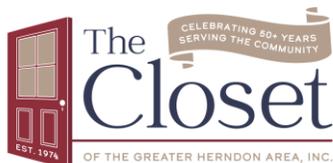
Everyone knows that the political, social and economic situation in Haiti is terrible. Furthermore, their problems continue at a time when the US government has made significant cuts to foreign aid. During the past year, many residents of large population centers such as Port-au-Prince have fled to rural areas such as Chapoteau, which lies in the central plateau region of Haiti. Fr. Kesner has welcomed as many of those children to St. Mathieu's as possible so that their education continues. Of course, this puts a tremendous strain on resources that are already limited.

Unfortunately, at this critical time for Haiti, there is no longer a ministry at St. Timothy's devoted to supporting this mission. If we are unable to grow a committee that is willing to take on this effort it is doubtful that we will be able to continue this work in future years. This topic will be addressed throughout our Agape period.

Donations may be made at any time, by check to St. Timothy's with Haiti School Fund on the memo line, or by credit card at this link: [Haiti School Credit Card Donation](#)

Please wander into Henry Hall and see the display of photos and videos from years when we were able to send a mission team (the last in 2018) as well as recorded messages from the Pere Kesner Gracia, the Priest in Charge of the Region, and Mr. Jacob Venet, Director of the school. And of course, we ask for your prayers for our children and all the people of Haiti.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Hamm



The Closet had the BEST Year Even

From our Store Manager, Tempestt Ware Harmon:

Executive Summary

2025 was the strongest overall year in The Closet's history by sales performance and total organizational income. Net sales, as reflected in Clover reporting, reached approximately \$1.22M, exceeding both 2023 and 2024. In addition, the year-end financial statements show total income of \$1,225,242.17, which includes sales activity plus items like donations recorded through the organization's accounting system. The organization finished the year with strong cash reserves and continued to deliver major community impact through vouchers, grants, scholarships, and seasonal giving programs, all while operating with ongoing staffing constraints.

Also - more excess funds than ever were distributed to the Greater Herndon Community:

Grants & Scholarships

Grants and scholarships are the clearest “mission output” of The Closet beyond the sales floor. In 2025, the organization distributed \$178,150 in grants and recorded \$54,000 in scholarship expense/support. These numbers matter because they reflect direct community investment. In simple terms, the store’s strong sales performance enabled the organization to continue making meaningful contributions to local nonprofits, families, and community needs, while still ending the year financially stable.

Voucher Program

The Voucher Program remains one of the most mission-critical functions of the organization because it provides families with immediate dignity-based access to clothing and household essentials. In 2025, the year-end financials show a total voucher distribution around \$119,547.46.

This level of service is significant and requires not only inventory availability, but also consistent administration and support. Note that St. Tim’s member Betsy Bosworth is a regular voucher volunteer. Maria LaWalt is a volunteer cashier.

Donations from the community, volunteers from 20 congregations and from the community plus a staff of 20 have made The Closet a success again - now in its 51st year.

The Closet is always seeking volunteers - please join the fun. Contact any of us below to learn more. For students who seek volunteer hours for school, the Closet is happy to have help from students too.

Thank you.

Holly Hartge mhhvirginia@verizon.net

Betsy Bosworth kblc@verizon.net

Maria LaWalt mjlawalt@verizon.net

News from the Social Justice Ministry

The Social Justice Ministry (SJM) was formally commissioned on Sunday, January 18, 2026, during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Weekend. Its mission is below.

The Social Justice Ministry, in an attempt to follow the example of Jesus, is committed to: demonstrating compassion where there is none, making no peace with oppression, working for justice for all people and fearlessly contending against evil via advocacy for actions and public policies that further the coming of God’s Kingdom.

Of course, the work of social justice is the work of the entire parish, and indeed of all who call themselves Christian. The SJM had its inception following a half-day retreat last Fall and seeks to ground itself in prayerful action. At this point the SJM will serve as a committee working closely with Charles in helping to guide the social justice ministry of the parish. Over time opportunities will arise in which there will be opportunities for participation from other interested parishioners.

Jesus has called us all to an alternate value system, one that is always in greater or lesser tension with the value system of the world. The work of social justice strives to help bring the world into greater alignment with values of God’s Kingdom. To that end, the SJM has committed itself to seek out the marginalized of any type, to help determine what services they need and to advocate on their behalf. Recently, Ron Boggio

(standing in for Charles) and a group of local Episcopal clergy met with the manager of the local Target in Reston to see if he might post signs about the Fourth Amendment rights of individuals that are being approached by ICE in Target stores and parking lots across the country. While the manager was very friendly; he informed us that company policy prohibited the posting of any notices on the store's premises. We thanked him for his time.



More broadly, the SJM is beginning by creating an informational database of the community's unmet needs, so that we can decide if we can fill the gaps that exist in helping the marginalized find the dignity that is due to all of God's children. Beginning close to home, one of our first undertakings will be with our Saturday night community, who have been justifiably injured and disheartened by recent events. Further initiatives and calls for parish-wide participation will occur as we complete our research and develop our priorities for 2026.

For further information, please contact socialjustice@saint-timothys.org

Respectfully submitted by Ron Boggio





Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Time: Friday 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Where: St Paul's Episcopal Church
815 E Grace St, Richmond, VA 23219

To register
Scan QR Code:



Please join us for our annual **Advocacy Day**. Together, we will meet legislators, elevate community voices, and advocate for legislation that improves the lives of Latinos and immigrant communities in Virginia.

Together, we will advocate for:

- Protecting and Strengthening Our Constitutional Rights
- Support Immigrant Rights
- Ensure Access to Healthcare
- Invest in Education
- Address Housing Concerns



The Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations, VACOLAO, is a non-partisan Organization. We have been advocating for the rights of Latinos and immigrants in Virginia since our foundation in 2001.

We work to educate, empower, and secure equal treatment, opportunity, and representation for Latinos in Virginia.

**TAKE ACTION
IN WASHINGTON DC**

Praying With Our Feet

**THIS THURSDAY,
JANUARY 29 AT 10AM ET**



Vestry 2025 (see March WORD for 2026 Vestry!)



Rick Wilson (2027) – *Senior Warden*
rwilson20@verizon.net
703-629-4972



Vilma Iveth Lemus Magano (2026)
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Wanda Rixon (2028)
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Midori Yanagihara (2026)
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Service Times

Saturday: 7 pm Spanish Service/Rite II
 Sunday: 8 am Rite I (English)
 Sunday: 10 am Rite II (English)
 Also available via Zoom
 (Livestream on
 YouTube/
 Facebook/Website)

Please check the website for up-to-date information about opportunities to worship

Welcome New Members

To transfer your membership to St. Timothy's or to find out if you are a registered member, contact the church office (office@saint-timothys.org) or fill out the Parishioner Information Form.

Editor of The Word

Ron Boggio
wordeditor@saint-timothys.org

**Submission deadline for the
 March 2026 issue of The Word
 is Monday, February 23rd**

If we do not have an email address for you and your family, or if your email has changed, send the information to office@saint-timothys.org.

The Word is published monthly and emailed to members and friends the first week of the month. It also appears on the website. If you wish to receive a copy by mail, please notify the church office (office@saint-timothys.org). Copies of *The Word* are also available in the office.

Rector

The Rev. Charles R. Cowherd
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 703-437-3790 x12



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 703-437-3790 x16



Parish Administrator

Ms. Deb Stolar
office@saint-timothys.org
 703-437-3790



Bookkeeper

Ms. Deb Angerman
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 703-437-3790 x13

St. Timothy's Pre-School Director

Ms. Allyson Showalter
sttimothypreschool432@gmail.com
 703-437-4767



Duane Hartge – Treasurer treasurer@saint-timothys.org
Rose Berberich - Registrar

Reflection for the Season of Epiphany/Manifestation

The Christ Mystery is the indwelling of the Divine Presence in everyone and everything since the beginning of time.

As the twentieth-century English mystic Caryl Houselander said, "Christ is everywhere; in Him every kind of life has a meaning and has an influence on every other kind of life."

If this seems to us today somehow exotic, it certainly wouldn't have to early Christians. The revelation of the Risen Christ as ubiquitous and eternal was clearly affirmed in the Scriptures (Colossians 1, Ephesians 1, John 1, Hebrews 1) and in the early church, when the euphoria of the Christian faith was still creative and expanding. In our time, however, this deep mode of seeing must be approached as something of a reclamation project. After the Western and Eastern Churches separated in the Great Schism of 1054, we in the West gradually lost this profound understanding of how God has been liberating and loving all that is. Instead, we gradually limited the Divine Presence to the single body of Jesus, *when perhaps it is as ubiquitous as light itself—and uncircumscribable by human boundaries.*

If my own experience is any indication, discovering Christ as *the transcendent within* of every "thing" in the universe can transform the way we perceive and the way we live in our everyday world. It can offer us the deep and universal meaning that Western civilization seems to lack and long for today. It has the potential to reground Christianity.

Religion's essential function is to radically connect us with everything (*re-ligio* = to re-ligament or reconnect). A cosmic notion of the Christ competes with and excludes no one, but includes everyone and everything (Acts 10:15, 34).

**Adapted from Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation for 12/22/26*

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/christ-in-every-thing/>