



## **Christ Episcopal Church**

*"Our Doors Are  
Always Open"*

**2000 Main Street**

**Stratford, CT 06615**

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### **INTERIM RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS**

I am opening this article to you with a quote from the book, The Shack; this book is about a man who suffers a terrible tragedy and is in discussion with God about that tragedy and the true nature of God. At its premise the book asks the questions, "How can there be a loving God when such tragedies happen?" and "What is the true nature of God?"

Here is the snapshot (the Trinity of God is speaking). "When we three spoke ourself into human existence as the Son of God, we became fully human. We also chose to embrace all the limitations that this entailed. Even though we have always been present in this created universe, we now became flesh and blood. It would be like this bird, whose nature it is to fly, choosing only to walk and remain grounded. He doesn't stop being the bird, but it does alter his experience of life significantly...although by nature he is fully God, Jesus is fully human and lives as such...That is why his name is Immanuel, God with us, or God with *you*...My purpose from the beginning was to live in you and you in me." (The Shack, pps. 99 and 112).

As we enter into Advent on November 27<sup>th</sup>, we begin the preparations for the incarnation, the indwelling of God, as Jesus Christ, in our midst. But, it goes beyond the historical presence of Jesus Christ at a certain time and place. It is God's fervent hope and delight that God may dwell in us and we in God.

God gives us hope by connecting us to God's self, and also connecting us to one another in love. As you may know, God is love. So, whenever true love is found, God is found. The incarnation or birth of Christ is another example of true love, sacrifice, delight and desire to be in relationship with us. We, however, must choose "yes" to that invitation. May we say "yes" to the indwelling of God in us this day and every day to come.

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Mary Canavan

### **ST. NICHOLAS & SANTA ARE COMING!**

On December 4<sup>th</sup> at the 10:00 a.m. worship service, St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, will be visiting us and sharing how it is that he has come to be called "Santa Claus" by children in the United States. We also give thanks that St. Nicholas has also promised to bring his Santa Claus outfit, give small gifts to the children and to be available for photographs in the parish hall after worship. We give thanks to the photographers (Jeff Scholl and Susan Sampson) and to others who will be helping that day (Rick Marcone and Jim Sampson).

### **UPDATE ON THE CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP EXPERIMENT**

**As you may know, throughout the Fall we have been experimenting with a new worship format and music style. Since this is an experiment, we have been adjusting and changing the format as we see what works best and what doesn't. Here's a summary of what we've noticed so far.**

#### **Music**

Throughout the Fall, as the surveys have come in, the overwhelming majority of parishioners love the new music and the energy of the choir.

We give thanks to Dottie Cameron's leadership and the volunteers who share their gifts and talents for music each week. We also give thanks to our Music Consultant, Steve Cinque, who is teaching Dottie and the choir this new style of music. After a flood of e-mails from the choir and upon reviewing the surveys from parishioners, the Vestry unanimously voted at its November meeting to continue Steve's consulting arrangement through June 17, 2012, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

### **Children in worship and Nursery**

From the surveys, most parishioners are also enjoying having the children in worship. Please know that children of any age are most welcome in worship. For those parents or caregivers (grandparents) who would like a quiet time to worship, we do have a paid Nursery Staff person, Onica Johnson, available for children under age 4. Onica is just about to graduate with her teaching degree from the University of Hartford.

### **Liturgy style**

Upon many requests, the "Prayer for Christ Church" was added back in the Prayers of the People for the experimental worship; parishioners are overwhelmingly happy to have it back! The surveys showed that the congregation was just about evenly split on whether they liked the "Peace" at the end of worship or in the middle. This was the one issue that struck numerous people as awkward or misplaced. After having it at the end through October 30<sup>th</sup> (approximately six weeks), we moved it back to the middle of worship in November and will leave it there.

A few people prefer to physically hold the Book of Common Prayer, and there has been some concern about the amount of standing, and a few people miss the Epistle reading. On the whole, however, the major concern revolved around the "Peace" and there was less energy or concerns about other aspects of the experimental liturgy.

### **Overall Summary of the Experiment**

Overall, given the feedback so far, I have to say that the music has been a huge hit, the children are welcome in worship, and the liturgy is better with the "Peace" in the middle. **Given the extraordinary response to the music, we will be continuing with the experimental worship**

**into January and beyond**, adapting and changing it as more information from you comes to light. Please continue to share your thoughts and insights into this experimental worship. I will continue to adapt the liturgy based on your input.

Your Sister in Christ, Pastor Mary

### **ADVENT BIBLE STUDY**

A Bible study of the stories of the foretelling, conception and pregnancy of Mary and Elizabeth, and the birth of Jesus will be held on **Mondays at 1:00 p.m. in Advent**, beginning on Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>. We will meet in the Library (Meeting Room). Please let Pastor Mary or Sue Hovan know if you are able to come.

### **ADVENT WREATHS**

On Advent 1, November 27<sup>th</sup>, we will be gathering in the Parish Hall at the coffee hour, you will again have the opportunity to make an Advent wreath to use in your home for the Advent season. All materials will be supplied. A free will donation would be appreciated to cover the cost of the supplies. The materials for each wreath is approximately \$12. But any amount would be welcome.

We give thanks to Amy Taylor for coordinating and organizing this family event.

### **THANK YOU'S**

We give thanks to **Vazzano's Four Seasons** for its very generous gift of hot meals for the needy whenever Christ Church is scheduled to serve food at the Wednesday night "Lord's Kitchen Community Meal." We have been providing the bread, coffee, tea and dessert and Vazzano's Four Seasons (formerly Leidle's) has provided the main meal. We also give **enormous thanks to Al Varvella and Vazzano's Four Seasons for their generous gift of the New Consecration Sunday Celebration Luncheon on November 20<sup>th</sup>.**

We give thanks to **Sally Logan, Bruce Blanchard, and Marian Knight** for their personal witnesses on behalf of Christ's actions

in their lives and how they have responded to Christ by giving on His behalf. Sally, Bruce, and Marian all shared during worship and did a great job explaining that giving to the Lord is out of gratitude for all that has been given to us.

We also give thanks to **Walt and Debbie Baker and Lou and Cheryl DeCilio** for hosting the Halloween Party on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was a lot of fun, with apple bobbing, donut eating, and great costumes, prizes, delicious meatballs (totally unexpected to have good food!) candy (of course) and decorations. Thank you so much!

We give thanks for everyone who helped with the Cemetery Tour, especially **Judy Kurmay, Rebecca Arkenberg, Ruth Munson, Dottie Cameron, Al Varvella, Sally Logan, and Joan Lohnes**. Approximately 80 people walked through and learned more about the history of Stratford and the characters who helped shape and form our country.

**THE ALTAR GUILD** – is the ministry of preparing the Altar, sacred vessels and vestments for our worship services. Members of the Altar guild perform a silent ministry to Christ Church, so that we may be able to worship and glorify Christ.

Members (men and women) are trained and are assigned to a team that is responsible for the services during a given week, once a month. Some of our Altar Guild members have been members for twenty-five years or more, some just a couple of months. Each member past, present and future is a special person who has touched the lives of every member and visitor of Christ Church, as they have come to the Lord's Table.

Please consider joining this ministry, as it is a privilege to serve God. For more information or to join the Altar Guild please call Susan Sampson at 203-414-0982.

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

The flowers on the altar have always been supplied by members of the parish, either in memory of a loved one or as a thanksgiving. The cost is \$35.00. You may take them home after the service or if you choose, one of our

parish visitors will take them to a homebound parishioner. There is a Flower Chart on the bulletin board in the hall, so you can see what weeks are open. If you would like to give flowers please call Sue in the office at 375-4447. We ask that they be paid for the week before the flowers are on the altar. Thank you!

## **GREENING OF THE CHURCH**

**Please join the Worship Commission in the greening of the church after worship on December 18<sup>th</sup>.** We need many hands for climbing ladders, holding ladders, and putting decorations up with no ladders! We will be decorating the window sills, the pews, the Christmas tree, and the balcony frontals. Hot cider, treats, fun, and love will be provided.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP (Saturday)**

December 24<sup>th</sup>:

1:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite II, using the Book of Common Prayer with traditional Christmas music

4:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Family Service using the Book of Common Prayer, with Junior Bell Choir, traditional Christmas music

10:00 p.m. – Festive Holy Eucharist, Rite II, using the Book of Common Prayer, with formal and traditional Christmas music, Adult Bell Choir and Senior Choir

## **CHRISTMAS DAY (Sunday)**

December 25<sup>th</sup> – 9:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite II, with no music, The Rev. Robert Deming, Celebrant and Preacher, using the Book of Common Prayer

## **NEW YEAR'S DAY (Sunday)**

January 1<sup>st</sup> – 9:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite I, with Christmas music, using the Book of Common Prayer

## Free Community Meals: Please Help

The Stratford Clergy Association is hosting free community suppers at Christ Church each Wednesday from 5:00 -6:00pm. Every week a different church will host the supper. We need our parishioners to provide hospitality by unlocking and locking up and showing the other churches where things are. Please help! Call Sue Hovan to sign up.

## FROM THE WARDENS

### From the Wardens

As you may recall, a series of March meetings focused on discerning the way forward to assure adequate operating income in our call of a new rector. The consensus that emerged was to liquidate a combination of endowed funds and property. To that end, the application to the Stratford Probate Court for the release of a portion of our restricted endowed funds was filed on October 28th. Another judge must be cited in to hear the request. Attorney Charles L. Kurmay has agreed to be our *pro bono* counsel on this matter. The law requires that the Office of the Attorney General be notified of all such petitions. It remains to be seen whether the A.G. will take a position contrary to our own.

Delegates to the annual Diocesan Convention passed various resolutions two of which will have a financial impact on all parishes, including Christ Church. Clergy will receive a 3% pay raise starting in 2012. Also there is an expectation for all parishes to contribute at least 10% of total operating revenues to the diocesan budget by 2014. These resolutions will certainly affect our 2012 and subsequent budgets.

On a less serious note, the Fall Cemetery Tour held on Oct. 22nd was a success thanks to the efforts of many. Those who mowed the grass, interpreted the lives of "saints" from the past, baked the goodies and offered hospitality to the 80 or so guests not only raised \$400 for the restoration of the grave stones; but also raised the awareness of Christ Church in Stratford.

As we move through this time of transition, some do struggle with change. While not minimizing this somewhat unsettled feeling, it is important to put it in perspective. At the three

feeding programs we support (St. John's Kitchen, Spooner House and the Lord's Kitchen), the constant refrain from the volunteers is "I'm so grateful to be the hands and feet of God."

Peace,  
Judy & Felix

## MUSIC NEWS

Our musical restart continues an exploration of "contemporary" music. We have picked up a new choir member, Dionne Jackson, and welcomed back Julia Seeber. The vestry has voted to secure the services of Steve Cinque through June. Steve has worked with us through the fall, lending his considerable talents to arranging music, singing, playing whatever instrument we need- stringed or percussion- and optimizing our sound. The reviews of the new church services have been very favorable to the church music efforts. It has been a lot of work, we are still getting our "sea legs" and there is so much to do that sometimes we practice twice a week, but the results are worth it. We are learning, and having a very good time doing it.

One major difference in the music that we do now as a part of our service is that we need to repeat songs that we have in our repertoire so that the congregation can actually sing them. Our goal is not to perform music- it is to sing music *with* the congregation that demonstrates "We all are one in mission, we all are one in Christ", as the hymn states. So if you feel like "Gee, I finally know this song, I might be able to sing it", please do!!! Sing out!! It makes us stronger! It is healing! It also makes you able to sing our regular Hymnal '82 hymns with renewed feeling. Perhaps we have taken them for granted, having had them as a part of our liturgy for so long.

Advent season is almost here- we would love to have people join us for the Advent- Christmas services, no experience needed. We practice at 7 PM on all Thursday nights, and some Tuesdays at 7 PM. We are in the church proper, not the music room, but both doors are open at 7 PM. Please speak to me or Steve after church, or just come at 9 AM on a Sunday morning, and sit-in with us on our practice for that day, if you would like to "try it on"!

Dottie Cameron

## **Thumbs up for Don Felix and his Book Nook!**

Every fourth Sunday used books are for sale after the 10AM service. You can donate your already-read books any time and then resupply at the sale at low, low prices. The last sale took in \$55 for the church. A win/win all around.

## **Vestry**

Walter Baker	Leah Datcher
Richard Marcone	Bonnie Paradise
Coleen Blanchard	Beth Brooks
Yvette Tajudeen	Sally Logan
Charlotte Matthews	Donald Millberry

## **Schedule of Twelve Step Programs**

### **AA**

10:00a.m. Sunday – Harry Rosen Group  
4 p.m. Sunday  
5:30 p.m. Tuesday  
5:30 p.m. Wednesday (Back to Basics)  
6:30 p.m. Harry Rosen Speaker  
12 Noon Friday

### **Alateen**

8:00 p.m. Monday – North Parish Hall

### **Alanon**

6pm – Monday – E.C.W. Room  
8pm – Monday – Basement South Parish Hall

### **Overeaters Anonymous**

10:00 a.m. Saturday– Meeting Room Parish Hall

### **Staff**

The Rev. Mary Canavan, Interim Rector  
The Rev. Lee Forshaw, Deacon  
The Rev. James Wilson, Resident Priest  
Dorothy Cameron - Organist/Choir Director  
Marilyn Olbrys - Hand Bell Choir Director  
Susan Hovan - Administrative Assistant

### **Office Hours**

9am to 3pm – Monday through Thursday  
9am – 12 Noon - Friday

### **Vestry and Officers of Christ Church**

Senior Warden	Judy Kurmay
Junior Warden	Felix Esposito
Treasurer	Louis DeCilio
Clerk	Yvette Tajudeen
Financial Secretary	Marilyn Olbrys

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Dottie Cameron

# Milestones

## December Birthdays

4	Edward Tirado
8	Jeremiah Rivera
8	Florence Rivera-Negron
10	Jane Russo
10	Ruth Munson
11	Valerie Penebre
11	Nancy Berkeley
14	Samantha Berkeley
15	Bennett Daponte-Smith
16	Michael Nagel
18	Bruce Berkeley Sr.
18	Sue Ziman
21	John Arkenberg
21	Verda Flash
22	Allison Baker
25	Fred Langhammer
26	William Erenhouse
27	Robert Sheftic Jr.
29	Blake Erenhouse
30	Jeff Arkenberg
31	Aidan Brennan

## December Anniversaries

3	Jancee & Rick Marcone
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## Baptisms

### All Saints' Sunday, November 6, 2010

Jackson Daniel Peter Greco, son of Kevin Greco and Amber Lozinak.

Anthony Joseph Milano, son of Daniel and Jennylee Milano.

Eiliee Addison Milano, daughter of Daniel and Jennylee Milano.

Amelia Mary Pereira, daughter of Brandon and Lora Pereira.

Sophia Violet Perillie, daughter of Michael and Michelle Perillie.

## Burials

November 17, 2011 - Nancy Watt Thiele

*If we've missed your birthday or anniversary, or have the wrong date, please call the parish office 375-4447.*

*Please keep our friends and families in your prayers for God's healing and their continued recovery: Cindy, Kyle, Betty, Karen, Hester, Brian, Anna, Isabella, Julia, Miguel, Diane and Erik.*

## Schedules

### Services

Sunday 8am & 10:00am with children in church  
Sunday School at 10:45 a.m.

Thursday 9am

### Adult Choir

Rehearse, Thursday 7:00pm  
Sunday 9:00am

### Adult Bell Choir

Rehearse, Wednesday 6:45pm

### Children's Choir (ages 5+)

Rehearse Sunday 11:30am

### Children's Bell Choir

Rehearse Sunday 11:30am

## Christmas Flowers

If you would like to contribute to the purchase of poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season, as a memorial for a loved one or as a thanksgiving, you may do so by using the enclosed envelope for your donation. Please return it to the church office no later than December 16<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the Christmas bulletin. Thank you!

## Schedules of People Serving the Lord – December

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Chalice Bearers</u>	<u>Acolytes</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Counters</u>	<u>Coffee Hour Hosts</u>	<u>Greeters</u>
Dec. 4	8 a.m. 10:00am	B. Ball J. Scholl	T. Jones C. Stebbins M. Flash	M. Flash D. DeCilio	<u>Team 1</u> J. Kuzmich J. Seeber E. Cartwright D. Scholl	<u>Team 5</u> J. Marcone W. Baker L. DeCilio	A. Minatti	B. Brooks D. Scholl J. Scholl
Dec. 11	8 am 10 a.m.	G. Schneider A. Varvella	B. Blanchard J. Kuzmich R. Marcone	R. Marcone R. Kuzmich	<u>Team 2</u> L. Schneider G. Schneider A. Minatti S. Sampson D. Baker S. DeCilio	<u>Team 1</u> G. Matthews F. Esposito D. Stevens	OPEN	D. Felix M. Olbrys J. Bettini
Dec. 18	8 a.m. 10:00a.m.	C. Stebbins J. DePalmer	Gail R A. Minatti B. Flash	B. Flash D. DiGiugno	<u>Team 3</u> C. Blanchard B. Brooks	<u>Team 2</u> M. Blake C. Moffat R. Kuzmich	OPEN	B. Brelsford B. Sampson P. Diamond
Dec. 25	9am		T. Jones		<u>Team 4</u> C. Matthews S. Hovan R. Munson	<u>Team 3</u> S. Hovan S. Cameron	NO COFFEE HOUR	B. Brooks

# Calendar of Events - December 2011

Date	Activity	Leaders
Dec. 1	Worship Commission Meeting	Ruth Munson
Dec. 4 8:00 am 10:00am 10:00am 11:15am 11:30am	<b>Second Sunday in Advent</b> Holy Eucharist, Rite I Holy Eucharist, Rite II Sunday School Pictures with Santa Claus – St Nicholas Youth Bell Choir Rehearsal	The Rev. Mary Canavan The Rev. Mary Canavan Walter and Debbie Baker  Marilyn Olbrys
Dec. 5 7:00pm	Buildings and Grounds Commission Meeting	Wilma Andrews
Dec. 7 5:00pm 6:45pm	Community Supper – The Lord's Kitchen Senior Bell Choir Rehearsal	Stratford Clergy Association Marilyn Olbrys
Dec. 8 9:00am 7:00pm	Holy Eucharist – Chapel Senior Choir Rehearsal	The Rev. Mary Canavan Dorothy Cameron
Dec. 11 8:00 am 10:00 am 10:00am 11:30am	<b>Third Sunday in Advent</b> Holy Eucharist, Rite I Holy Eucharist, Rite II Sunday School Junior Bell Choir Rehearsal	The Rev. Mary Canavan The Rev. Mary Canavan Walter and Debbie Baker Marilyn Olbrys
Dec. 13 7:00pm	Vestry Meeting	Judy Kurnay
Dec. 14 5:00pm 6:45pm	Community Supper – The Lord's Kitchen Senior Bell Choir Rehearsal	Stratford Clergy Association Marilyn Olbrys
Dec. 15 9:00pm 7:00pm	Holy Eucharist - Chapel Senior Choir Rehearsal	The Rev. Mary Canavan Dorothy Cameron
Dec. 18 8:00am 10:00am 10:00am 11:30am 11:30am	<b>Fourth Sunday in Advent</b> Holy Eucharist, Rite I Holy Eucharist, Rite II Sunday School Junior Bell Choir Rehearsal Greening of the Church	The Rev. Mary Canavan The Rev. Mary Canavan Walter and Debbie Baker Marilyn Olbrys Worship Commission
Dec. 21 5:00pm 6:45pm	Community Supper – The Lord's Kitchen Senior Bell Choir Rehearsal	Stratford Clergy Association Marilyn Olbrys
Dec. 22 9:00am 7:00pm	Holy Eucharist - Chapel Senior Choir Rehearsal	The Rev. Mary Canavan Dorothy Cameron
Dec. 24 1:00pm 4:00pm 10:00pm	<b>Christmas Eve</b> Traditional Service - Holy Eucharist, Rite II Family Service - Holy Eucharist, Rite II Festive Holy Eucharist, Rite II	The Rev. Mary Canavan The Rev. Mary Canavan The Rev. Mary Canavan
Dec. 25 9:00am	<b>Christmas Day</b> Holy Eucharist, Rite II	The Rev. R. Demming
Dec. 26	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	

Date	Activity	Leaders
Jan. 1, 2012 9:00am	<b>FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS – New Year's Day</b> Holy Eucharist, Rite II	

The church office will be closed for the week between Christmas and the New Year. If you have a pastoral emergency, please feel free to call Sue Hovan at 203-378-0156 and she will connect you with a member of the clergy.