

September 2011

# Highland Park

## Community Council Newsletter

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### Art on Display

in Highland Park

Neighbors, commuters, and passers-by have been noticing something new in the air at the Union Project: a sculptural installation by artist Will Schlough.

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# A Letter from the President

For the last several years, I have been attending the conferences of an organization called the System Dynamics Society (SDS).

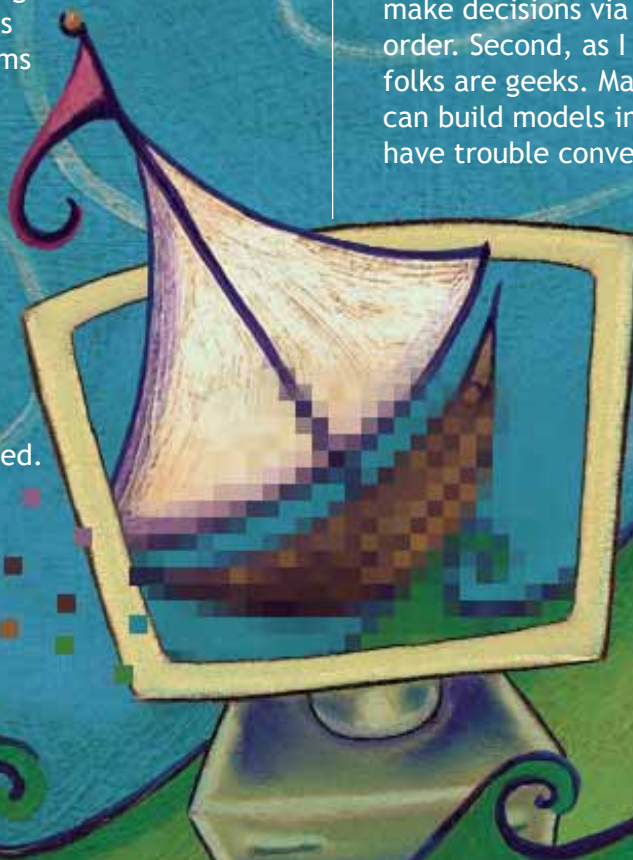
The quickest way to describe them might be to say that they are a group of geeks who wish to solve the world's problems using sophisticated computer simulation models. The models themselves tend to be made up of parts that represent "stocks" - an accumulated amount of some thing - and "flows" into and out of those stocks. So, for example, a population of woolly mammoths would be a stock; newborn mammoths would represent flows into that stock, and deaths would be flows out of it. The levels these stocks or the size of these flows might, in turn, affect other things, like populations of the mammoth's prey, nitrogen levels in the soil, or annual migration patterns of nomadic hunting cavemen. System dynamics practitioners study problems in every imaginable field - health policy, education, economics, business, the environment, sports, security, armed conflict, and project management, just to name a few.

The models the SDS folks tend to specialize in are mind-bogglingly complicated. Ultimately, these folks believe that most of the systems

underlying the world's thorniest problems are too complex for our brains to solve without the help of computers. The systems involve many interacting parts; there can be significant time-and-space gaps between cause and effect; taking an action tends to produce reactions that counterbalance it; and often, a good long-term strategy will produce undesirable short-term or long-term side effects. But if you can do the research and gather the data to make a solid model, you can experiment with that model (in ways that approach playing a video game) to gain insights into the system's behavior; try policies that would be too expensive, risky or time-consuming in real life; and settle upon a course of action that would maximize your chances of a good outcome. If the CEO's, political leaders, school principals and board chairpersons of the world would embrace this as a viable way of solving complex problems, the potential, says the SDS, would be enormous.

But that kind of embrace is not the norm. For one thing, these leaders got to where they are today by whatever skill or methods or luck they already have, and have generally been working in their fields for many years. Asking them to put aside their intuitions and experience, and to make decisions via computer model, is a tall order. Second, as I mentioned above, the SDS folks are geeks. Many of them have PhD's and can build models in their sleep, but they often have trouble conveying ideas in plain English

(unless words like endogenous, exogenous, and econometric - words I hear many times during any given conference - are your idea of plain English). And third, the models are wickedly complex, so much so that it can be difficult to keep a non-believer from glazing over when you try to explain it.



The system dynamics community at large finally got their long-standing wish of increased public attention on April 26, 2010. A system dynamics consulting firm had been working with the Obama and Karzai administrations to try to get a handle on how to improve things in Afghanistan; this firm had constructed a causal-loop diagram (a younger cousin of the simulation model) attempting to show all of the interacting issues. The diagram was leaked to the press, and on April 26, the diagram was on the front page of the New York Times. Instead of a serious discussion about using such tools to solve complex problems, however, the newspaper principally held up the diagram as a prime example of the horrendous evils of indigestible PowerPoint presentations, and how "death by PowerPoint" is engulfing the military. Unfortunately, there is a tendency in our society to reduce complexity - especially complexity on a controversial issue - into a sound bite.

For all of these reasons, there is a fair amount of moaning at every SDS conference about the lack of public acceptance of system dynamics as an approach to solving problems. This year, the Society president devoted his keynote address to the topic - which is fairly typical - but in doing so he employed a metaphor that I found particularly striking. He compared the system dynamics movement to a ship - a sailing vessel. From there, he asked three simple questions. First, what is our voyage - where are we going, and why? Second, what is our cargo - the stuff that's so valuable that people would really want it? And third, who are our passengers - the people we primarily intend to benefit?

Which (finally!) brings me, friends and neighbors, to our little corner of the world. I found myself thinking about the HPCC as I was listening to this speech. What are we doing? Why? What value do we create? Who benefits? When I look at the HPCC, I see a few common denominators. We seem to want low crime, stable or increasing property values, successful businesses on Bryant Street, good local schools, and lots of trees. We sponsor multiple social events each year. We support the community ListServ, which helps people with common interests find each other, and we maintain a community playground.

These are all good things. But I confess there are moments when I find myself wondering if there is, or should be, something more. At times I wonder if we are much more than the social club we were originally founded to be. And I have a laundry list of issues I don't really know what to do with. I have observed that the folks who show up to HPCC meetings, or are active in its activities, as a group seem whiter, older, more affluent, more home-owning than Highland Park residents at large. I pushed harder than anyone for an electronic newsletter to replace our print-and-mail newsletter, but I know our new way of doing business leaves behind those without regular access to the Internet. I understand the motives behind the HPCC's roles in zoning and nuisance-noise issues, but our activities in these arenas can create the impression that we are trying to exclude certain people from our neighborhood. At times, I think we can take a local crime incident and blow it out of proportion. And, to round off the list, I find myself very much wanting, but not knowing how, to increase what I'll call a culture of hanging out with one's neighbors.

Perhaps this is just me behaving like a parent who is unhappy with his child's A- grade at school; I genuinely believe we have a great neighborhood, one of the few in the city that has all the things Sue and I were looking for. It's just that I hope to maintain a constructive dissatisfaction with the status quo in areas where I think we can improve. And I - as well as the HPCC - need your input and participation in order to stay as constructive as we can. We always stand ready to partner with you to make our neighborhood the best that it can be. ***So if you have the talent or interest to crew some task aboard our grand ship, please come join us!***

Eric D. Randall, HPCC President



# HPCC August Meeting Minutes

*by Bob Staresinic*

Monica Watt, HPCC Vice President, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm with a quorum present.

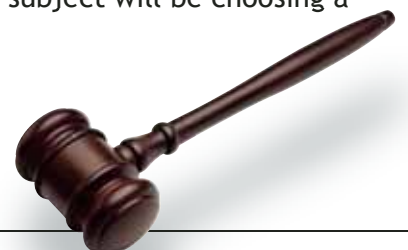
Zone 5 Commander O'Connor reported that an arrest was made on the recent shooting on Portland St. Also, since the arrest of several suspects, thefts from vehicles has decreased. Zone 5 is doing directed patrols around the neighborhood.

Teri Rucker was nominated for a Director position on the Board. She was added to the slate for the election at the September 15th meeting.

Kelly Vitti is having Highland Park t-shirts made as a fund-raiser to support the Bryant St. Festival, and will have them on sale soon.

Dawn Lehman from the CVVC's Dialogue and Resolution Center spoke about their Mediation Services. They are available to facilitate and teach nonviolent ways to resolve conflict, promote constructive conversations and repair harm. Their services are available to assist anyone with issues around family, housing, school, workplace or community, with disagreements involving individuals or organizations. They are located at 5916 Penn Avenue, and can be reached by phone at 412-482-3240 (non-emergency) or 412-392-8582 (for the emergency helpline).

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm. The next meeting is Thursday, October 20 at 7:00 pm, at the Union Project. The subject will be choosing a public school.



Continued from cover...

# 'Tethered Kites'

is a group of three floating kites that are tied to the Connect, Create and Celebrate signs at the corner of the Union Project's busy Stanton and Negley intersection. The playful sculpture, constructed from steel, fabric, ribbon, string and paint, seems to float freely in the wind in front of the building. Delighted to see the new artwork, I asked artist Will Schlough to give us a little background on his creation... *Monica Watt, Editor*

Tethered Kites was initially created for an outdoor exhibit titled Wind Through The Trees at Jenkins Arboretum and Gardens in Devon, Pennsylvania. The exhibit was designed to present large kinetic and sound sculptures amongst the trees and gardens of the arboretum. Knowing that the exhibit would inevitably include many earthy toned metal sculptures, I designed Tethered Kites to be bright and playful. The result was a whimsical and seemingly gravity-defying piece that speaks to the importance of imagination and the pursuit of simple joys.

Earlier this summer, I was introduced to Jeffrey Dorsey, the executive director of the Union Project. During a friendly chat, Jeffrey told me about an idea the folks at the Union Project had to turn their front lawn into a corner gallery of sorts. The idea was to engage passersby, especially the commuters who wait at the Stanton/Negley bus stop every day, and call attention to the varied work that the Union Project does within the community.

While returning to Pittsburgh from Philadelphia last month, kite tails flapping in the truck bed, it dawned on me that the Union Project's lawn would be the perfect new home for Tethered Kites. I wouldn't have to store them away somewhere and the Union Project could kick off their corner gallery idea. A week later they were installed, literally minutes before the August 19th downpour. Luckily, they survived the storm and are still blowing in the wind.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Will Schlough lives and works in Pittsburgh, where he is currently following his passion for creating sculpture in the public realm. He grew up in Ohio and New Hampshire before moving to Pittsburgh to attend Carnegie Mellon University for art. After graduating from Carnegie Mellon in 2007, he spent some time working in Los Angeles before moving to Iceland for a year on a Fulbright Fellowship. There he created sculpture based on the society's interaction with its unique and inspiring landscape. After returning in the summer of 2009, Will moved back to Pittsburgh to continue his artistic practice.

Sculpture, Will says, is his way of communicating the way he interprets the world around him. In general, his work is playful, but discusses topics that he finds particularly important, most notably our relationships with the environment and each

other. His work often encourages the pursuit of simple joys while simultaneously reminding us of the bigger picture.

Union Project works to support artists and promote creativity in our community. If you would like a place to share your art and engage our neighborhood, contact [Kelly@UnionProject.org](mailto:Kelly@UnionProject.org)



# Around St. Andrew's

By Bruce Robison

Summer begins to fade in Western Pennsylvania, and on Sunday, September 11, we observed our annual "Round Up Sunday" at St. Andrew's - which was a great fall gathering of our congregational family and friends as our regular service schedule resumes in September, with Church School, Youth Group, Adult Sunday Programs, and full Choir.

Services on Sunday morning also included special prayers to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the Great Bell of St. Andrew's Church was tolled for five minutes at 8:46 a.m. to commemorate the time when the first plane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

As we resume our Fall Schedule, our first service of the morning is 9 a.m., Holy Communion, contemporary language, in the Chapel, followed at 9:45 a.m. by our Montessori-themed "Godly Play" program, a class for 4th and 5th grade "Tweens," and our Middle/High School Youth Group. At 10 a.m. our "Coffee and Conversation" Adult Forum begins in the Parish Hall, and our Sunday Adult Bible Study gathers in the Clover Room downstairs in the Old Rectory.

The Choral Service of Holy Communion (Choral Morning Prayer on the Second Sunday of each month), traditional language, begins at 11 a.m. Younger children attend the first part of the later service with their families and part way through the service will be invited to join Children's Chapel upstairs in the Parish House. Nursery Care for infants and toddlers is available from 8:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Parents interested in our Church School and Youth Programs are invited to contact our Church School Director (and Highland Park'er) Liz Buchanan at [churchschool@standrewspgh.org](mailto:churchschool@standrewspgh.org). All interested in our Parish Choir and Music Program should contact our Organist and Choirmaster (and Highland Park'er) Peter Luley, at [peterluley@aol.com](mailto:peterluley@aol.com). Or just call the Church Office for more information.

Our service schedule also includes two services of Choral Evensong. We begin with a Third Sunday of the Month, 4:30 p.m. service of Choral Evensong and Sermon, sung by St. Andrew's Schola Cantorum. The fall Sunday afternoon series will begin on September 18, at 4:30 p.m., and our guest preacher at that service will be the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, Senior Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Brentwood.

And we can mark calendars now for the first "First Thursday of the Month" service of Choral Evensong of the fall season, 8 p.m., on Thursday, October 6, sung by the St. Andrew's Parish Choir and followed by a musical recital, with baritone soloist Thomas Octave, Chair of the Department of Music at St. Vincent's College in Latrobe. A festive reception in Brooks Hall will follow the Thursday evening services.

St. Andrew's has been on the corner of Hampton Street and North Euclid Avenue, at the heart of the Highland Park neighborhood, for more than a century. If there is a pastoral need that we can help with - a baby to be baptized, a wedding to celebrate, a sick or shut-in friend or neighbor to be visited, a family to support at the time of a death - please feel free to be in touch. Or if you need to find some space for a meeting or family gathering, or to borrow a few chairs: we'll be glad to help if we can. Call us at 412 661-1245, or check us out on the web: [www.standrewspgh.org](http://www.standrewspgh.org).



# Mediation Services at CVVC's Dialogue and Resolution Center

By Dawn Lehman

At the invitation of Councilman Dowd's office, Dawn Lehman came to the Highland Park Community Council Meeting on August 18, 2011 to share about the mediation services of CVVC's Dialogue and Resolution Center (DRC). Knowing that conflict is inevitable and can cause tension and discomfort between neighbors, she shared how mediation can support people to address their concerns in a constructive way.

Mediation is a way of managing conflicts. In mediation, two or more people involved in a conflict sit down and talk with each other about an issue of concern. Often, mediation participants haven't had an opportunity to talk with each other about the conflict, or if they have, the conversation hasn't been productive. In mediation,

trained mediators are present to support the participants in having a constructive conversation where everyone has a chance to hear each other's perspective and share their own.

Participants make their own decisions during the mediation process. They decide what issues to focus on and what to discuss, whether it involves understanding what happened in the past or deciding how to handle the future. Any agreement reached by participants can be written up by the mediators, either with the intent to be legally binding or not, based on what the participants want.

The mediators' job is to make sure that everyone understands how mediation works and is comfortable with the process. The mediators listen and may ask questions. Their main goal is to help the participants have a helpful conversation about the situation. The mediators will often highlight main points of the conversation as well as some of the choices participants have regarding what to talk about, how to talk about it, and how to manage the situation.

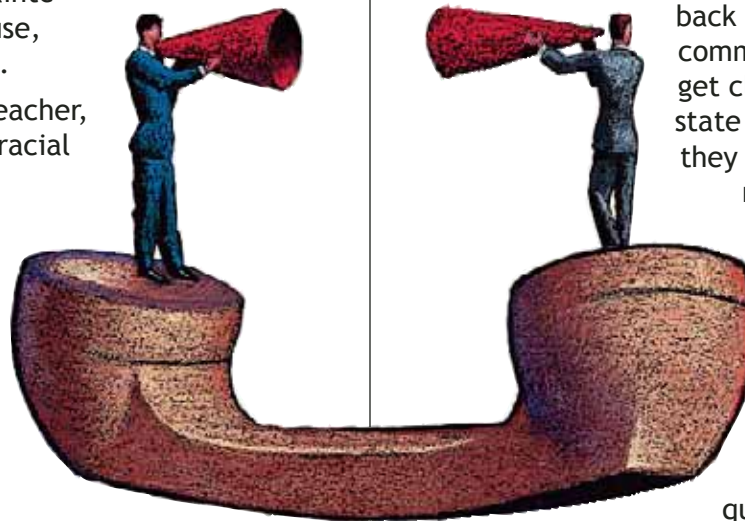
Mediators don't make decisions or force solutions on anyone. As a result, mediated agreements are often more satisfying to both parties than a court's judgment.

Almost any disagreement involving individuals or organizations can be mediated. Mediation is an excellent option when the people involved in the conflict have an ongoing relationship, for example in conflicts between family.



Mediation can even help resolve conflicts that have gone on for many years. Mediation can assist with many types of conflict, including the following:

- **Community** - Culture clashes, racial or ethnic tensions, land use, environmental concerns, and neighborhood issues.
- **Family** - Conflict between parents, parents and children or other household members, and elder care or end-of-life concerns.
- **Housing** - Neighbor, landlord-tenant, and roommate issues such as rent, security deposits, repairs and maintenance, noise, property use, and lifestyle differences.
- **School** - Peer, student-teacher, and co-worker conflict, racial or ethnic tensions, extracurricular conflict, and bullying.
- **Workplace** - Employer, employee, client, and co-worker concerns such as working conditions, morale, pay, and performance.
- **Civil** - Personal injury, family, business, debt, contractual, and property issues.
- **Veterans** - Reentry, deployment, and other issues involving veterans.



to assist you. The Dialogue and Resolution Center's mediators come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, including law, counseling, social work, and psychology. Mediators receive at least 40 hours of training in conflict resolution and mediation skills and they observe several mediations before being paired with an experienced mediator to mediate their first cases.

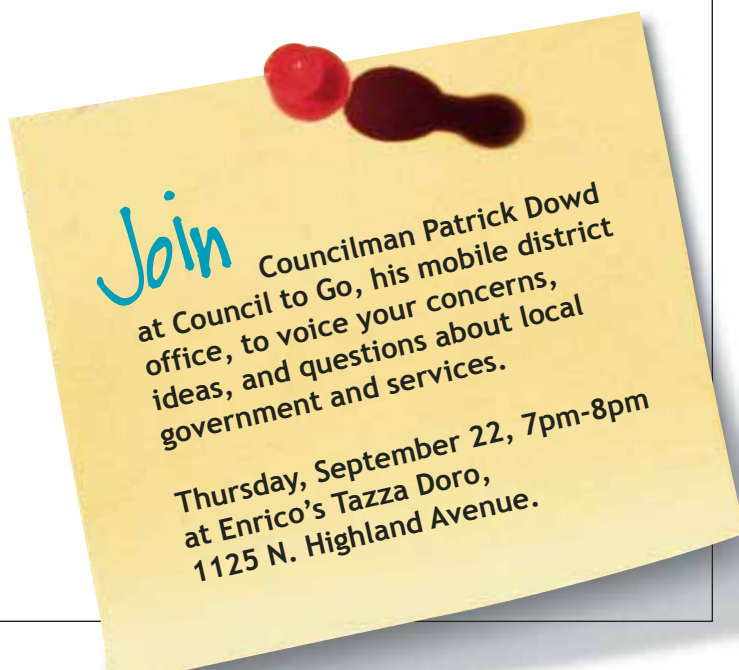
It can be hard to sort out the real issues and discuss them constructively when you're in the middle of a disagreement or conflict. Mediators help participants take a step back from the dispute to communicate more effectively, get clearer about the issues, state their needs and feel that they are being heard, and make informed choices about how to handle the situation.

Anyone can contact the Dialogue and Resolution Center for help with a conflict. DRC staff will respond quickly to your call, provide more details about the mediation process, and contact the person you are in conflict with to arrange a mediation meeting.

If you are interested in participating in mediation, please contact the DRC at 412-482-3240 x219. 

Mediation can be a very worthwhile experience for participants. Because mediation participants have an opportunity to come to an understanding, it's possible that the conflict situation will improve. In addition, mediation costs less and takes less time than going to court. **In fact, mediation is often free for individuals.** Mediation is also private and confidential and it's convenient for participants. Mediations are held near the participants' homes or workplaces and can be held on evenings and weekends. And unlike the court process, mediation gives the participants control over how the dispute is resolved.

The Dialogue and Resolution Center's mediation program has existed for over 30 years (formerly as Pittsburgh Mediation Center) and has a strong base of experienced mediators who are ready



**Join** Councilman Patrick Dowd at Council to Go, his mobile district office, to voice your concerns, ideas, and questions about local government and services.

Thursday, September 22, 7pm-8pm  
at Enrico's Tazza Doro,  
1125 N. Highland Avenue.

# Why the Corbett Budget is Bad for Pennsylvania

*By State Rep. Joseph Preston*

I voted against the final state budget for 2011-12 because it will cost our region thousands of jobs, increase your taxes, harm senior citizens and the disabled, and turn back the clock on education in Pennsylvania.

## **Tax dollars are hoarded while people are harmed**

Even though Pennsylvania ended the fiscal year with a \$785 million revenue surplus, the 2011-12 budget includes more than \$1 billion in cuts to education, slashes services for senior citizens and forces trickle-down tax increases on middle-class families. Instead of using the surplus revenue - money already collected from taxpayers - to help limit devastating budget cuts, the governor left \$560 million of this surplus sitting unused in the treasury. This money wasn't even transferred to the state's Rainy Day Fund.

## **A tax-increase budget**

The cuts in the 2011-12 budget will force school districts and local governments to increase your taxes over the next several years, so calling this a no-tax-increase state budget is not accurate. Raising taxes is raising taxes, and the state budget will force local tax increases across Pennsylvania.

## **What about jobs?**

While local taxes go up, jobs will disappear. Gov. Corbett's budget cuts will result in more than 11,000 teachers and additional school staff losing their jobs. The \$200 million in cuts to higher education will reduce jobs and economic activity related to universities, which in many areas of Pennsylvania are the largest employer. The higher tuitions - the University of Pittsburgh increased tuition 8.5 percent (\$1,200 hike) for Pennsylvania residents attending the Pittsburgh campus - also will force many young people to leave the state for their education and career. Pennsylvania's future doctors at Pitt's School of Medicine will see an even higher increase - 12 percent. The 2011-12 budget also cuts funding for hospitals, another huge local employer throughout Pennsylvania, and a variety of economic development and job-training programs. How can the state grow its economy with thousands more people out of work and young people leaving the state?

I will continue to work with my colleagues to mitigate the fallout of the 2011-12 budget, especially as we begin the early crafting of the 2012-13 spending plan. I encourage your input.

My constituent service office - 208 N. Highland Ave.; 412-361-3692 - can help you with any state-related matter. Please contact my staff if you need assistance.

State Rep. Joseph Preston Jr. serves the 24th Legislative District which comprises Aspinwall, Wilkinsburg and portions of Pittsburgh.

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Rachel Matos (412) 361-3802

Paul Miller (412) 365-0675

Mike Nadler (412) 363-3483

Nancy Levine-Arnold

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public-safety@highlandparkpa.com

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Ethan Winograd (412) 352-2767

### **Super Playground -**

Monica Watt (412) 361-7902 &

Vernon Simmons (412) 661-1366

### **Yard Sale -** Paul Miller (412) 365-0675

### **Welcoming -**

Bob Staresinic (412) 441-8972

### **Zoning -** Dell Ziegler (412) 363-0742

**Free**

## 6-week Diabetes Self-Management Course

Vintage senior community center, 401 North Highland Avenue, East Liberty (across from Home Depot), will offer a FREE 6-week Diabetes Self-Management Course designed by Stanford University. The classes, for older adults, will meet on Wednesdays from Noon until 2:30 p.m., October 12 through November 16. Space is limited and preregistration is required. Please call 412-361-5003 ext. 106.

### St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

*The Rev. Dr. Bruce Monroe Robison, Rector  
The Ven. Archdeacon Jean D. Chess, Deacon  
Peter J. Luley, Organist & Choirmaster*

### At St. Andrew's

*Sunday Morning Services  
9 a.m.*

*In the Chapel  
11 a.m.*

*Choral Service in the Anglican Tradition*

*Nursery Care: 8:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Church School, Youth, and Adult Programs,  
Sunday Mornings, 9:45 – 10:45 a.m.*

*Wednesday Morning Service  
Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.  
Rector's Bible Study 11:15 a.m. – Noon*

*Choral Evensong  
First Thursday of the Month, 8 p.m.  
Third Sunday of the Month, 4:30 p.m.*

*Check our Website for Special and Holiday  
Services and Activities*

*You Are Welcome Here*

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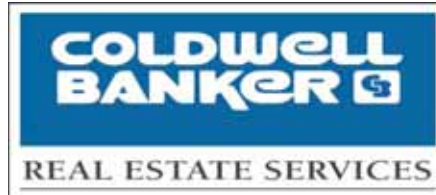
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