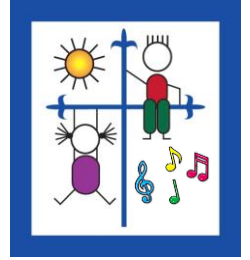




CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE



Growing in faith ~ Serving our neighbors ~ Creating community

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2017

Reflections from The Rector

by Rev. Diana Wilcox



I love Christmas- the sights, the carols, and all the festive joy. The story of Christmas is the story of God, wanting so much to reach us, and being willing to be born to us as a small child of humble means. God, pained by the darkness of the world, came to us in this way – into the lives of people like Joseph and Mary, people of humble means, not riches, living at a time of darkness and fear. God entered into the lives of the marginalized and the poor, like the shepherds who were the first to receive the good news.

It's a crazy thing to think about isn't it, but the truth of Christmas is that God chooses the most unlikely places to enter into our lives to make sure we truly understand that God's love is for everyone – no exceptions. And it is in each of us that God yearns to be born today, not only for

ourselves, but that our lives might be the good news of great joy to a people living in the cold, dark fields of our world. You see, this good news of great joy is truly for all people, and was never meant to stay in the manger, the barn, or for that matter – the church.

In this world, that can seem so dark and cold, this wonderful Christmas story we tell each year is to remind us that God never forgets us, will always look to be born in us, and will seek us out in the darkness to bring us the good news – that we are loved deeply, unequivocally, and always.

The hope that gave light to the world, is born this day in our hearts.

And that, my dear friends, are truly tidings of great joy for all people.

Merry Christmas!

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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Seasons Greetings this Christmas

by David Drislane, Warden



My fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, it's hard to believe 2017 will be drawing to a close in a few short days. This is my final year as one of your Wardens, so as I reflect back on another eventful year, I do so with a prideful heart. We have accomplished many things this past year as a parish to live out God's mission, so if I may, I would like to share my thoughts with you on a few of them.

One of the truly touching moments this year was in September. If you recollect a number of areas were severely impacted by powerful hurricanes that caused mass destruction and many deaths in their wake. This resulted in many folks being without homes, power, and even the basic necessities for life. Thousands of people are desperately trying to rebuild and put their lives back together as a result of these horrific natural disasters. At our September vestry meeting, our Director of Finance, Bob Solon, made a suggestion to use our entire outreach budget of \$5,200 to set up a matching fund campaign for Episcopal Relief & Development to aid hurricane victims. This suggestion was very quickly embraced and implemented by your hard-working vestry. The resulting matching funds campaign not only attracted the attention of our congregation and nursery school parents, but other parishes and strangers from across our diocese to ensure the matching goal was achieved. The campaign was so successfully it was oversubscribed with the church sending a check for more than \$12,000 to Episcopal Relief & Development. As one of your Wardens, this made me personally very proud to know that in a time of crisis for those in need we came together as a parish.



This past fall we also celebrated a milestone with the 50th anniversary of our nursery school. When it was founded back in 1967, its purpose was to provide a safe and nurturing nursery school experience for families from our surrounding communities. Over the past 50 years this outreach ministry has certainly done that and has grown significantly, earning a reputation along the way for being one of the top nursery schools in our area. The expanded and upgraded nursery school facilities, which we opened last year, truly reflect the commitment and investment of our parish community to this vital outreach ministry.

One of my favorite services each fall is our Annual Blessing of the Animals which I personally organize to aid the work of PAWS in Montclair. For those of us who are pet owners and lovers this service is always a very moving and spiritual one. The unconditional love we give and receive from our pets draws us more deeply into the larger circle of life with our Creator. This year's service was no different with many folks providing food and monetary donations to aid their important work in our community.



Blessing of the Animals

German, Hebrew, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Braille. It is a symbol used around the world to serve as a constant reminder for us to pray for peace. The second event, for me, was the sermon given by Christian Paolino, an LGBT activist during Gay Pride month this past June. He has served with both Oasis (our diocesan LGBT ministry) and Integrity, its church-wide equivalent. Having Christian preach during Pride Month reinforced for me what I already knew: when Christ Church says "all are welcome" they really mean it. This is why I am so happy to call this place my church home. People need to feel welcome wherever they are and should never have to worry about people judging them for their religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, or culture. We are all God's children and we need to remember God loves us all no matter what.

Lastly, I would like to take a moment to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as one of your wardens, along with my fellow warden, Ms. Denise Massay Williams.

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

Our parish community here at Christ Church has always been at the forefront of promoting social justice, equality, and peace under the fearless leadership of Mother Diana. To that end, our church community is extremely welcoming regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, culture, or religious belief.

Two important events this past year clearly demonstrated that we are a diverse and welcoming community at Christ Church. The first was the installation of our Peace Pole in the front courtyard of the church. It displays the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" which is written in different languages. Our Peace Pole includes the languages: English, Arabic, Creole,



“The Holy Boy”

by Bill Davies, Director of Music



Among the many works the choir will sing in this season is the beautiful short piece “The Holy Boy” by the English composer John Ireland. It is one of those works that is deceptive in its apparent simplicity, like its author.

Ireland’s music is often described as “English impressionism,” linking it to such French composers as Debussy, Fauré and Ravel. The term “impressionism” is in turn borrowed from the world of painting, in which you would recognize its practitioners for their “blurred” canvases, and sometimes heavy application of paint, providing an “impression” of a scene, rather than a careful recreation. So too, in music. Impressionist composers preferred short pieces – songs, brief piano works – to massive forms like symphonies. As in “The Holy Boy,” the works often suggest simplicity with a lovely melodic line. The impressionist composers, though, had their own version of blurred canvases. They loved to play with new harmonies, to dabble in ambiguous tonalities and to write long, complicated harmonic progressions under the melodic lines. As you listen to “The Holy Boy,” be aware of what’s going on



under the melody, which the sopranos sing at all times. The other three voices (alto, tenor and bass) are doing more than you think.

John Ireland could be said to mirror his music, though



John Ireland

the reality is probably the other way around. He was born to a very old father (aged 70 at Ireland’s birth), and both his parents were dead by the time he reached the age of 15. Many writers suggest that Ireland’s haunting melodies reflect his rather sad childhood, which seems to have haunted him much of his life. His personal adult life was also rather fraught. He married once, divorcing soon after, and was described in contemporary biographies as a “life-long bachelor.” Yet, Ireland found considerable public success in his lifetime. He exploded onto the music scene in 1917, when one of his violin concertos won a competition, and from then on he moved among the most important English musical figures of his time and taught at the Royal College of Church Music where one of his students was Benjamin Britten. The Ireland known to the public was something of a rock star, yet much lay underneath.

Nursery School News

by Jean Bannon, Nursery School Director



Such a busy time of year here at the Nursery School of Christ Church! In October, we did our Ashley Fundraiser, which helped us be able to replace some badly needed equipment in our gym. Picture day went as expected...a little crazy but with good results.

We had a nice turnout for our annual Halloween Show and Parade. Toddlers through Kindergarten classes sang songs and recited Halloween poems. The costumes were wonderful, and parents, families and friends thoroughly enjoyed the parade.

The Thursday before Thanksgiving, we had our delicious Annual Thanksgiving Feast with turkey and all the trimmings. We have a full traditional menu (turkey, potatoes, corn, stuffing, rolls, etc..), plus a delicious assortment of desserts. The staff and children prepare, cook, and serve this feast and we ALL (infants included) sit down to share in this special occasion. It was truly amazing and a lot of fun! This year we had quite a few parent volunteers, which made the whole event run smoothly.... Everything was so delicious! We also had a great collection for the food drive this year.



The children taking Dance and Yoga classes had their recital on Wednesday, December 13 and our soccer classes ended a few weeks ago, earning their medals for a job well done!

Staff and children began decorating and practicing right after Thanksgiving for our annual Holiday Show which was on Friday, December 15th in the Parish Hall. Once again, we had a special visitor who surprised the kids with a HOHOHO down the aisle and handed out presents to all of the children. We had our Staff Appreciation Dinner at Fitzgerald's on that Friday evening, as well. This is always a well-deserved, well appreciated dinner, and a relaxing time for us to sit back and enjoy the evening as friends.

Happy Holidays to all!

Children and Youth

by Candice Whitaker, Director of Family Ministries



The season of Advent is my very favorite, but really, every season working with kids and youth is pretty fantastic. I am truly grateful for the kids (and the parents who bring them!) who make it to church, and the young people who come to youth group. We have an amazing group of kids here at Christ Church and it is a blessing to work with them.

Sunday School is offered every Sunday morning during the 10:30am service. We follow the Whirl Classroom Curriculum, which covers the stories of the Bible. Because our ages are so varied, we have had to be very flexible with the lesson plans and adjust them accordingly. However, this curriculum does provide lessons for ages Pre-K/ K, 1st/2nd Grade, 3rd/4th Grade, and 5th/6th Grade. The goal is to be able to offer multiple classrooms each week. We have the space; we just need more volunteers and regular attendance. I am very hopeful that we will get there in the next few years. We have a lot of little ones right now, which means we are already in the perfect position to keep growing!



We have a great space for the youth to meet (the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, unless otherwise noted). Thanks to a very generous donation by Charles and Ann Nicol, we now have a huge 60 inch TV in the youth room. We just added a ping-pong table, and it is so nice having a space completely dedicated for our youth to make it their own.

Our children and youth have been working on a “Kindness Rocks” project. This is a nation-wide project, and although not a new concept, a really fun thing to be a part of and contribute to. It has taken a little longer than expected, but when they are done, they are going to be awesome! The idea is to paint rocks with inspiring messages on them, and leave them around the community. When people see them, they can pick them up and leave them in a new place, or leave them for the next person. Who doesn’t like finding a little note of encouragement? It is an easy and fun way to spread the love. Keep an eye out for our rocks soon- I’ve been so impressed with the creativity and positive messages they have come up with, and the ones that are finished look amazing!



In November, the youth group did an Escape Room in Montclair. If you haven't done one of these, you should! It is a great community-building activity for any group! These "escape rooms" are all over; the rooms have different themes and you have one hour to "escape" by solving puzzles, riddles, and finding clues that lead you closer to the goal. It was really fun watching our youth work as a team, and yes, we did escape (with literally seconds to spare!).



Our Christmas pageant was last Sunday, December 17th. We had a new script this year, so it was fun to switch things up a little. The biggest thank you to Danielle Treuberg, who brought so much energy, creativity, and talent in directing this pageant. We had so



much fun working and collaborating with the kids to make the pageant something they had a voice in. The "shepherds" and "angels" of today are the firefighters, doctors, teachers, etc. They are the people who watch over us in our daily lives and help keep us safe. We kept the costumes very minimalistic and modern to express that although the story about the birth of Jesus happened a long time ago, it is a story we keep telling today because sharing the good news is still relevant, and these people were just like us. I'm so proud of all the kids and our youth who stepped up to play these roles. They did a fantastic job and I hope you all enjoyed it, too!

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, we had forums on Women at the Well (Bible-type scenes), The Gospel of Matthew, The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, and the 7 Week Advent. Mother Diana also did an Instructed Eucharist, which covered what we do in church, why we do it, and so much more. The Instructed Eucharist booklet handed out that morning are available to take home (ask an usher for a copy). Coming up this Spring will be forums on: The Gospel of Mark (because we are in Year B, where we hear from this gospel), and other topics.

There is also a Men's Group, a Book Club, Labyrinth Walk & Compline services on Wednesdays, Evening Prayer on Thursdays, and of course, the popular Theology on Tap. We will be launching other groups in the Spring, so check it all out.

Office and Communications

by Candice Whitaker, Director of Communications

As you may know, I wear many “hats” at Christ Church, as both the Director of Family Ministries and the Director of Communications. There is always room to grow in each ministry, so it definitely keeps my job busy and exciting! I also feel like I’ve gotten to connect with more people and parishioners and work with you all in ways I didn’t get to before. I’ve really enjoyed it!

The Parish Office is responsible for all communications and the management of the facilities. It is also (typically) the first point of contact for vendors, visitors, and others looking to know more about the church.

We have continued to work to ensure that all the good things happening in and out of Christ Church are well-known in our surrounding communities. We have ongoing Facebook and newspaper ads, had sign displays on Bloomfield Avenue near the

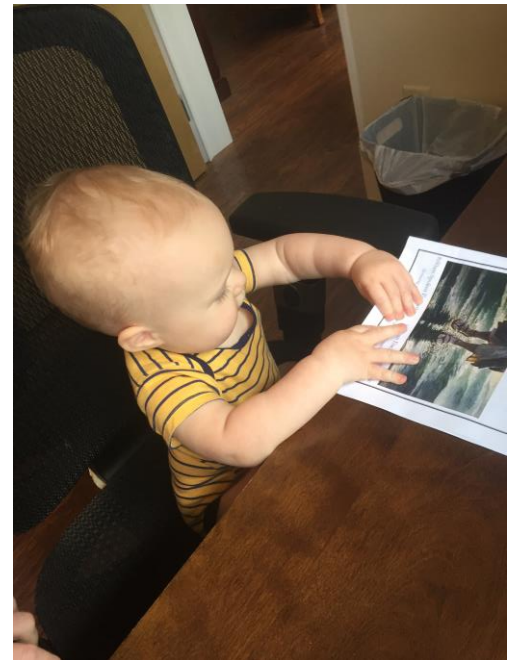
Glen Ridge train station, and brightly colored banners alongside the church on Bloomfield Avenue that are regularly updated. Press releases are always sent out to local media for our events, and our big events are also submitted and posted on the Diocesan calendar and events page.

We have recently started sending out weekly emails to help you stay better connected. Most of this information is also (usually) in the Sunday Paper, which we provide as an insert with the bulletin each week. However, I don’t want you to miss out on any of the information so this is just one more way to have the latest news! If you have not been getting the emails, please let me know and I will add you to our mailing list so you receive the next one!

Creating a photo directory has been an ongoing project. We now have an updated directory, which was long over-due. I am putting together the photos I have received and will be providing this photo directory at the annual meeting (January 21st). Last chance to send in your photos! There is also a link in the weekly email where you can update your information and upload a photo, which then comes directly to me. Thank you to those who have utilized it!

We also offer a text service to provide you with last-minute updates, closings, news, events, etc. If you haven’t done so, text **CHRISTCHURCH** to **313131** to receive these messages.

As always, we produce the bulletins and Sunday Papers for every worship service, all of which are loaded online each week, as is the quarterly newsletter. There are plenty of ways to stay connected at Christ Church; don’t miss out!



Our office helper, Emerson

Outreach



In the past few months, Christ Church has been busy doing the work of Christ in the world. In October, our vestry approved a matching grant for Hurricane Relief after so many places were struck by these natural disasters. The response to this was incredible- not just by our parishioners, but from our community and the surrounding churches that also wanted to contribute. In total, we were able to raise \$12,000 for the Episcopal Disaster Relief.

Throughout the month of November, parishioners of Christ Church and every classroom of our Nursery School collected loads of groceries to be donated to the Presbyterian Church on the Green Food Pantry. They were brought forward to be blessed at the altar the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Over the past three years, we have developed a strong partnership with them in their ministry to feed the hungry. We are always amazed by the generosity of our Church community and the amount of food we collect for the pantry! Thank you to Kevin Treuberg, who organized the pick-up this year!

Our Annual Giving Tree went up in the Parish Hall on the first Sunday of December with tags (made by our children) that listed items needed at North Porch. North Porch is a ministry in our diocese that supports women and children in need. Our congregation, as well as our Nursery School, responded as they do every year- with exceeding generosity and enthusiasm. What better ministry to support in Advent when we await the birth of Jesus, born in humble means to Mary. Thank you to everyone who was able to contribute, and thank you to Kevin Treuberg, Cheryl Restaino, and Christopher Dwyer for volunteering your time to coordinate with North Porch and getting these items delivered to them.

On December 3, the choir organized a caroling afternoon for the seniors at South End Gardens in Montclair, where some of our own parishioners live. We always have such a great turnout and it brings so much joy to everyone!

We also started a Winter Coat collection. As the weather begins to get colder, we especially notice our local friends and neighbors who are in need of coats to keep them warm throughout the winter. We have been collecting new or gently used coats so we are able to provide some warmth to those in need. The winter chill is just beginning, so we continue to welcome donations! We have a box located at the back of the church to put your donated coats in. All sizes are appreciated!

Stay tuned for more, as our Outreach Group continues to keep us focused on our mission. If you would like to help and get involved with our Outreach Ministries, please contact Mother Diana.



A Few Recent Highlights

Caroling at South End Gardens in Montclair, our beautiful Lessons and Carols, Baptism, and Fools Mass by Dzieci Theater





Our Nursery School Dance, Yoga, and Holiday Shows, and our Parish Christmas Party after Lessons and Carols





Greening of the Church on December 16, getting ready for the Pageant, and scenes from our Pageant on December 17.



Mother Diana talking to our Nursery School children about the church at Christmastime, our Joyful Noise service with the Nursery School on Wednesdays, and Lexi the Church Dog.



Upcoming Events and Services



Come celebrate the arrival of the Kings to pay honor to Jesus at our Epiphany service **on January 7th**.

On Sunday, **January 21st** after the 10:30am service (there will be no 8am service that day) we will be holding our Annual Meeting of the Parish.

We begin the Lenten Season with **Ash Wednesday on February 14th**. That means **Shrove Tuesday is February 13th**- it comes up very quickly this year so mark your calendars!



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

The website:

<http://christchurhepiscopal.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@christchurhepiscopal.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.

**Christ Church
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