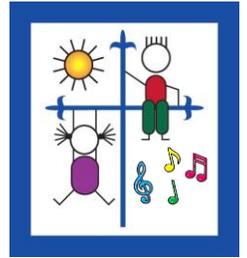




CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE



Growing in faith ~ Serving our neighbors ~ Creating community

OUR NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2015

From The Rector

What a joyous Advent we have had here at Christ Church! The children gave us a wonderful Christmas Pageant on the 20th that warmed our hearts. Later that same Sunday, our choir, under the leadership of our Director of Music, Bill Davies, filled our hearts with the beauty of their music at our first Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols.

It is most of all at Christmas when I look back over the year and give thanks to God for the way in which the Holy Spirit has moved in this place. While we grew 14% last year, and expect to do the same or more again this year, it was in the growth of the choir, the 7 baptisms of young ones (5 of which were in this past Fall alone), and the outreach that has truly warmed my heart. Jesus is on the move, and so are we! As our Warden David Drislane points out in his article, a force has awakened here.

And yet, there are still so many people walking in darkness, amid the troubles of the world. But the message of Christmas is that we are not a people without hope, for the one whose light can never be overcome has been born to us, and the world will never be the same! Thanks be to God!

This light of Christ we celebrate at Christmas is the hope of God's all abiding love and grace freely given to everyone. From this light, each of us are given new life to do the work Jesus calls us to do – to love and to serve all of God's creation.

Wishing you all a safe, joyous, and Merry Christmas, and blessings in the year to come.

See you in church!

Mother Diana+



*"The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;*

*those who lived in a land of deep
darkness--on them light has shined."*

Isaiah 9:2-3

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE

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Warden's Words by David Drislane

The Force Awakens – Some Reflections On The Year

My fellow brothers and sister in Christ, it's hard to believe 2015 will be coming to a close in just a few short days. As I reflect back on the past year, I think the new Star Wars movie "The Force Awakens" is an appropriate description of what has happened here at Christ Church this past year. [Editor's Note: Don't worry – no spoilers ahead]

Similar to the name of the movie, something here has truly awakened and spurred our church family here at Christ Church to move forward to do God's work with a new passion. For a few years before our new Rector arrived, we were a congregation in a slumber just moving along and existing without truly having an impact on ourselves or our surrounding communities. Now we have awoken with a force! Our congregation is leading the way for us to live out our mission, which is to grow in faith, serve our neighbors and create community.



Several examples of the force awakening started or grew this past year. One of these was Theology on Tap, where on every third Thursday of the month, members of the community are invited to meet at Fitzgerald's in Glen Ridge for a discussion over the beverage of your choice. The theological topics varied each month and provided a forum where everyone of any denomination or believe system could come to express their thoughts on a subject in a safe and comfortable environment.

In addition, an Outreach Group was formed, led by Stephanie Reynolds and David Brinkerhoff, with the goal of getting us more engaged with our surrounding communities. They already organized and ran a very successful rummage sale back in November. In January they will be hosting the first blood drive in our parish hall with the Red Cross in memory of Raymar Lecky.

This year as well, under the leadership of our Youth and Family Ministries Director, Candice Whitaker, our Sunday School has grown in numbers, and we held our first Vacation Bible School, serving 12 children between the ages of 3 – 12 with the assistance of Cross Roads Camp. It was a resounding success and demonstrated the commitment your Vestry and leadership team has taken in investing more time and money in our youth and families ministries. We have already booked this again for summer 2016, so reserve your spot early as we expect it to be sold out.



One of my favorite services was our Annual Blessing of the Animals to aid the work of PAWS in Montclair. For those of us who are pet lovers, this service is always a moving and spiritual one. During the summer we also installed a pet watering station on the Park Avenue side of our church for our four legged friends to provide a cool drink during the hot summer days. This small action was very well received by members of our local community. The unconditional love we give and receive from our pets draws us more deeply into the larger circle of life with our Creator.

Your vestry in 2015 worked diligently on a major infrastructure project. This project is a key component to help us provide more modern and updated facilities for our nursery school while also providing the church facilities for further growth so we can better serve our surrounding communities. I would be remiss if I did not mention the countless hours during the summer that our Warden Bill Seeman and Treasurer Dan Wing took of their time and talent to work on the budget numbers to help make this project a reality. Without their financial expertise we would have been lost. Thank you Bill and Dan for everything you do for the people of this parish. It is projected to be completed by the end of June for the start of the new Nursery School year on July 1st. As a result of this extensive exercise, the Vestry also clearly saw more than ever before how the church and nursery school are



one – partners in an important relationship, and that this project is needed for the long term sustainability of both. The infrastructure project was approved by your Vestry at our November meeting, and we are set to start work just after the new year begins.

I completed writing this article the evening after returning from our first ever Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols. What a wonderful and deeply moving event which was attended by over 90 people from our community! It was such a blessing to take time away from the Christmas hustle and bustle so we could just sit back and experience the wonderful joy and spirit of the Christmas season. Our choir, which has grown considerably this year under the leadership of Bill Davies, must be commended for the outstanding performance they delivered that evening and every Sunday. Music for many of us is a spiritual and unifying way to connect with God during our church

services. [Editor's Note: If you want to see a video of the fabulous music from that evening, it is available on our website.]

In conclusion, I would now like to take a moment to thank you and to wish you and your families a Happy Christmas and New Year's. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as one of your Wardens along with my fellow warden Bill Seeman.

May God bless you and keep you all safe this Christmas Season.

Music Notes by Bill Davies, Director of Music

History, Music, and Lessons & Carols

We have recently celebrated the Advent service of Lessons and Carols at Christ Church and, in some past years, we have used part of the Christmas service of Lessons and Carols in the late service on Christmas Eve. These services are not all that old, as liturgical traditions go, but they have quickly become an essential element of the season in the Anglican Communion. That seems to be the case because they have so successfully touched both historical and musical chords.

The original Lessons and Carols service (for Christmas) was first celebrated in 1880 in Truro, England and was quickly adopted by other English churches. It found its most important home, however, when it was first held at King's College, Cambridge in 1918. That December 24th fell just a little over a month after the end of the First World War, a war which had decimated not only thousands of English soldiers, but also European conceptions of war as a glorious endeavor which left men covered in glory. In that context, worshippers at King's heard the Dean read out the now-famous final line of the bidding prayer: "Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are forever one." Of course the prayer was composed to remember all the dead, but the immediacy of the just-ended war and the raw reality



of lost sons, husbands and brothers imbued the Christmas celebration that year with a twinge of longing that is often still recalled by commentators on the annual service, which is now broadcast around the world on Christmas Eve.

But the music composed for Lessons and Carols is its vital legacy and can be rightly said to have redefined the sound of Christmas for the entire Anglican Communion, as indeed it has for many outside it. Boris Ord ("Adam Lay Ybounden"), Harold Drake ("In the Deep Midwinter") and

perhaps most famously David Willcocks ("Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day" and the almost universally sung descant to "O Come, All Ye Faithful") served as successive organists and choir directors at King's, accounting for an incredible history of musical output from 1929 to 1973, a record that has continued under Philip Ledger (1974-82) and Stephen Cleobury, who has held the post for the past 33 years.

Profound history and profound music are a powerful combination, and they have combined for over one hundred years to give birth to the music of Christmas.

Nursery School News by Jean Bannon, Director



The month of November was a very busy month for the Nursery School. We started off November 2nd through the 6th with our annual food drive. Boxes were decorated and set up in all of the classrooms, and parents placed non-perishable foods in, and all around the boxes. Food was delivered to the Bloomfield Presbyterian Food Pantry. Our soccer classes with Kiddie Soccer ended then too, but will be having another session in the spring. Our Dance and Yoga classes will continue through the first two weeks in December, with a recital on Wednesday, December 9th at 10:00am. These classes will also resume in the spring.

Our annual Holiday Thanksgiving Feast was a huge success! The staff cooked and prepared a full “traditional” holiday feast for the children and staff. Mother Diana, Bob & Jayne, and many parent volunteers joined us as well. We all sat in Parish Hall (infants & toddlers too) and enjoyed a delicious meal together.

The month of December at the Nursery School is the most hectic of them all, but the most enjoyable as well. The excitement here is immeasurable, and contagious! Family and staff are in the spirit with decorations, music and lights, and have collected gifts for Apostle’s House families who are less fortunate. Such a busy time here at the Nursery School!

We are all decorating, and singing our little hearts out, as we get ready for Christmas. We have our annual Holiday Show on Friday, December 18th at 2:00pm. Toddlers, preschoolers, and our Kindergarten class will all perform for each other, relatives and friends! We have a “special” guest who joins us at the end of our program, HO. HO. HO’ing his way through the crowd to the stage so he can hand out presents to all of the children. So exciting for everyone!!!

On December 9th we had an interactive puppet show for the school, hosted by Ms. Cheryl. The children all get to participate in part of a story, and they truly enjoy her time with us. On December 9th we also had our semi-annual Dance Recital with children from our dance and yoga classes from Ms. Melissa’s Dance Academy.



Also in December is our Staff appreciation Holiday Dinner at a local restaurant. This is a well-earned dinner for the staff, and we all relax and enjoy the evening. Enrollment is typically lower during the week between the holidays (as older siblings are off from public schools), so Staff can get decorations down and their rooms ready for the New Year.

[Editor’s Note: That Santa sure looks familiar – hmmm.....]

Children & Youth News, by Candice Whitaker, Director of Family Ministries

Advent is such a fun and festive time! The Christmas pageant was on December 20th, and it was so much fun getting to work with all the children and youth. I admire and appreciate all the hard work the kids put into it, and they all looked absolutely adorable!

[Editor's Note: The backdrop, manger, and costumes were all new this year, and the kids and congregation both had a wonderful time hearing this traditional telling of the birth of Jesus.]

Our youth choir will be singing again on Christmas Eve at the 5pm service. They



have been practicing so hard and I can't wait to hear their sweet little voices sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Bill Davies, our music director, has been so fantastic in working with them- it's going to be great!



In Sunday School, we have been going through the workshop cycles. Our latest cycle has been fittingly themed for Advent, and focuses on the birth of baby Jesus and the amazing ways in which that Gift changed everything for all of us. This cycle is about gifts and getting ready, and not just about retelling the central Christmas story. We have learned about how we can give the gift of

ourselves through our time or service to others by creating our own wrapping paper and Christmas "coupon books" to give to our friends and family. We will be reading stories about Christmas to remember the story and celebrate the gift all over again and we will be making and decorating Christmas cookies to be able to share with others.

In January, we will be starting another workshop cycle where we will learn about when Jesus was a child and follow in his footsteps. I love seeing all the different ways the children express themselves each week and it is truly a delight getting to know them every Sunday. I thank you all for your support and dedication to this ministry!



Youth News

Our Youth Group shopped for presents as part of the Giving Tree (See Outreach Notes for more information). They also attended the Bloomfield-Glen Ridge-Montclair Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, which took place at a local church, with a member of a local synagogue giving the homily.

In January, the Youth Group will participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring. The Souper Bowl is a nationwide outreach effort aimed using the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and those in need. Our Youth Group will be collecting donations and food for the Presbyterian Church on the Green Food Pantry during the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl, and of course at worship on Super Bowl Sunday, so stay tuned.



Adult Formation



Christ Church isn't only for the young, but the young at heart too! Adult Formation is an important part of living into our baptismal covenant. This year there have been a number of Adult Forums after worship. The topics have engaged a wide range of theological and contemporary areas, including: Epiphany: The Jesus and Peter Moments of Our Lives, Lent Madness, The Gospel Parallels, The Bible & Homosexuality, Spooks & Saints, Episcopal 101, Ways to Pray. We also had a wonderful presentation by Len Roberts on his trip to Turkey. In January there will be a three part series on the Gospel of Luke, and a Diocesan Convention report back.

There is also a Men's Group, a Book Club, Zen Meditation, Labyrinth Walk & Compline services on Wednesdays, and of course, the popular Theology on Tap. Upcoming topics will be announced in our Sunday Paper, which is available every week in print, and online (as is our Bulletin). So, check it all out. And, if you have a topic you would be interested in learning more about, please be sure to contact Mother Diana.

Outreach

In the past few months, Christ Church has been busy doing the work of Christ in the world. Our first Craft Fair & Rummage Sale, run by our newly formed Outreach Group, was held in November, with the proceeds going to support outreach in our community.

Also in November, parishioners brought forward loads of groceries the Sunday before Thanksgiving to donate to the Presbyterian Church on the Green Food Pantry. Over the past two years, we have developed a strong partnership with them in their ministry to



feed the needy. They were blown away by the amount of food we had collected, and needed multiple trips to pick it all up!



Then the Giving Tree went up, and the congregation responded as they do every year, with exceeding generosity. Just look at all those presents! North Porch was blown away by what we delivered to their families for Christmas. If you are unfamiliar with the work of North Porch, it is a ministry in our diocese that supports women and their children. In November alone, they served 124 children, which translates to about 6200 diapers distributed, 9920 baby wipes, 1240 jars of baby food, and approximately 75 cans of



formula. What better ministry to support in Advent when we await the birth of Jesus, born in humble means to Mary.

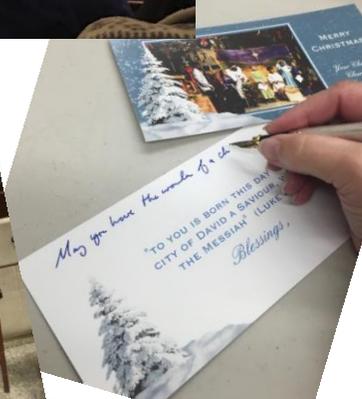
Also in this time of year the choir organizes a caroling afternoon for the seniors at South End Gardens in Montclair, where some of our own parishioners live. What a turnout we had this year, and as always, it was fun for everyone!



In January, we will have our first Blood Drive, in memory of Raymar Lecky, the son of one of our parishioners, who lost his life at such a young age. That will be on Saturday, January 16th from 10am-3pm. Stay tuned for more, as our Outreach Group continues to keep us focused on our mission. If you would like to help, please contact the chairs, Stephanie Reynolds and David Brinkerhoff at outreach@christchurchepiscopal.org.

Christ Church At A Glance (favorite moments of the year)...

Santa and his elves, Altar Guild makes the church beautiful, Advent Lessons & Carols, Parish Hall & Church decorated for Christmas, Greening of the Church, Frances checks out the Giving Tree, Mother Diana signing Christmas Cards.



Nursery School Christmas and Halloween Shows (and parents watching), Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, Mother Diana With Some Of The Nursery School Children and Teachers



Last Chance Mass, A Few Of Our Baptisms, Youth Group Lasagna Bake-Off, New Light Over The Font, Vestry Retreat, Mass On The Grass With Brass In The Glen





Here are some of the ways you can find out more about what is happening here at Christ Church:

The website:

<http://christchurchepiscopal.org>

Our Facebook page:

facebook.com/cc74park

Our Sunday Paper, an insert in our Sunday Bulletin, all of which is located on our website for download to your e-reader or iPad.

By email:

office@christchurchepiscopal.org

And the best way...come to church!

Our Newsletter

We at Christ Church are excited by the new life and transformation in this place, and this newsletter is a part of the many ways we are stepping boldly forward in faith. This newsletter is published three times each year, and will cover the life of this congregation – worship, spiritual formation, music, children & youth, and so much more. Let us know what you think.

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