



Seeking. Living. Sharing Christ

Christ Church Chronicle

Christ Episcopal Church
69 Fair Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326
E-mail: christchurch@ceccoop.net

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Phone: 607-547-9555 / Fax 607-547-7414
Website: www.christchurchcooperstown.org

For Your Calendar

Friday/Saturday, May 1, 2: Spring Rummage Sale: Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Sunday, May 10: Mother's Day

Sunday, May 17: Praise Band Sunday followed by 198th Annual Meeting of the parish — Bring a dish to pass.

Thursday, May 21: Ascension Day, Holy Eucharist at 8:30 a.m. in the church.

Sunday, May 24: S. Julian, Sisters of St. Margarets, visits to preach at 8:00 and 10:00 o'clock services.

Sunday, May 31: Pentecost — Choral Evensong at 5:00 p.m.

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

We are a parish of 232 households of whom only 166 are at all active, a total of 414 people. We have 73 under the age of 16. Our average Sunday attendance is 134, so less than a third of the active members are in church on any given Sunday. For 2009 97 households have pledged \$135,000 toward our operating budget. Thus 58% of our active households pledge and the average pledge is \$1350 or \$26.75 per week. If we all practiced tithing (giving 10% of our gross income to Christ Church), that would suggest that the average income in the parish is \$13,500. That is, of course, ridiculous. My guess is that the average income is about \$50,000. If so, this would mean that we give, on the average, 2.75% of our income to Christ Church.

Our 2009 operating budget depends upon drawing 42% of our income from the endowment (\$123,130). The endowment has declined in value by 1/3 in the last year. If we continue to withdraw endowment moneys at this rate (approximately 5% of principal) and the endowment value is stagnant or declines further, the amount

we can withdraw will also drop. In a worse case scenario, our endowment could be gone in 10 years.

So what do we do faced with long term economic uncertainties? I see these possibilities:

1. We can reduce expenses. Unfortunately belt tightening has been going on these past four years. The only major reductions still possible are: 1) laying off staff or reducing their hours; and 2) sale of marketable buildings (the sexton's house and the rectory) to reduce maintenance and utility costs and generate new endowment principal. The first would jeopardize our core programs and ministries and could send us into a downward spiral from which there may be no recovery. The second violates the cohesion of our historic campus and betrays the trust of past donors.

2. We can increase annual giving We can present pledging more forcefully as a responsible and attractive opportunity for our active households. We can concede that the entire tithe (for those able to tithe) should not go to the parish church (we all feel other obligations for charitable giving) but nonetheless set as a giving goal 5% of gross income. This should increase the average pledge to \$2500 and generate an additional \$107,500 for the operating budget, replacing 87% of the current endowment draw.

3. We can increase membership. In the past year it has become clear that Christ Church, with quality programming, can attract new members in three areas: families looking for Christian nurturing for their children, music lovers looking to listen, sing or play sacred music, and retirees looking to worship in a welcoming community and to offer time and talent as volunteers. If we could attract a net increase of 10 new households a year (net of those who die or leave) for 10 years, even at current giving levels, we would be able to replace the current endowment draw simply by increased numbers of pledges. If we could both deepen our annual giving and increase our membership, Christ Church could become a powerful engine for the Kingdom of God.

In sum, I think our situation may be as follows: grow or go.

Yours faithfully,

(the Rev.) Samuel B. Abbott, Rector

Thanks and Praise

O give thanks to the Lord for:

- the calling and acceptance of the Rev. Mark Michael to serve as 22nd rector of Christ Church;
- the sparkle and beauty of our Sanctuary at Easter;
- for the strong choral singing and beautiful trumpet playing of Ron Stewart at Easter;
- for the bishop's chair restored by Bill Ralston and Janet Rigby through the gift of Mike and Marly Miller;
- for the life of Fred Doolittle, at his death our oldest member;
- for the elegant choir breakfast organized by Linda and Alton VanCleaf;
- for Jim Atwell's witness at our healing service on Palm Sunday;
- for our confirmation and reception candidates - Teri Barown, Terry and Elso Alessandri;
- for a beautiful spring following a long winter.



Nominations Desired

In the diocese, our church newsletter has long been regarded as a model of what one ought to be. Marly is currently in her eighth year of editing the Christ Church Chronicle and is interested in receiving nominations and suggestions for a new editor to take over in the fall. Please suggest names or volunteer!

“A Call to the Diaconate”

This will be my last month serving as an intern at Christ Church. I have grown to love the people of this congregation and will greatly miss spending Sunday mornings with you. God willing, I will be ordained with my classmates on May 30th at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany. (You are all cordially invited!) As of this writing, I don't yet know where the Bishop will assign me to serve. Deacons serve directly under the authority of the Bishop, and like priests, serve at a parish but are not members of that parish. What exactly is a deacon, though?



The ministry of deacons is one that can be hard to explain. Deacons are often described by what they can't do. Deacons can't do the ABC's — absolve, bless, consecrate. Deacons cannot pronounce absolution of sins in the name of the Church. Deacons can not bless a marriage in the name of the church. Deacons cannot consecrate the Holy Eucharist.

Deacons can read the Gospel and set the Altar Table. But can't a priest do that? Well, yes. Deacons can administer the chalice and take Communion to the sick and housebound. But can't Lay Eucharistic Ministers do that? Well, yes.

What does a deacon do that either the priest or laity can't do? Just what use are deacons, anyway? In my journey through the ordination process, I have been asked this question many times. Deacons are to be evangelists, proclaiming the salvation of God to all people, especially "the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely." Deacons are to live in the world, work in the world, and carry the needs of the world back to the church. Most deacons don't have church jobs; they work in colleges, schools, and businesses, just like you. Deacons are to be students of Scripture. In this diocese, the clergy and all those in the ordination process follow the ancient custom of praying the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening prayer every day. Prayers and Scripture shape and form the day. Scripture becomes part of you when you immerse yourself this way.

But wait; aren't all Christians called to spread the Good News of Christ, to pray and study the Scriptures and to serve God? Yes! Now we get to what a deacon is for. A deacon is an icon of the servant ministry of Christ that all Christians are called to participate in. When you see a deacon, you are supposed to remember your gifts and ministry to the world. Deacons serve by empowering you to find your ministry, to answer the call of God on your life. They do this in as many ways as there are deacons. Deacons preach and teach, train mission teams, work in soup kitchens, visit prisons, work with addicts. All seek to draw in other Christians to serve with them.

If deacons are an icon of Christ's servant ministry, what is an icon? When most people hear that word, they think of those little pictures on their computer. You know, click on the tiny house and you go right to Google's homepage. That's what an icon does — it takes you through the image to the real thing. The icon disappears and the reality appears. When you look at a religious icon, you aren't supposed to see just the pictures, but to look through it to the reality it represents. The painting of Jesus is more than a two dimensional image in paint; it's a device that can take the faithful into the presence of the Lord himself.

The calling of a deacon is to fade into the background, to be invisible, to be among you as one who serves. When I and my classmates stand before the bishop to be ordained, in a very real way, we will disappear. Our calling is to show forth Christ and assist you in your ministries.

Perhaps some of you may be feeling a call to the diaconate. You may wonder exactly how the process of discernment and training works. First, prayerfully consider the tugs on your heart. Share your thoughts with your

family, friends and rector. If you receive confirmation of a calling from them, continue to the next level. Contact Fr. David Collum, Dean of the Susquehanna Deanery at St. John's in Delhi [(607) 746-3437] and talk with him about beginning the discernment process.

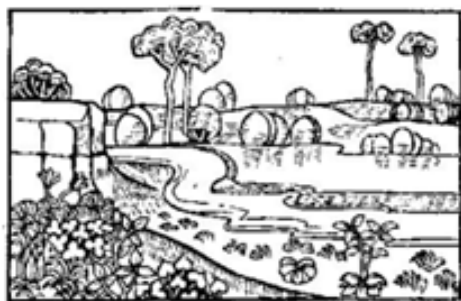
The Diocese of Albany requires a 1-year discernment process. You will be assigned a discernment team consisting of clergy and laity who will pray with you and seek to clarify your calling. Once the discernment team certifies you, you will begin the next step — Deacon Formation School! This is a 3-year process, meeting one Saturday a month in Scotia at St. Andrew's Church. You will also be required to commit to one additional Saturday for small group mentoring from an experienced deacon. In the past, this has been done by Dcn. Peter Sweeny at Calvary Church in Burnt Hills. There are one or two weekend retreats each year at the Spiritual Life Center. In your final year, you will serve an internship at a parish. As you can see, there is a heavy time commitment and lots of travel!

Whew! Seems like an overwhelming process, doesn't it? It can be overwhelming and very challenging, but it is a wonderful experience, full of growth and the grace of God. I pray that any of you who might feel this call, test it! If God isn't calling you to the Diaconate, He is calling you to some other ministry. Go for it!

— *Vicky Hunter, Deacon -in -training*

A Beaver Cross Invitation

Where do beavers, marshmallows, and Jesus come together? At Beaver Cross! I went to Beaver Cross Summer Camp two times, and both were really awesome. Beaver Cross is a great overnight camp that makes learning about God and Jesus a lot of fun. There are wonderful counselors, yummy food, and cool cabins.



A normal day at the six-day camp is first the lesson and praise, breakfast, and then an activity. You get to choose your activity, which include drama, waterfront, sports, crafts, and more. Then we have lunch. Afterwards, we go to two different activities that we pick and change every-day. After, we have some chill time, and then we have dinner. After dinner, we usually do something fun, like a campfire, gold rush, or even a real live game of Clue, where the counselors are the suspects!

There are camps for kids entering 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th, and 9th-12th. They also provide a mini camp for those in 1st-2nd grades.

I love Beaver Cross, and look forward to it every summer. You can find out more at <http://www.christ-the-king-center.org/BeaverCross/>.

—*Becca Odell*



Music at Christ Church

A MUSIC NOTE . . . a wonderful Easter hymn is found in our hymnal on page 184, "Christ ist erstanden," translated by Catherine Winkworth, a linguist who has probably translated more hymns than any other writer. I came across another translation by Martin Seltz that I would like to share with you: "Christ is arisen from the grave's dark prison so let our joy rise full and free, / Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia! / Were Christ not arisen, then death were still our prison. / Now with him to life restored, we praise the Father of our Lord. Alleluia!"

Easter behind us, we now evaluate our musical offerings and look ahead to new ones in the future. So many of you shared your comments with me such as, "inspiring," "glorious," "stunning" and "a wonderful celebration." Thank you for your comments.

Each one involved in our music program has worked tirelessly to bring this special music to you to celebrate Christ's resurrection. We thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful trumpet music presented by Ron Stewart on Easter Sunday; without the trumpet, our anthem would have been incomplete. While I did use our organ's Trumpet and State Trumpet stops, I did not have enough hands to play the trumpet solo part in addition to the organ trumpets! The music actually called for three live trumpets; however, we were more than satisfied with one. We hope that it inspired you as it did our choir. Our appreciation goes out to Jordan Murray as well for singing our Easter Psalm with us so beautifully.

LOOKING AHEAD

On May 3 (after coffee hour) our church bell will ring. You will then have an opportunity to experience the first Lenten organ recital if you were unable to attend the original program, as I have been asked to repeat it. It is an all-Bach concert of about ½ hour duration. Please plan to attend and enjoy it.

Music Minutes will begin on Saturday May 30 at 12:00 noon. Each Saturday during the summer we will present a few minutes of music in Christ Church for Cooperstown visitors; of course you are invited as well. On May 30 visitors will hear a brilliant "Toccatà." Why not stop in during your Saturday shopping and bring a friend with you.

It will only take five minutes!

On Sunday May 31 at 5:00 p.m. the Choir will present spring's Choral Evensong. This is a special time of worship and reflection in Anglican tradition. Please join with us as we experience the beauty of this service.

— *Roberta Rowland-Raybold, Choirmaster and Organist*

VESTRY NOTES: April 2009

Father Sam opened the meeting at 7:01 with prayer and by reading the day's Collect from the Prayer Book.

Reports from several members of the vestry indicated that their "Caring Contacts" enjoyed the Easter services, especially the choir and music.

John Mason presented the Treasurer's Report. John noted that we have a surplus in our fuel oil budget account with Bruce Hall and will not need to make further monthly budget payments this spring. He indicated that while we are running slightly behind in our "Income" budget lines, overall because expenses have been carefully watched we are about even financially.

Susan Snell reported on behalf of the Financial Planning Committee. The committee is already beginning to create next year's budget. They have begun that process since it appears that the available income we will be able to draw from our endowment will be much less next year and careful planning will be required.

Susan also reported on the behalf of the Nominating Committee that thus far a parishioner has agreed to run for the Junior Warden's position and four have agreed to run for the vacant vestry seats.

On behalf of the Search Committee Robert Birch placed in the Vestry minutes a statement that the Search Committee had, as of Sunday, March 29th, 2009, issued a call to Father Mark Michael of Sharpsburg, Maryland and that he had enthusiastically accepted the call. Bob indicated that the Search Committee is excited to



have Father Mark, his wife Allison, and son Phillip join us. Father Mark's first Sunday with us will be August 16th.

Janice Brenner reported on behalf of the Christian Education Committee that this past year has been very successful. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for April 19th, and they will be considering seeking new volunteers to assist with the Christian Education Program.

It was noted by Father Sam, on behalf of the Congregational Life Committee, that additional hosts are needed for our Sunday "social hour."

Father Sam, in his Rector's Report, noted that our average Sunday attendance, for the first three months of this year is 120 per week, roughly equal to the totals of the first three months of last year.

There being no new business the meeting was closed with prayer at 8:11 p.m.

—*Martin Tillapaugh, Senior Warden*



Outreach Committee News

The outreach committee will have its spring meeting on Sunday May 31st at 11:30 a.m. in the library of the Parish House. The 2009 budget will be reviewed, current outreach ministries discussed, and upcoming projects planned.

Outreach at Christ Church has been strongly supported for many years. You confirmed that support by designating it a top priority in our recent parish survey. We need your help spending our \$30,000 budget wisely. The current economic downturn adds new challenges and responsibilities to this task. We need help with many hands-on activities as well — from building projects in the Dominican Republic to flipping pancakes and manning the rummage sales. We invite you to join us in this important work. Consider choosing an activity and making it a family project!

We have changed our structure to encourage more of you to participate, limiting our meetings to three a year. We strongly encourage all those who are involved with community or global service organizations to join us. Successful outreach programs are those that support the good works being done by members of their congregations. Please come and help us set our priorities, refine our vision, and discern God's will as we strive to be wise stewards of the funds entrusted to us by our parish.

—*Audrey Murray, Outreach Comm. Chair acmurray@mac.com*



Heartfelt Thanks to Dr. Mike Miller

Prayer Table volunteers have found an angel! When Dr. Mike Miller was at the Spiritual Life Center, he noticed some tee-shirts that he thought would be perfect for the Prayer Table. The shirts were blue with the Spiritual Life insignia of the healing ministry and the question, "How may I pray for you?"

So he ordered one for all seven table volunteers. Dr. Miller, we are so grateful to you! We look forward to wearing them when our Prayer Table starts on Saturday mornings in May from 10:30 to noon and continues through the summer. Please stop by, let us pray with you, and admire Dr. Miller's wonderful gift!

With grateful thanks to our angel,
— *Roxie Hansel, Prayer Table Coordinator*

United Thank Offering

On Sunday, May 17, Christ Church will participate in the annual United Thank Offering Spring Ingathering. Church members using the UTO blue boxes for their Thank Offerings should bring their boxes to church that day. Additional boxes are available at the back of the church for anyone who would like one.

There will also be envelopes at the back of the church for anyone who wishes to make a Thank Offering without using a blue box. Checks should be made out to Christ Church with UTO noted in the memo line. Both boxes and envelopes will be collected at church services on May 17. Donations for the UTO Ingathering may also be mailed to: UTO Ingathering, Christ Church, 69 Fair Street, Cooperstown, NY 13326.

For more information about the UTO Spring Ingathering, please contact Catherine Ellsworth at 607-547-8124.



Giving Back

I have always loved music, especially singing. So it was not unusual to find myself singing in an Easter Cantata about a month ago. One song in particular screamed of "Stewardship" and made me wonder if I live up to its words. *"If you are my Lord, why am I silent? If you are my Lord, why do I turn from you? If you are my Lord, why does my life deny it, when you should shine in all I do? I say my time is yours alone, yet make no time to spend in prayer. I say I love my neighbors, yet in their need I'm seldom there. I say my wealth belongs to you, pretend to give my best; yet you can see my gifts are small and secret sin goes unconfessed"*

Do I really live up to the idea of returning a portion of my gifts to God by contributing myself and my talents to Christ Church, or have I dug a hole in the ground and hid them from fear of losing what I have?

—*Jim High, Stewardship Committee*



A Caring Ministry

In difficult economic times, there are more and more people struggling to meet challenges. With the permission of Stephen Leader Mary Bellew, I will share a story of one of her friends: "A longtime friend of mine has been having some pretty rough times for a few years. She had to move her mom into a nursing home after she suffered a debilitating stroke, sell the house, and now assume guardianship for her mom; my friend's son, now 16, has autism and is not responding to the medications as expected. They have been traveling over 90 miles for specialized treatments and consultations. The other day they made the trip again, and I wrote her to find out how it went. She sent me the following: 'Our appt. went pretty well. We went out to lunch after and the waitress was talking to us about Lewiston. There was an older couple sitting behind us who paid our bill on their way out¼ They told the waitress to wait until they left to tell us. Wasn't that nice?'" I don't know if this couple was familiar with Stephen Ministry, but they certainly showed caring. As Jesus said, "Whatever you do for the least of your brothers"

—*Anita High, Stephen Leader*



IMAGES in this issue of Christ Church Chronicle are drawn primarily from the wonderful website, www.godecookery.com and their Medieval Woodcuts Clipart Collection. Thanks to the Gode Cookes for use of images of the risen Christ, singing lesson, and springtime rebirth. In addition, the picture of the Christ with cross and banner is drawn from www.cruzblanca.org and its extensive clipart collection.