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The Vergers Voice

The news blog of the Vergers Guild

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Thursday, July 6, 2017

In Service, Fellowship, and Worship at the VGEC Annual Conference



During the 29th Annual Conference of the VGEC, we will spend a day with Crossroads Community Ministries at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Atlanta

By Phillip Knight, Chair, [Mark Emory Graham Chapter of the VGEC](#), and Verger at [St. Teresa's, Acworth, Georgia](#), phillipknight@comcast.net

Friday morning, October 13, 2017, will begin a day of Service, Fellowship, and Worship at the [29th Annual Conference of the VGEC](#) in Atlanta, Georgia.

The day will begin with our wearing work clothes. Our Presiding Bishop, [The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry](#), will join us for a short three block walk from the Marriott Marquis to [St Luke's Episcopal Church](#). The walk down Peachtree (THE Peachtree Street, not one of the 1,762 other Peachtree-named streets in Atlanta) is to make a point. We hope that this journey will ground and instruct us and give us chance to become more intimate with the dynamics of an urban church, a downtown church. Peachtree Street will be bustling with rush hour commuters, well-dressed professionals making their way to their gleaming sterile cubes, comfortable and safe in their climate-controlled autos. The buildings along Peachtree Street are clean and inviting.

St. Luke's is on the corner of the Pine Street intersection, and there is a large homeless shelter in a building across the corner from the church. The view changes rapidly as you turn the corner and head away from the heart of downtown—the buildings less and less inviting, streets no longer freshly swept, the people not so well-heeled. A block distant, yet two worlds apart, the dichotomy is striking. These are the poor among us and are some of the many clients of St. Luke's [Crossroads Ministries](#). Although we are extremely excited about spending time with Bp. Curry, these men, women, and children of Peachtree and Pine are definitely our focus for the day. They likely will change each of us, if our hearts are open. This can be a sacramental walk.

Crossroads began over 40 years ago when a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church handed a

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homeless man a sandwich. Today, we are a refuge for people who are homeless in Atlanta, offering compassion with constructive programs designed to give the people who come to us for help the tools they need to get off the streets. Crossroads' well-trained staff and committed volunteers provide a variety of services to help people who are homeless find shelter and stability. Each year, Crossroads:

- serves 60,000 meals to men, women and children who are homeless
- provides 6,500 MARTA passes for employment-related and medical emergencies
- serves over 4,200 men, women and children
- provides 3,500 Guests with a mailing address—a critical first step to end homelessness
- acquires 3,100 state issued IDs and birth certificates for Guests
- assists with placing 300 Guests in detox and treatment programs; and
- assists with placing 200 women and children into safe, affordable housing

Many of us will proceed to the Parish Hall, where supplies and equipment to make some 3,300 sandwiches will be in place. We will assemble these for the Crossroads Ministry to distribute to the folks that need them. By the way, we will also be assembling a snack that your fellow vergers will eat just before the Eucharist. The bravest of us will come together to help clean up trash along the back of the campus. This may be a menial task but, in truth, is more valuable as a tool to allow us an excuse to mingle with the men, women, and children who live in our neighborhood (though seldom considered "neighbors!"). We will all gather for a light snack and find our seats for the Holy Eucharist. Bp. Curry will preach, we will sing with the wonderful choir, and experience Anglican liturgy at its very, very best.

After the Eucharist, the vergers will eat lunch, prepared by Clyde Corbin, Crossroad's Chef Extraordinaire. This will be the third serving shift for the Crossroads volunteers, as they will have already served the same (famous) fried chicken meal to two previous groups of 150 people, beginning at 9:45 that morning. We will all want to thank these volunteers profusely — it will have been a long day for them. There is room for about 150 of us in the dining hall; the rest of us can enjoy our lunch in the beautiful fall air on the grassy hill. This will also be a great time to wander by the table where the Bookstore is selling Bp. Curry's new book, [Following the Way of Jesus](#).

Following lunch, we will assemble in the Nave for our time alone with the Presiding Bishop. It has been a long-standing tradition of the MEG Chapter that when we assemble for our meetings, the Bishop gathers us about, sits among us, and teaches in the ancient tradition. Some jokingly refer to this as "stump the Bishop," but there is a much deeper, intimate feeling to this type of interaction. We began calling it formally, "Dialogue with the Bishop." It is our fond hope that the events of the day will inspire meaningful exchange, divine meaning, and lasting memories.

It is my personal wish that your walk back to the Marriott might seem different from the morning's walk, and that the day's events will have changed something about you and something about the places where you see Jesus.

More Top 10 Reasons to attend the Atlanta Conference

1. Discover the essence of Southern Hospitality
2. Walk down the world-famous Peachtree Street
3. 57 streets called "Peachtree"
4. Run through Centennial Park's Fountain of Rings
5. Home of Gone with the Wind – but we're still here
6. It's smarta to use [MARTA](#)
7. Coca-Cola is the elixir of life
8. A midnight snack in Atlanta is the nearest Waffle House
9. Witness Atlanta's horrific traffic from the comfort of your hotel
10. A snow flurry in Atlanta is the literal end of the world – an imminent Snowpocalypse

The 2017 VGEC Annual Conference will take place in Atlanta, Georgia from October 12th through October 15th. We hope you can join us! Click the big red button to register today. You can also [read more about the conference](#) and [book your hotel](#).

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*Editors note: Send ideas for **Vergers Voice** topics to ideas@vergersvoice.org*

Abstract: Phillip Knight, Chair of the Mark Emory Graham Chapter of the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church, details Friday morning, October 13, 2017, as a day of service, fellowship, and worship for all who plan to attend the VGEC Conference in Atlanta.

Posted by [Scott Smith](#) at [8:54 AM](#)



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