



Seeking. Living. Sharing Christ

Christ Church Chronicle

Christ Episcopal Church
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December 2008-January 2009
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Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17: Advent potluck suppers in the parish hall. Bring a dish to pass. A short devotional will close the evening.

Saturday, December 6: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Advent Quiet Day led by F. Sam on "*Four Watchwords for Advent*". Please register with the parish office.

Sunday, December 7: 10:00 a.m. Advent lessons and carols led by the choir. No Eucharist at this service. Praise Band visits Gilbertsville.

Sundays, December 7 and 14: Alternative Christmas at the Social Hour sponsored by the Outreach Committee.

Wednesday, December 17: 7:00 p.m. "*The Longest Night*" in St. Agnes Chapel, a service of remembrance of and comfort for your loved ones lost in the year past. Sponsored by our Stephen Ministry.

Saturday, December 20: 8:00 p.m. *Magnificat* by J.S. Bach and R. Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* performed by The Voices of Cooperstown at Christ Church. Tickets are \$18.00 at Augur's Bookstore or at the door.

Sunday, December 21: 6:00-7:00 p.m. Living Nativity in the Mowry Barn at the Farmers' Museum's Candlelight Evening performed by our Parish Players.

Wednesday, December 24: 5:00 p.m. Family Service led by the Praise Band with church school pageant and Eucharist.

9:30 p.m. - Choir concert followed at 10:00 p.m. by Festival Eucharist (Rite II) led by our choir. The rector will preach.

Thursday, December 25: 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite I) with hymns. The rector will preach.

Thursday, January 1: 8:30 a.m. Feast of the Holy Name with Holy Eucharist. No Wednesday Eucharist.

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

And what, you ask, was my best Christmas ever? Well you may ask because I have lived through 66 of them. Not on the list was the year the Christmas tree fell over, or the year I broke into the presents closet and opened just one box from my maiden aunt and discovered it was a wool shirt. Or the Christmas I was given (clearly an inappropriate gift) a jackknife and held it backwards while trying to whittle with the result that it closed suddenly leaving a scar on my middle finger that I can still see.

Or the Christmas spent in Tamanrasset, Algeria, in the middle of the Sahara Desert, with neither a Christian nor a Christmas tree within 500 miles.

No, my favorite Christmas was 1968, my first Christmas with Edith. We didn't go to visit family for it and instead began our own tradition (we had been married just six months). We were living in Berkeley, California in a second floor apartment while I finished law school. We bought a small evergreen branch (it wasn't even a tree) and set it up on our dining table stuck in a lump of modeling clay. We found curious little prickly casings from a local tree and dyed them gold to hang on our branch. A friend sent us a pottery vase as a gift which arrived smashed in the mail. Much of the week after Christmas was spent gluing it together, piece by piece. We still have it. It doesn't hold water but, with a glass inside, it does just fine. The golden 'pricklies' still hang on our Christmas tree and remind us of our first Christmas together forty years ago.

If Christmas is about new beginnings and love, both divine and human, you can see why this was the best.

Like the holy family fleeing from Herod and the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem, we soon met sadness. My mother died suddenly on January 3rd, 1969. But the Christmas memory remains.

What's your favorite Christmas?

Faithfully in Christ,
(the Rev.) Samuel B. Abbott

Thanks and Praise

Thank you, Lord, for:

All who have pledged for 2009 in the face of grave economic uncertainty;

A new class of Stephen Ministers in training;

Compelling Stewardship Moments presented by Susan Snell, Martin Tillapaugh and Steve Elliott;

The help of F. Bill Day with our energy audit;

New songs sung in the Children's Chapel and played by our Praise Band;

Choral evensong beautifully sung by our choir on November 9;

The beautiful altar flowers faithfully arranged by the Flower Guild and given in memory of loved ones.

Christmas Flowers

The forms for donating flowers in honor or in memory of loved ones are due in the parish office by December 3rd for inclusion in the Christmas service leaflets.

E-Mailing the Chronicle

This is the last issue that will be sent out by bulk mail! Please e-mail us at christchurch@ceccoop.net so that we can send the February issue electronically. If you do not use e-mail, there will be copies at the back of the church the last Sunday in January.



The Best Christmas Ever

“About 85 years ago I had played sheep and shepherds in Christmas pageants but finally was promoted to a King and got to sing a solo. I'm sure I missed a few words or notes but Mom and Dad praised my attempt and the afterglow transcended all the gifts from Santa” (George Wyckoff).

“I was twelve. My older brother was spending Christmas with a college friend and my other brother was staying at school to work through the holidays. As soon as the Christmas Eve service ended at midnight, Mom and Dad loaded up the car with packages and a fully cooked turkey dinner. We drove all through the snowy night from Niagara Falls to Bloomington, Indiana. My brother's empty frat house was beautifully decorated, complete with a huge Christmas tree. We sat around the warm fireplace, ate dinner and opened our presents. My brother got a game of *Jeopardy!* While Dad napped, Mom, Bill and I played all day and into the night until we finished all thirty-eight games. It was the first time I ever remember being "away from home" for Christmas. That is when I really understood that Christmas is not a place or things, but the spirit within your heart” (Mary Bellew).

“Awesome pageantry: choirs sang ‘We Three Kings.’ From behind New Delhi's congregation, brilliant silk-draped, dark-skinned 'royalty' astride camels lumbered beneath acres of palms to inspiring rock-crested manager” (Jane Richardson, 1972).



Christ Church History

A Christmas Gift -1913

During this Advent season parishioners are urged to give special attention to the pavement in the chancel as they approach the altar rail. First used on Christmas Day 1913, it was a gift from Mrs. E H Harriman* in honor of her great grandfather, James Averell, a prominent early church member. The tiles were designed by Henry Mercer, the foremost decorative tile maker of his time, and produced at his Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, PA.

In the altar section may be seen tiles that are reproductions of medieval designs from major European churches. The tile factory, which exists today as a museum, has kindly provided copies of the extensive correspondence with Fr. Birdsall attendant to the project. We also have a 1913 catalog that describes the tiles in detail. The sturdiness of the tiles is truly remarkable when one realizes that portions have borne the tread of at least one million feet with scarcely a sign of wear after 95 years.

*Her son, W. Averell Harriman, Governor of New York and twice candidate for the Democratic nomination for President, was clearly named for his forebear, our parishioner.

— David Svahn

The Search for a New Rector

Since the last article, the search committee (vestry) has been quite busy on the search process, attempting to adhere to our ambitious time line. By doing so, the search process will be expedited yet thorough.

Written by Mike Miller and Roger MacMillan, the parish profile defines the constituency of the congregation, the community, and the environs in which Christ Church operates. The goals of our church, its assets both of a

spiritual as well as financial nature, and our accomplishments are discussed. This profile will be made available to all interested candidates, giving them the opportunity to determine whether they should further pursue their application. The parish questionnaire was collected and carefully studied. Our committee was delighted that over 100 surveys were filled out by the congregation. This interest, the vestry believes, reflects an avid concern about the search process and a significant willingness by the congregation to help us. The fact that our search has been inclusive will be clear to candidates. The vestry has not acted in a vacuum. We are grateful to Will and Janet Rigby, who collated the results, placed them on a computer, and printed them to us in a graphic form. Thank you. Using this format, we were better able to interpret results that reveal a diverse congregation.

The next step was to send the above information to the diocesan office and open up the opportunity of serving Christ Church as a new rector. This opening is being made known on a national level, not just restricted to this diocese. We believe that significant progress has been made on the search and that soon the task of reviewing resumes will begin.

Please remember that this task has been undertaken by the vestry, who welcome additional suggestions by members of the congregation. Should anyone have a candidate whom they would wish us to consider, they may speak with any member of the vestry so that the name can be forwarded to the diocesan office for inclusion in the search process.

— Roger MacMillan

Music at Christmas

Music sets the stage for the advent, birth and life of Christ. At Christ Church we are blessed with a tradition of beautiful music that sets the Holy Season apart from the myriad of commercial marketing. With our choir, the praise band Joyful Noise, liturgical dance, recorder, piano, organ and handbells, we will join to make this time of year very special! The organ music will range from the chorales of Bach and Brahms to a toccata on "Veni Emmanuel" by composer Adolphus Hailstork. Our choir and soloists have prepared such beautiful music as "O Holy Night," "O Magnum Mysterium," "To Bethlehem This Night has Come" and "Look-a-That-Star," a lively spiritual. Original compositions by our organist (under contract with Augsburg Fortress Press) will be presented for the first time on Christmas Eve. On the organ we will hear a setting of "Adeste Fidelis" written for foot pedals only! Handbells and chimes will enhance our seasonal offerings in new and exciting ways. Children's voices, guitars, and tympani featured by Joyful Noise will complete the musical road to Bethlehem.



On Christmas Eve at 9:30 p.m. – Traditional music of Christmas by the choir and soloists precedes the beginning of our 10:00 p.m. service.

At the Christmas Day 10:00 a.m. service, quiet music for a Christmas morning will be the prelude to the Rite I service and commence at 9:45 a.m.

A Gift that Lasts

Looking for the perfect gift? Why not give the gift of music? It is a gift of quality that will change a life forever. I am taking a limited number of piano and organ students in January. Feel free to call me at home to talk over an interest in music lessons for yourself or your children.

— Roberta Rowland-Raybold

(607) 544-1110

music@ceccoop.net



Treasurer's Stewardship Report

In order to keep everyone up to date on the progress of our most important Stewardship program, I would like to give you a summary as of November 24th. We have gotten in 85 pledges so far for a total value of \$121,504. We should all feel very good about the response to date but keep those cards and letters coming! We still have a way to go before we rest. You might be interested to know that almost 45% of you have increased your pledges during these uncertain times. "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

If you still are holding on to that little card, please, please, please fill out your stewardship card and place it in the box on Sunday or drop it off in the office. All any of us can do is the best we can. Remember, you can always amend your pledge if circumstances require so that no one is held fast to one number. But from this end it is much easier if we can get your realistic view so we have a firm foundation from which to plan.

In closing, again I say rejoice in what has been accomplished thus far. Think how great an accomplishment it would be if I, you, and God could celebrate the greatest number of pledges ever at Christ Church. May God bless us all as we give thanks at this time of year.

—John Mason, Treasurer

Outreach Through Your Coffee Cup

You may remember our discussion of fair trade coffee in a summer *Chronicle*. The Outreach Committee will be offering coffee from the Dominican Republic for sale as part of the Alternative Christmas Market and using D.R. coffee at the coffee hour during Advent. *Tres Mariposas* (three butterflies) coffee is a blend of D.R. coffees, mostly from an organic farm called Alta Gracia which uses some of its proceeds to run a school for children and adults. It is imported and roasted by the Vermont Coffee Company, our supplier.



Farmers receive a price based on their cost to produce the coffee plus a fair cost of living, rather than a price based on speculation on coffee futures. Thus this coffee allows you to support: 1) social justice for farmers; 2) more responsible land use, which decreases rainforest destruction and preserves winter habitat for songbirds; and 3) another tie to the D.R. Such a bargain!

We will offer 12 oz. bags of Tres Mariposas (D.R. blend) for \$10 and Vermont Coffee Company Decaf (fair trade from multiple countries) for \$11 a pound, both sold as whole beans to preserve top flavor. We plan to feature D.R. coffee at least once a month at coffee hour and to offer you a chance to restock your pantry; money raised will help offset the higher cost of this coffee. Raise your cup!

— Kathy Lloyd

Alternative Christmas Market

The Outreach Committee is pleased to announce that our annual Alternative Christmas Market will take place on December 7th and 14th in the fellowship hall after the Sunday services. You will have the opportunity to make donations - excellent holiday gifts - to several organizations we support. Items from African Team Ministries and coffee from the Dominican Republic will also be available.

A mitten tree in the sanctuary will once again welcome hand made or purchased hats and mittens.

Donations for the Dominican Republic scholarship program, in any amount will be accepted at the Alternative Christmas Market or via the church office through December 15th.. Checks may be made out to Christ Church with "D.R. Scholarship" in the memo line. A scholarship coordinator is still needed; please contact Audrey Murray if you can help.

— Audrey Murray

Our Stephen Ministry Program

We hope that Christ Church's congregation is aware of our Stephen Ministry program. The main purpose is a confidential, one-on-one program where Christ cares for people through people. Since it is a caring ministry, we also sponsor a few other activities. One of these is the book cart, available to every member of the congregation. The cart has many spiritually-oriented books for you to borrow. On the first Sunday of each month, the cart can be found at the social hour after the 10:00 a.m. service. It can also be accessed by request to any Stephen Minister.

ΙΗΣΟΥΣ
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ
ΘΕΟΥ
ΥΙΟΣ
+ ΣΩΤΗΡ

One of our other special activities is sponsoring The Longest Night Service in December. It is a time when most people are busy with holiday preparations and happy parties. It is also a time when most of us remember past holidays with a friend or relative who has passed away. These memories can become overwhelming and turn a joyous time into one of sadness. Through The Longest Night, we take time to remember those loved ones and receive a feeling of peace. We will be holding this service on Wednesday, December 17 in St Agnes Chapel after the Advent Pot Luck Supper.

Please plan to attend! If you have any questions please call Mary Bellew at 547-7202 or Anita High at 547-9825.

— Anita High

Soul Food

A Book Cart, is manned by the Stephen Ministers the first Sunday of each month during the Social Hour following the 10:00 AM Service. A Stephen Minister reviews one of the many books available.

Who doesn't like the aroma of bread baking, then cutting and sharing the warm buttered slices? This scene invites wholeness and comfort and so does the book *Fresh Bread*. We are all the yeast that makes dough rise as we solidify our spiritual relationship and grow daily on our life's journey with God as taught through the life of Jesus. We experience ways to share the love and steadfastness of our expanding knowledge through our relationship and time with God.

This slim book aligns our lives with the months of the year. It is daily time dedicated to being on track with feeding our spirit because we take time to be with God. Just 10 to 20 minutes in the morning will set the tone for your whole day. No matter what you face, there will be morning sustenance to guide, comfort, or celebrate your daily living.

Each chapter taps the seasons of our lives. The depth of prayers, seasonal focus, and studying short daily scripture readings form the holy dough of our day. At the end of each chapter there are four questions that can be used for meditation or journaling. These questions are reflective as building blocks for our inner spiritual growth.

So if you have wanted an inspirational time with God, select this from the book cart, available after church on the first Sunday of each month. As we grow, we will share this daily bread.

— Jacque Gregory



RUDOLF KOCH IMAGES

In this issue are drawn from the public domain work of artist Rudolf Koch, as shown on <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Koch-ChristianSymbols.htm#NT> and http://www.moorstation.org/Koch_Memorial/meisterwerke.htm.

Christ Church Youth

This year we have two young parishioners who are in foreign lands, as well as others in college. The following is a Christmas greeting from Anna Snell.

For the past eighteen years, I have spent Christmas day at my home on 23 Delaware Street, Cooperstown. This year will mark my first outside of that tradition, as well as outside of many other traditions. I won't sing Silent Night at our church the night before, with a candle burning and glowing in my hand. I won't bundle up in my pajamas and snuggle on the couch with Katy and Emily, listening as Dad reads us *The Night Before Christmas*. I won't leave peanuts for the reindeer; I won't leave cookies for the big guy. I won't chit-chat with my sisters the night before about what we hope for and then scamper down the stairs to see what Santa left us the morning of. I won't use my long red-and-white-striped stocking, which was always the biggest one hanging from the mantle. I won't spend the morning pulling ribbons and ripping paper. I won't roast my back in front of the fireplace with Ginger in the afternoon, and I won't enjoy Christmas dinner with Mom, Dad, Katy, Emily, Peggy, and Doug. I won't look out the window at night, as Christmas lights illuminate the snow. I won't see icicles, sleds, or dogs with sweaters. A week later, I won't pop poppers, throw confetti, or count down from a minute as I watch the ball drop in New York through the TV screen at Claire's house.

This year will be different, and I don't know all to expect. In mid-December, I will set up a Nativity scene in my home--possibly with life-size figurines and taking up most of the living room! I will decorate an artificial tree, and if I see Christmas lights, they'll be on palm trees rather than on pine trees. Papá Noel (Santa Claus) will come, but he'll speak Spanish and he might look a little different. I will go to a church service mid-day on Christmas Eve, followed by the opening of all gifts that night. I will spend Christmas day with my friends and family. I understand that I will eat lots of turkey for dinner and hot chocolate and panetón, something similar to a fruit cake, for dessert. I will welcome the new year in yellow underwear and a meal of twelve grapes (one for each month): apparently it's good luck.

Of course I will miss the holiday celebrations that I've always known from back home. But, I know my new home in Cajamarca has a lot in store for me this year, too. I wish you all a very '*Feliz Navidad*' and a Happy New Year!

“Angel Tree”

Christ Episcopal Church is once again participating in the Otsego County Jail Ministry “Angel Tree” program.

“Angel Tree” offers us an opportunity to provide Christmas gifts for children whose parents are in prison.

The child of a prisoner can receive the Joy of Christmas this season through our contributions to this Prison Fellowship Ministry. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

The “Angel Tree” Christmas Gift Guide is posted on the Community Bulletin Board at the back of the parish hall dining room. A box will be placed near the bulletin board for your gifts. Gifts should be unwrapped!!

Last pick up date for your gifts is December 8, 2008.