



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Members of Shiloh Church of God in Christ pose with some of the toys collected during the Toys for Tots drive.

Bringing Happiness to Children

Local church provides over 1,000 toys to families in need.

Shiloh Church of God in Christ is making sure area families in need can experience the joy of opening presents under their own trees. Church members traveled 100 miles to Charlottesville, Va., to collect more than 1,000 toys donated through the United States Marine Corps Reserves' annual Toys for Tots initiative.

"We've been doing this for about four years now and the response is just tremendous," said Shiloh Church of God in Christ, Pastor Floyd C. Hawkins. "We started with about 50 families and have now served over 250 in Alexandria alone."

The volunteer effort has made its biggest impact on area families, many of whom have fallen on hard times. "I've been between jobs this year and the year before, and the members of Shiloh really came through," said Marsha Jackson-Lites, a grandmother of three. "I put the toys under the tree the night before and wake up to my grandkids shouting about all the gifts they've gotten. It warms my heart to see them light up like that. There's no way I could've done that without the toys from the church."

First Lady Linda R. Hawkins, acting director of the missions department, said the number of those needing assistance has grown in recent years. "We've always seen a steady increase in requests, but this year we've seen a jump in the number of families requesting assistance. We are just blessed that so far we have been able to help them all."

Husband and wife duo LaVaughn and Crystal Lawrence, both church members and parents of three, traveled to Charlottesville with LaVaughn Lawrence's brother Romarr after a long day's work



Ten-year-old church volunteer Stephon Fortune-Lawrence stands next to some of the donated toys collected during the Shiloh Church of God in Christ toy drive.

to load the toys into their vehicles.

"The drive was long but I'm happy to do it for the kids," LaVaughn Lawrence said.

"I love kids, and to be able to help other parents who might not be able to provide for their kids is priceless to me," said Crystal Lawrence.

Felisha Bailey, the church's hospitality coordinator, arranged for the pick up with longtime Toys for Tots distributor Angie Jefferson. "We've been collecting toys from Angie for a few years now. She separates toys by the ages of the children on our needy families list making it easier for our hospitality team to provide a memorable Christmas for each individual child."

"As long as there are requests from families, we will be doing our best to fill them," said Pastor Hawkins, who recently celebrated his 30th pastoral anniversary at the Shiloh Church of God in Christ. "I served this great country in the Air Force for four years and will continue to serve those in my community for as long as I am able."

Shiloh Church of God in Christ is a non-profit religious organization affiliated with the international six million member strong Church of God in Christ, Inc. Visit scogicva.org.



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Stafford/Harris \$259,900
11 Shady Lane
 Beautiful 3BR, 3BA Cape Cod, bursting with charm. This property contains two lots (for total .67 acres), with winter views of Aquia Creek. 2nd Lot may potentially be buildable (grandfathered). Expansive and open floor plan. Enjoy nature's beauty from the back screened porch or multiple decks. Large shed/hobby room w/electricity (conveys as is). Quiet and serene location. Close to Quantico!



Alex/Woodland Heights \$819,900
8608 Woodland Heights Ct.
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 Beautiful 5BR/3BA home w/carport in sought after Ft. Hunt community with easy access to GW Pkwy and Mt. Vernon Bike Trail just blocks away. Wayneswood Elementary. Home provides lots of space including finished attic as a bonus room. Hardwood floors throughout 4 of the 5 levels. Anderson glass doors off of dining room lead to large deck overlooking lovely fenced back yard w/garden shed. Updated kitchen and baths. Fireplace in living room. Large family room in lower level is bright and cheerful.



Alex/Engleside \$1,300,000
8734 Lukens Lane
 4.128 acres zones R-2 for sale. There are 2 lots: 4/0 acres w/house (Tax Map 1101 01 0043) and .128 acre vacant land (1101 01 0043A). House on Property sold "AS IS" and NO ACCESS given or allowed. Land Value only. Water, sewer, gas, electricity available. This land is adjacent to the houses on Halley Farm Ct. which were built in the 2010-2011 time frame.

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