Over the past several years, the Christian Service Committee has regularly sponsored a Ministry Fair on the steps of the Cathedral to invite parishioners to give of their time and talent to join one of the many ministries that serve and support the parish.

Recently it was suggested at the Parish Council meeting that we set up at table at the Parish Suppers and Coffees to invite people to serve the Lord. At the January 24th Parish Supper, Nancy and Ron Bachner of the Christian Service Committee manned the table and passed out ministry information to interested parties. We’re always on the lookout for events where a group of parishioners might assemble; the Potluck Suppers and Doughnut Sundays are really good chances to invite people to join us in serving the Lord.

New Parishioner Alizon McLaughlin responded to the call and received some information from Nancy. She expressed an interest in the Council of Catholic Women and had the opportunity to meet with current President Carol Letcher to learn more about the organization.

We’ve doubled the size of the parish since before the restoration but haven’t doubled the number of folks involved in our ministries. If anyone would like to learn more about any of our parish ministries, please contact Deborah Wade at 912-507-6470 or deborahwade@comcast.net

Charlie and Cheryl Ganem present a check to Monsignor O’Neill in the amount of $119,215 for the Cathedral Heritage Fund. This represents a record amount raised to benefit the restoration and preservation of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Thanks to Charlie and Cheryl and the entire Gala Committee for a job well done!

Our parish tries to help the Social Apostolate during the year with a food drive, toiletries and items of the month. Here’s a summary of how they used these items to help the less fortunate in our community this past year.

- **Soup Kitchen**: 20,533 People fed
- **Showers**: 1021 Provided
- **Hygiene Packets**: 617 Distributed
- **Groceries**: 1028 Families
- **GA ID Cards**: 298 Obtained
- **Birth Certificates**: 553 Obtained
- **Transportation assistance**: 278 Provided
- **Clothing Vouchers**: 1131 Provided
- **Work shoes/clothes**: 71 Provided
- **School Uniform Vouches**: 213 Provided
- **Prescriptions**: 339 Obtained
A few years ago, I participated in an Evangelization workshop. We were asked to consider how we would approach a coworker or friend to discuss our Catholic faith and invite them to come to a Mass. One of the participants, a mature woman and lifelong Catholic said she could never do that because she wouldn’t know what to say about her faith. Essentially she was saying that she had faith but was not sure enough in what she believed to speak to another about it. I asked her if she knew the Apostles Creed. “Yes,” she said. “Then you know what to say about your faith,” I replied. Last year we placed a plaque containing the Apostles Creed on the wall in the narthex as a public and solemn profession of our Catholic faith, for all visitors, many of whom are non-Catholic, to see. In light of the example above, perhaps we should all read it occasionally and reflect upon the words, to remind us of the basic tenets of our faith.

It occurred to me at Mass recently that perhaps a mnemonic device would be helpful in this regard. Our teachers often resorted to various mnemonic devices (from the Greek mnēmonikós, of, or relating to, memory) when we were in school, to help us remember important facts. One of the most memorable for me was ROY G BIV, standing for Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet, the colors in the rainbow or visible spectrum.

That’s where the letters I E C R A come in. Although not as memorable as ROY G BIV, they serve as a mnemonic to remember many of the key tenets of our faith, which are spelled out in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. It stands for:

**Incarnation** — “I believe . . . in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.” Or in the more explicit words of the Nicene Creed, “For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

**Eucharist** — On Holy Thursday evening, Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper with the words “This is my body, this is my blood,” and the miraculous consecration occurred, transforming the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

**Crucifixion and death** — “was crucified, died and was buried”

**Resurrection** — “on the third day he arose again”

**Ascension** — “he ascended into heaven”

As we approach the Easter Triduum, in the heart of Holy Week, we reach the culmination of our Lenten journey. During the Triduum, the three holiest days of the church year, we commemorate three key tenets of our faith including the institution of the **Eucharist**, the mystery of the **Passion**, **Crucifixion**, and Death of Jesus and on Easter Sunday, his glorious **Resurrection** and triumph over death.

The Son of God, accepted the Passion and the Cross out of love for us, to enable us to share in his Resurrection so that we might be saved and live forever in consolation and in peace. At the Last Supper, in pronouncing the blessing over the bread and the wine, Jesus anticipated the sacrifice of the Cross and expressed the intention of perpetuating his presence among us. Under the species of the bread and the wine, he made himself present in a real way for all time, with his Body given and his Blood poured out.

The Easter Triduum, the fulcrum of the entire Liturgical Year, is a time of special grace for every Christian. Jesus reprimanded the disciples as recounted in St Matthew’s Gospel, “Could you not watch with me one hour?” Let us respond joyfully and willingly to the Lord “Oh, yes Lord! We can wait with You!” Let us walk with him throughout the entire Easter Triduum and by doing so say, “Thank You Jesus for your willingness to go to the cross to forgive us our sins and heal us from all infirmity.”

Along with the subsequent Ascension and the aforementioned Incarnation, these feasts constitute some of the central doctrines of our faith. We encourage your participation in these upcoming events.

This article contains excerpts from comments made by Pope Benedict XVI.
You don't truly appreciate something until it's gone. I wonder how many of you had ever looked at or remember the six stained glass windows, in the covered entryway, leading down to the Chapel of Our Lady. Sadly, in January 2013, someone callously tried to break into the chapel and significantly damaged the three windows on the west side of the entry. When I first heard about it, I couldn’t recall ever looking at the windows. It wasn’t until I went over to view them at the Aurora Stained Glass studio, where they were being restored, that I truly appreciated their beauty.

According to an article written by Rita DeLorme for the Southern Cross, “In 1940 with the clouds of war gathering, Monsignor T. James McNamara, the church’s rector, decided to have the crypt beneath his church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On November 26, 1940, the feast of Mary’s Presentation, the basement of the Cathedral officially became the Chapel of Our Lady. With the onset of World War II, materials were in short supply, so the chapel, although dedicated, remained unfinished. In the latter months of 1944, with the wartime situation easing, the chapel once again became a priority. The prestigious architectural firm of Henry D. Dagit and Sons of Philadelphia, PA, was hired to design an entrance to the Chapel of Our Lady. Inspired by the early portals to English Gothic churches, they designed a similar entrance to the chapel, a so called medieval porch.

Framed by a custom arch, with authentic Gothic detailing, the new entrance doors to the chapel stood beneath a stone tympanum with a bas relief carving of the Virgin Mary.” Monsignor McNamara reportedly said at the time that “this feature will make the whole entrance a monument of beauty and devotion and will have an inviting atmosphere to the passerby.”

Once inside the entryway, the beauty was even more evident as the six lovely stained glass windows, on the upper landing, featuring images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, warmly shed their blue and red polychromatic light into the space. A large number of titles have been used to honor the Virgin Mary throughout history or ask for her intercession. Each of the windows is dedicated to Mary under one of her titles as follows:

**East side:**
- Mother of Purity
- Our Lady of The Miraculous Medal
  
  “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”
- Mother of Grace

**West side:**
- Mother of Mothers
- Queen of the Rosary
- Queen of Peace

According to Jon Erickson, the Designer/Owner of Aurora Stained Glass, “These windows are quite beautiful. The medallions are exquisite. Willet Hauser Glass did a very lovely job executing them. The three windows on the west side were pretty badly damaged. They were very beat up; two of them were somewhat
bowed but the Mother of Mothers window was significantly damaged and the lead was very badly stretched,” said Jon.

The initial challenge of the restoration process is trying to find some photos of them before they were broken, so that they could be accurately restored. Sadly we didn’t have any photos of them before the damage, here at the Cathedral. Willet Hauser of Philadelphia, PA, originally made them for us and fortunately Jon was able to obtain images of these windows before they were damaged. Willet Hauser Architectural Glass continues to lead the industry as the largest studio in North America. A few prominent examples of their work includes: The National Cathedral, Washington, DC, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, The Cadet Chapel, United States Military Academy, West Point and The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NY.

Figuring out how the pattern looked before the damage is just part of the restoration process; matching the broken glass is equally challenging. The glass in these windows is English antique glass made by Hartley Wood and they haven’t made any like it since the 1970’s. Jon is making every effort to use the existing material unless the damage is too extensive. Sometimes it only involves rebending the damaged glass and lead back into place. But in one window, the glass was so badly broken as to require recreation of the design as well as replacement with other glass. If he can’t use the existing glass, Jon attempts to find glass that is the closest or most sympathetic match to the color of the damaged glass. Since much of the original glass is extremely thick and some of the lead was so badly smashed that it cannot be rebent into place, it will have to be replaced with new lead.

The work will go on for several months as the restored windows won’t be installed until about mid-year when the scaffolding is removed. These windows were stone set, right into the masonry, which is a bit unusual here at the Cathedral where most of the stained glass windows are set in wooden frames. It will present an additional installation challenge, as the panels were built out of square, to match openings that were also out of square.

We are thankful to Jon for his effort to lovingly restore these beautiful windows. Once they are reinstalled, please take the time to have a good look at them and appreciate this exquisite and little known feature in our church.
Growing in Faith, said Fr. Philip Chircop, S. J., requires more than accepting the Gift of Faith. We all received this beautiful gift at some point in our lives, perhaps in infant baptism, nurtured within a practicing Catholic family or school, or perhaps later in life when we assent to membership in the Catholic Church. But the Gift of Faith, though lovely to behold, is of no use to us or to God until it is opened, used, shared and celebrated!

This theme was developed over the three nights of our Lenten Parish Mission held on February 17 through 19 at the Cathedral. Attendees learned the keys to unwrapping our gift during three memorable evenings of song, teaching and prayer.

On the first evening, Father Chircop told us that “Faith is the bird that senses the dawn and sings while it is still dark.” It is the gift that allows a person to go out and live God’s word joyfully in spite of the sadness, rejection and misery all around him.

How is this possible? Opening the precious Gift of Faith, sharing it and celebrating it requires TRUST (Fiducia), FIDELITY (Fidelitus) and VISION or EASTER EYES (Visio—the eyes of Christ).

TRUST

The first aspect of Faith involves 5 practices:

**Truthfulness** — Acknowledging who we are, our fallen nature that is shared by all other people, and our special relationship to God who loves us.

**Reconciliation** — As sinner and saint, good and evil, we must be prepared to reach out to others and share their brokenness.

**Unity** — We should become a “Shalom” people, a people of peace in all we say and do.

**Silence** — We must learn to love stillness in order to hear God’s voice.

**Tenacity** — We must persevere even in the most difficult of circumstances.

FIDELITY

On the second night, Fr. Chircop told us that Faith is a relationship, an encounter, a falling in love with the one who loved us first. To develop the practice of fidelity, he recommended 5 practices:

**Foot Washing** — As Jesus washed Judas’ feet in the upper room, so we must provide compassionate service to others.

**Immersion** — Getting out of the way for Christ to act, disappearing as John did when he said he must decrease so that Christ could increase.

**Devotion** — Do everything because it nourishes your soul without becoming obsessed by your devotional practices.

**Enthusiasm** — Do everything with love, through love, with love, in His love.

**Levity** — Practice authentic Christian joy. Learn to laugh.

Fr. Chircop concluded by saying “If the New Evangelism is not about joy, it will not work!”

VISION

Finally, on night three, Fr. Chircop told us to develop “Easter eyes,” where everyone and everything belongs. He asked us to let go of all the “tinted” glasses, our biases and judgments, and put on the eyes of Christ who loved everyone.

In order to keep this Easter vision, Father recommended 5 additional practices:

**Vulnerability** — Don’t be afraid to be broken; become an umbilical cord to nurture others; rather than fighting or fleeing, follow the 3rd way, the Way of the Cross.

**Inclusion** — Avoid excluding anyone.

**Simplicity** — Let go of what is unnecessary. Nothing in this world is permanent.

**Imperfectio n** — Celebrate your brokenness made whole in Christ. When you fall, get up again as Christ did.

**Obedience** — Means listening. Practice radical, continuous listening to the voice of God in others and in yourself.

Nothing, declared Fr. Chircop, could be worse than to find ourselves approaching death without ever having unwrapped God’s great Gift of Faith. He urged us to live in a state of “possibility,” to practice patience with ourselves and to stay connected to the vine.

Mission attendees went away with a renewed sense of purpose in our lives, and we are very grateful to Fr. Chircop for his humor, his enthusiasm and his deep understanding of the human heart.
Pope Benedict XVI has said, “The word of God recalls how the water and bread are necessary for every human being. The story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes by Jesus, reminds us our own responsibility to do what we can to help those who suffer from hunger and thirst. Do not forget others and do not be afraid to open our hands and hearts to help all those in need.”

“The Gospel,” he continued, “reminds us that we are forbidden to be indifferent to the tragedy of those who hunger and thirst! It encourages us to give them food to eat and share our bread with the needy. Following Christ, we must be sensitive to the poverty of others. Feeding the hungry is not simply a logistical and economic challenge, it is a moral obligation!”

The former Pontiff reminds us that Jesus Christ wants to take care of both our physical and spiritual needs. “Christ is attentive to material needs but wants to give more because man is always hungry for something more, has need of something more. This need is fulfilled in the Eucharist which helps us to love God more and to love others too. In the Eucharist, Jesus also makes us witnesses of God’s compassion for each brother and sister. The Eucharistic mystery, thus, gives rise to the service of charity towards the other. We are invited to look upon the consecrated Host: It is the same God! The same Love! This is the beauty of Christian truth: The Creator and Lord of all things became ‘a grain of wheat’ to be sown in our earth, in the furrow of our history; he became bread to be broken, shared, eaten; he became our food to give us life, his own divine life.”

He affirmed that the Eucharist is “the school of charity and solidarity. Those who eat the Bread of Christ cannot remain indifferent before those who, even in our days, lack daily bread. The Church does not only pray ‘give us this day our daily bread,’ but, following the Lord’s example, works in every way ‘to multiply the five loaves and two fish’ with countless humanitarian efforts and sharing, so that no one remains without the necessities of life.”

During this Lenten season, the Christian Service Committee encourages all parishioners to heed the Holy Father’s words and help others in need. Every March, the Cathedral Parish is responsible for contributing food to the Savannah Social Apostolate Food Basket Program which goes to provide meals to the needy of our city. We’d like to see that basket overflowing with food every Sunday in March as the need is so great. A can of soup is welcome but a bag of groceries each week is preferred. So put the bulletin insert on your refrigerator and bring a bag of groceries to church every week. The drive starts Sunday, March 3rd, and runs through the entire month. Boxes will be maintained in the vestibule of the Cathedral for parishioners to deposit items of non-perishable food for this much needed cause; canned fish and meats, dried beans, rice, macaroni, peanut butter and jelly are always needed. Here is an opportunity to fulfill your Lenten responsibility for almsgiving before we get to Easter. Please be generous and support this worthy cause.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.” Matthew 25:35
Last year a beautiful, handcrafted wooden Celtic cross made its appearance in the Cathedral just in time for the St. Patrick’s Day festivities and has since retained a place of honor next to the Ambry at the entrance to the Sacred Heart Chapel.

The Celtic cross is a symbol that combines a cross with a ring surrounding the intersection. In Ireland, it is a popular legend that the Celtic Christian cross was introduced by Saint Patrick during his time converting the pagan Irish. It has been claimed that Patrick combined the symbol of Christianity with the sun cross, to give pagan followers an idea of the importance of the cross by linking it with the idea of the life-giving properties of the sun.

A couple of years ago, Brother Robert was talking to Pat McCarthy, who often helps him out with projects at the Cathedral. “Is there anything I can do for you?” Pat asked. “Yes,” said Brother Robert. “I have an old Styrofoam Celtic cross, which we use at St. Patrick’s Day, which has gotten kind of worn out. It would nice to have a new one.” And so began a project which ultimately resulted in the addition of a beautiful wooden Celtic cross to the Cathedral.

Pat has undertaken many woodworking projects over the years for his family. A unity candle stand he made for his niece Molly’s wedding in the Cathedral a few years ago. Ultimately he gave it to Brother Robert for use at future weddings in the Cathedral.

In commissioning the cross, Brother Robert gave Pat only one directive, “You have essentially a year to make the cross but I definitely need it before St. Patrick’s Day next year,” he said. Not knowing exactly where to start, Pat got a little help from his wife Gail who suggested that he take a look at the Celtic cross located in Emmett Park on Bay Street. Placed in the park in 1983, to commemorate Georgians of Irish ancestry, this “Irish Limestone Celtic Cross” was hand carved in County Roscommon, Ireland. It has interlaced face and sides, a roped front and back with the bands sunk front and back. There is a nine-inch cap on top. The total of die and base was intended to be nine feet, six inches in height, but the finished stone was somewhat smaller.

Pat made many trips to the park over the next several weeks to take photos and make exact measurements. In crafting his own version of this cross in wood, Pat simplified the design by eliminating the roped front adding the gold leaf detailing around the sunken band as well as an intricate, inlayed Celtic knot to the side of the base.

Pat selected a wood called sapele for the principal part of the cross. Native to tropical Africa, sapele is commercially important wood, reminiscent of mahogany. Among its more exotic uses include the top, back and sides of guitar bodies as well as for interior wood trim on Cadillac vehicles. “I knew it would stain dark and more closely match the other woods in the Cathedral,” he said.

The main body of the cross measuring about 75 inches is made up of three pieces of sapele laminated together. The massive base which was necessary to support the cross is a laminate of sapele, Caribbean rosewood, cocobolo and elm from Ireland. The finished cross measures 108 inches from floor to cap.

“Since seven generations of McCarthy’s have received sacraments in the Cathedral beginning with my great-great-grandfather “Mik” McCarthy who came over from County Mayo in 1851, I feel a strong connection to the church. More recently our son was married in the Cathedral and our grandson was baptized in the Cathedral in 2011. The cross is a symbol of our faith and Irish heritage, I feel honored to have been asked by Brother Robert to build this cross for the cathedral,” Pat said.

When he saw the cross for the first time after Pat delivered it to the Cathedral Brother Robert was overwhelmed. “What a beautiful work of art. This cross is truly a labor of love. It has been constructed to perfection. I hope and pray that it will be in the Cathedral for years to come,” he said.

Thank you Pat, for using your God-given talent, to craft this beautiful addition to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.
I am an altar server at the Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 1:00 PM in the Cathedral. Serving at this Mass, I get a sense of awe and wonder at its majesty and grandeur that convey a nearness of God. There are two elements in the Tridentine form that give it such a feeling of majesty.

The first is its continuity. The Extraordinary form of the Mass, the culmination of tradition, was standardized by Pope Pius VI in 1570. Even before then, however, it was the foremost of the rites and was used in Rome for hundreds of years. Besides being essentially unchanged, it is said in the Latin tongue, the traditional language of the Catholic Church. The Mass’ unity with the traditions of the Church is continually present in the minds of the congregation.

The other element that does much to increase its grandeur and reverence is its highly ordered structure. Each word and motion is preordained. Every movement and every word of the priest has a reason that is rooted in profound respect and awe for the holy sacrifice taking place. This sense of a permanent, unchanging rhythm is the same for the altar-servers. Their movements follow a set pattern, so that each one knows what he is about. This ensures that each server – without distracting the priest by depending on him for cues – can focus on the Mass instead of wondering what to do next.

This order apparent in the Mass gives it a sense of unhurriedness and peacefulness only matched by Monastic services. The Gregorian chant sung during the Mass – as specified in the rubrics and requested by the Pope – conveys solemnity and reverence. When these different elements – its orderliness, its language, its union with tradition, and its music – come together, they give the Mass a majesty that focuses our mind on its purpose, the Eucharistic mystery.

It is this ever-present feeling of the nearness of God that draws people, including myself, to the Tridentine Mass. The ordered nature of the Mass draws us into it; the Latin is no barrier – instead transcending the limits of language – and the music unites the actions of the priest with those of the people.
During January, Respect Life Month, many activities were held throughout the country as well as right here in the Diocese of Savannah to help build a culture of life by promoting the respect for the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death. Geraldine Pufahl, Pro Life representative for the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist detailed them as follows:

1. A Pro Life Mass was celebrated at Cathedral of St. John the Baptist on Thursday, Jan. 17, by Bishop Emeritus Kevin J. Boland in honor of Respect Life month to pray for an end to the sin of abortion.

2. Youth groups from the Diocese of Savannah traveled to St. Augustine, FL for a Pro Life Rally on Saturday, Jan. 19. The rally was attended by over 2000 people, mostly from FL and GA. The Diocese of Savannah was well represented by the St. Anne Life Teen group (total 39 w/ chaperones) and 64 attendees from Blessed Sacrament, Saint Frances Cabrini, Saint Boniface and Saint Peter the Apostle.

3. A Vigil Mass was held at St. Anne, Richmond Hill Monday, Jan. 21. Father Joseph Smith chose the liturgy for the feast of the Holy Innocents to commemorate the Anniversary of Roe v. Wade (Jan. 22). He ended Mass with a Prayer for the Unborn Child which concludes with the words:
   “Give us the grace, when the sacredness of life before birth is attacked, to stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life. Almighty Father, give us courage to proclaim the supreme dignity of all human life and to demand that society itself give its protection. AMEN”

4. Mass was also celebrated on the 40th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7:30 AM at St. Peter the Apostle, Wilmington Island.

5. The March for Life Rally in Washington, D. C. on Friday, Jan. 25, drew estimated 500,000 with 80% of them young people who marched down Constitution Avenue to remember the 55 million Americans who have died in the last 4 decades. Shane Kavanagh, 18 year old son of Cathedral parishioners Jamie & Mary Ann Kavanagh, had a strong emotional reaction to his participation in the march. “I was very excited to attend the March for Life this year as I had never been before. My expectations were high, but the experience was so much better than I ever imagined.
   “The Mass at the National Basilica was amazing and one of the most moving masses I have ever attended. The March itself was wonderful. I was so very encouraged to see the thousands and thousands of people who were in attendance. It gave me great courage and hope for my generation, since the majority of the protestors were young adults. It was a wonderful experience and I hope to be able to attend again next year,” he said.

6. A Eucharistic Holy Hour for Life, Marriage & Religious Liberty was held on Monday, March 11 at the Cathedral from 7:00–8:00 PM led by Father Luis Fonseca.

7. A Pro Life Holy Hour is held at St. James Church, every Wednesday from 6:00–7:00 PM and at St. Frances Cabrini, the 4th Thursday each month, from 6:30–7:30 PM.

8. A weekly Prayer Vigil is held every Thursday from 9:30 AM to Noon in front of the abortion clinic (Savannah Medical Clinic) on 34th St. between Abercorn & Drayton streets. Friends gather to pray & offer alternatives to abortion. Free & confidential services are available at the Savannah Care Center, Crisis Pregnancy Center, across the street at 105 E. 34th St.

Upcoming event:
   Savannah Care Center “Walk for Life” at Daffin Park on Saturday, March 23.
   Registration at 8:15 AM and the walk begins at 9:00 AM.
   “Being pro-life isn’t simply a political act. Even more important is actively praying for the end of abortion. Please find a way to make prayer for the protection of the unborn part of your daily prayer life,” said Geraldine.

“Human life, a Gift from God worthy of our respect and protection.

“Our humanity is not defined by the atrocities that have been committed throughout history, but by the shining light of those who recognize injustice and refuse to be complicit through silence.”

— Carol Tobias, President -National Right to Life Council
Gerald Cyr: 
FAITHFUL STEWARD 
By Peter Paolucci

For the past three years, Gerald Cyr has served as the Chairman of the Property Committee of the Cathedral Parish Council, responsible for addressing the various physical needs of the Parish, in regard to church buildings and property. I sat down with Gerald recently to gain some insight into what that really means.

“I try to notice things that need to be fixed, respond to requests from various people to correct problems and arrange to get things remedied. Most of the time, it’s all about doors, floors and leaks,” said Gerald. “The Cathedral is a very old building and though it was restored 13 years ago, after a few years respite, just after the restoration, deterioration has resumed and there is always something to fix. There is continual settling which regularly affects the way the wooden doors line up. Also things like the hinges on the bronze altar gates needed to be repaired so they close properly. And numerous marble blocks in the aisles were rocking badly and needed to be removed and reset,” he continued.

And then there are the leaks which have recurred regularly over the past 100 years. The copper gutter system at the bottom of the roof was affixed rigidly and did not allow for expansion of the metal due to temperature variation. This caused breaks in the copper gutters which then leaked into the walls of the church. Whenever we have leaks, not only do they have to be fixed but the damage they caused also needs to be repaired. This has happened several times in different places since the restoration.”

It is obvious to everyone that the steeple project is well underway. “How did this damage occur if we restored the Cathedral only 12 years ago?” I asked Gerald.

“We believe that the earthquake in the Washington, DC area a few years ago caused this damage,” he said. (On August 23, 2011 a 5.8 magnitude earthquake occurred in Louisa, Virginia just southeast of Charlottesville and northwest of Richmond according to the USGS. Tremors were reported as far north as New York and well into the New England area. According to the USGS, an Eastern US earthquake of this magnitude can typically be felt as far as 300 miles away.) “There were numerous reports that people in the upper floors of Savannah’s taller buildings felt their structure sway significantly. The impact tends to dissipate at the ground level, but the higher you go, the more the deflection is felt,” he continued.

“The steeples and stucco were inspected during the Cathedral restoration and both were found to be sound. Annual inspections conducted since then continued to confirm their soundness. However, after the earthquake, cracks were detected inside...”
the tower structures and a crane and basket inspection of the outside of the steeples detected cracks in the exterior stucco of both towers as well. Sheets of stucco weighing an estimated 2000 pounds were broken loose and hanging precariously, in danger of slaking off and falling to the ground,” he concluded.

Initial estimates projected that the repair work would to cost about $750,000, split roughly equally among, the scaffold rental, removal and replacement of the stucco and repair of structural damage to the steeples. Since the scaffolds have been erected, engineers have confirmed that the cracks go completely through and around the steeples, necessitating more extensive repair.

In addition, the scaffolding has allowed us to closely examine the rose window and other windows in the steeples. They were not restored during the restoration and now have deteriorated to the point where major work needs to be done on them. Since we have the scaffolding in place for the steeples project, it is most cost effective to restore these windows at this time. Preliminary estimates suggest that the additional structural and window work could increase the previous estimate to the $1.25 - $1.5 million dollar range for the total project.

Gerald also gave me a heads up about a problem with the murals which will soon need attention. Since we installed a new, more efficient chiller for the cooling system a few years ago, we are experiencing condensation on the vents which exit into the cathedral just below the Procession of Saints murals in the center aisle. There is a wicking effect of this moisture into the canvas of the murals which has begun to cause deterioration of the oil paint on the lower part of the surface on many of these masterpieces. We will have to address this issue soon to preserve the murals. Some days it feels as if it never ends.

Despite the many problems that Gerald has had to address these past three years, he has great admiration for the Cathedral and is committed to preserving it for future generations. We are grateful to Gerald for his dedicated stewardship of our majestic Cathedral as the center of the spiritual life of our diocese.