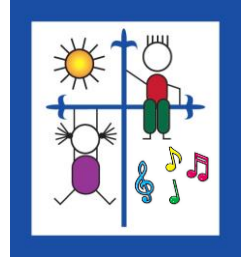




CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE



Growing in faith ~ Serving our neighbors ~ Creating community

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014

From The Rector

I can hardly believe it was just nine months ago that I began to serve as your Rector. And what a nine months it has been! We have given birth to so many new programs & ministries, all while growing in faith and in size, and caring for our buildings. There is so much to tell about all of this, and there is more detail in this newsletter – so be sure to read on.

In the months ahead, we will continue to explore new ways of encountering Christ in our lives and in the world. These have been difficult times for all of us globally, and for many, on a deeply personal level. The news across the world, and across our neighborhoods, have been filled with violence, hatred, and bigotry. And there are members of our own congregation, and those known to us privately, suffering from the loss of loved ones, sickness, and hardship. It can sometimes leave us feeling lost and in despair.

Yet, as part of the body of Christ, we are given something priceless – a vision of how the world can be. Our community of faith is the place where we are given strength for the journey in the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ – not for ourselves alone, but to bring the good news of God's love to a hungry and dark world. I believe that the growth of Christ Church – the renewal and restoration we have been experiencing as a community – is a symbol of that core part of who we are as followers of Jesus. A symbol of the power of resurrection.

As exciting as all of this is, there is something more. I want you to be part of it – to experience both believing and being. Want to know more?

See you in church!

Rev. Diana+



“Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.”

St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians

1:27

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE

The Reverend Diana Wilcox, Rector
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Warden's Words by William Seeman

Welcome Back EVERYONE!

It is my privilege to write to you at a very special time in the life of Christ Episcopal Church.

Eight months ago with the arrival of Rev. Diana, we began a new journey together, a journey of renewal that remains in its early days. And yet, we have already achieved a great deal. New programs such as Joyful Noise, Worship Without Walls, Labyrinth Walks and Theology on Tap have injected new life and excitement into our parish and we have experienced measureable growth in attendance for the first time in many years.

Our physical plant is also being renewed with the refurbishment of the sanctuary floors the most prominent example so far. I say so far because we are just beginning, as you will see in coming months.



What Exactly Is A Warden Anyway?

The canons of the Episcopal Church say very little about wardens other than their responsibility to ensure that worship services are continued in the absence or disability of the rector or parish priest. The term itself dates back to seventeenth century England because of the individual's responsibility to unlock the church doors for worship and other events. The distinction between "senior" and "junior" warden or "rector's warden" and "people's warden" depends on the diocese, the parish and even geographical or regional customs and practice.

An open and trusting relationship

Putting canons and customs aside, the primary role of the warden is to serve as the lay partner of the rector or priest-in-charge in articulating the mission and vision of the parish, managing its day-to-day operations, identifying and nurturing leaders, and empowering members of the congregation to live out the Gospel in their daily lives. The role requires an open, honest and trusting relationship between warden and rector — and it is virtually impossible to fulfill if these key elements are missing or impaired. Elections of Wardens occur at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Our Wardens

We are blessed to have two fabulous Warden's, Bill Seeman and David Drislane. Many others have served in this role, and it may be one that you will find yourself called to at some time in the future.

As we continue together, consider and remember that you, our members are ultimately responsible for all that we achieve. The Episcopal Church is a democratic organization and the members elect the Rector, Wardens and Vestry. Membership, therefore entails a special responsibility.

During the coming months, we will all have the opportunity to renew or establish our individual commitment to the special responsibility we have as members of Christ Episcopal Church and it will be our choice to actively participate in the move forward that the church is making in this time of renewal. We are blessed with unique diversity, great people and gifted leadership; a combination that offers the opportunity to serve God, our communities and each other in a unique and meaningful way. Given our current momentum, there is little reason to doubt success.

In closing, may God bless all of you and all you do in God's name.

Music Notes by Bill Davies

Many years ago, when I lived in Washington, DC, I got a phone call from a local Christian Science Church wondering if I would like to be their organist. In the course of the conversation, the caller explained that I wouldn't have to worry about picking hymns, because they were chosen every week for all churches at the offices of the Mother Church in Boston! (The sermon is also sent out from Boston, apparently.) I didn't know that Christian Scientists exercised that level of centralized control, and I didn't take the job. But the experience does suggest one end of the spectrum concerning how hymns are chosen. Now that I live in Maplewood, I tend to drive past three churches very frequently: St. George's Episcopal, Morrow Memorial



Methodist and Wyoming Presbyterian. Since the latter two belong to that tradition in which sermon titles and special services are posted in front of the church, I know that many Sundays at Morrow and Wyoming are thematic, rather than liturgical: "Youth Sunday" or "Outreach Sunday" or "Take Your Granny to Lunch Sunday" (not really!) seem quite frequently to supersede what, down the street at St. George's, would be The Third Sunday after Pentecost or even a Sunday of Advent. While the Presbyterian and Methodist churches now follow the same lectionary (the source of readings for a given week) as most main line Protestant churches - one which is, in fact, largely the same as the Roman Catholic lectionary - those traditions tend toward the other end of the spectrum and feel quite free to interrupt or ignore the liturgical calendar.

So essentially, the distinction among the other denominations is basically between what are called "liturgical" and "non-liturgical" traditions. The Episcopal Church, like the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and some other churches, falls into the "liturgical" category. Which camp your church is in will determine, to a large extent, how the music is chosen for any particular Sunday. If someone is picking hymns in a liturgical tradition, one is attempting to pick those hymns that reinforce and comment upon the readings appointed for the day, most often the Gospel. There's still a considerable amount of choice within those constraints, though. Consider that The 1982 Hymnal, used by the Episcopal Church (liturgical) alone contains over 700 hymns. If you add to that number the additional hymns in LEVAS and Wonder Love and Praise, you will have about a thousand hymns from which to choose. Of course, some are immediately unavailable for a given Sunday. We wouldn't sing "Jesus Christ is Ris'n Today" in Lent or "Joy to the World" in Advent. They obviously make no sense. Still, one is left with considerable choice. What follows are some thoughts on how I narrow the choice.

First, we should start by admitting that all hymnals contain bad hymns. That's partly because hymnals are assembled by committees, a necessary method of making a hymnal, but one that inevitably results in lots of horse-trading among committee members. (And you'll notice that hymnals tend to contain numerous hymns written by committee members. Surprise!) Hymnals also reflect the historical moment in which they were written, so hymns that seemed perfectly reasonable at one point may seem very dated, or even offensive, at a later date. (Would we sing a mission hymn that made reference to "lesser breeds without the law" in 2014? I hope not! Take a look through the "Missions" section of The 1940 Hymnal and cringe. And this was a deservedly beloved hymnal.) So, let's be generous and imagine that 90 per cent of the hymns are actually "good." How to decide among from among those hymns which to choose? I tend to rely on three categories: pastoral, musical and theological. Here's how they work.

(continued on page 11)

Christ Church Children



Nursery School News

Our Nursery School is beginning a new program year too, just like the church, and there is, as has been the case for sometime, a waiting list to get in! We serve over 100 children here with a top notch staff. This past May, we said goodbye to our graduating class, who are now entering the first grade! We have watched these children grow, most of them from the time they were only a few months old.

On September 16th, we hosted parents for a meet and greet with their teachers. Rev. Diana spoke to the parents about the church's commitment to this important ministry, while the Director of the Nursery

School, Jean Bannon, gave everyone an update on all the programming planned for the year ahead. The parents were able to see the artwork their child made, all hanging in the Parish Hall. It was a wonderfully colorful and joyful evening.

KidZone & Joyful Noise!

This past year we added the KidZone at the back of our church. This space is designed to allow children and their families to worship together, but in space that is welcoming and engaging for little ones. There is a play mat, the maze (labyrinth to adults), books, crayons, and bulletins made just for them. Also in the KidZone is a rocker with handmade baby blankets, for parents who need to provide a peaceful moment for their infants. We recently hired two of our nursery school staff for our infant care on Sundays as well. Why do we do all of this? Because we want everyone to know that children are not only welcome here, they can teach us so much about what it means to sing a joyful noise. Speaking of that, our Joyful Noise! service is for those under 7 and their parents. It is interactive and energetic. Check it out on Sundays at 9:15am.



Sunday School is now in full swing, and we look forward to a whole new program for children up through the 5th grade. For 6th-12th, we are looking to engage them in the full worship experience, serving as acolytes or in a youth choir. Stay tuned for more information on the many ways children can grow in their faith in a safe and sacred space just for them.



Youth Group News

Our High School Youth Group is at it again...planning outreach efforts, growing in their faith, and having fun. They meet on the first and third Sundays from 6-8pm. Youth Group provides an opportunity for teens to talk about their lives and their faith journey in a safe and sacred space. Our Youth Group last year also raised over \$1,300 to help those with neuromuscular diseases, and served in numerous roles in worship as acolyte, lector, and crucifer. This year, we will also be looking at the possibility of going on a mission trip next summer. All High School age youth are welcome!

Sharing the Good News

We are called to share the good news of Christ, but we also have some good news to share about Christ Church – this Christ Church as a matter of fact. Check it out!

Since the beginning of this year, we have restored our buildings, grown our numbers, and expanded our outreach. In the last nine months we have:

- ❖ Increased our average Sunday attendance by more than 13%
- ❖ Restored our worship space, fixing and refinishing the wood and cleaning the terrazzo, while making the labyrinth a permanent and beautiful addition to our nave (which, in itself, has attracted many to our church)
- ❖ Added worship experiences, including: Last Chance Mass/Worship Without Walls, Joyful Noise!, Stations of the Cross in Community, Labyrinth Walk & Compline
- ❖ We continued in our outreach, including: The Nursery School, Ashes 2 Go, SpiritWalk, and so much more
- ❖ Transformed the choir room into a multi-purpose space that respects the past, but is not grounded there. The new space will be rededicated as the Coursen Room on October 12th (Choir Appreciation Sunday)
- ❖ Created a KidZone to make it easier for families with young children to come to worship, staffed up our child care facilities, and added an Easter Egg hunt (look for a Christmas Pageant this year and Vacation Bible School next summer)
- ❖ We launched a new website (over 10,000 hits), new Facebook page (158 followers), new quarterly newsletter, and new weekly Sunday Paper
- ❖ We have hired new staff, and hope to add a Director of Family Ministries soon
- ❖ Adult Formation is now regularly offered
- ❖ The old dirty plexiglass is being removed from all the stained glass, allowing light to flow in, and changing the outside look from a church that is boarded up to a church that is most definitely open and beautiful
- ❖ Additional social opportunities are being provided, including a new Second Saturday Stitches group that makes scarves, hats, etc. for those in need
- ❖ We are now hosting diocesan events including Christophany and Diocesan Council meetings



What does all this mean? We are growing to serve and serving to grow.

Christ Church in just nine short months has grown by leaps and bounds, and in the next year, we will experience even more. Over the next few weeks, you will hear more about how you can become an important part of this exciting time in our church life.

Don't miss out on your opportunity to be a part of it!

At A Glance...



"Yours was the first church service in the last five years where I truly felt touched by the hand of God..." A note to Rev. Diana from a newcomer. Used with permission.



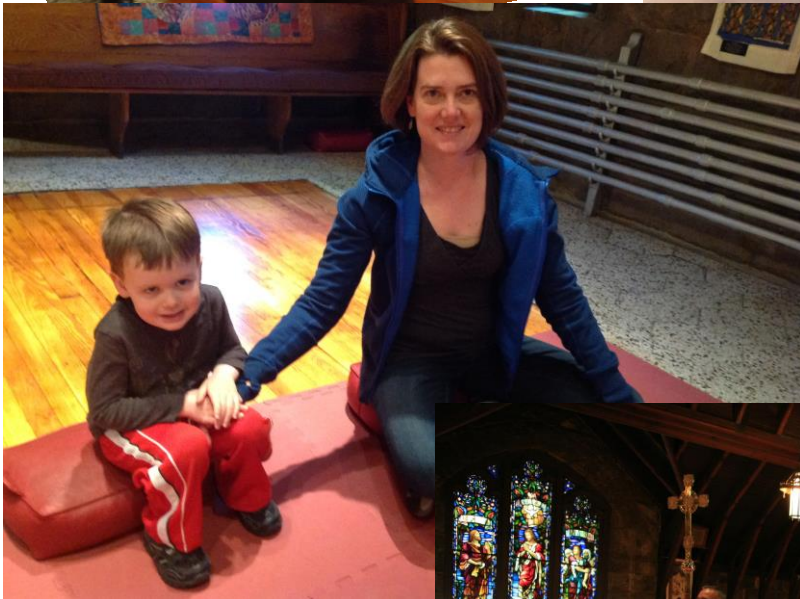
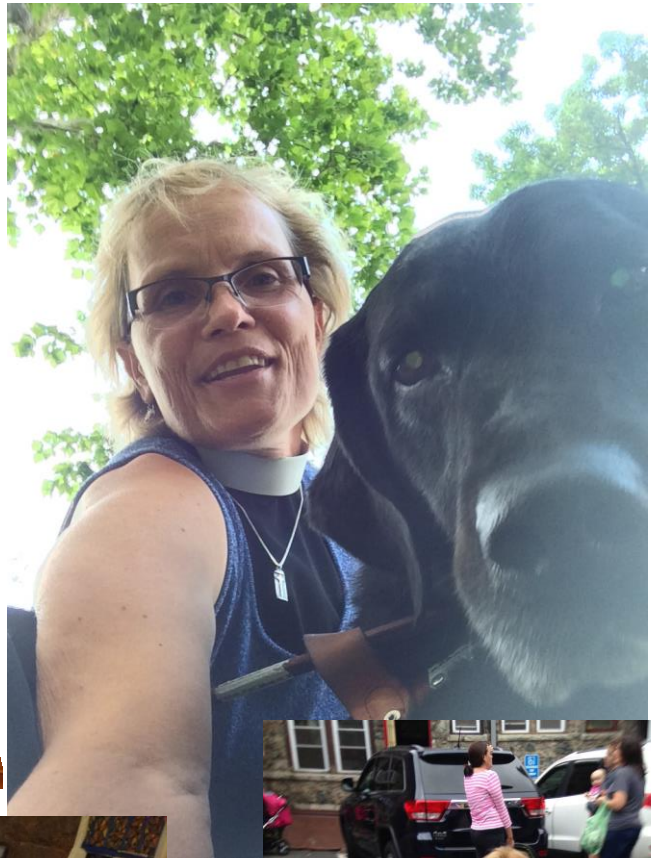
"You have renewed my spirits for Christ Church, but more than that, the people of this great brick and mortar facility are renewed." A note to Rev. Diana from a former parishioner. Used with permission.





"I have found my spiritual home. My first service here I cried. Thank you!" A note to Rev. Diana from a former parishioner. Used with permission.





"The church is so beautiful! Oh my gosh!"

Heard during Compline shouted by a passerby outside.

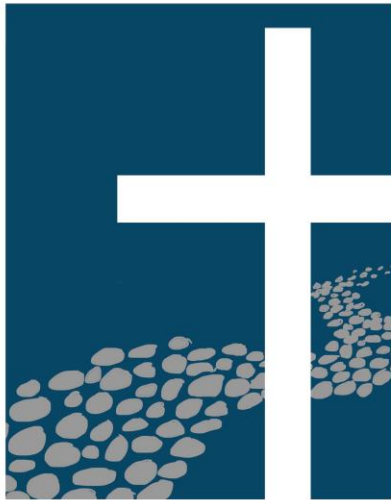
So...do you want to be a part of this renewal, this rebirth, this Christ Church?

"This is NOT your grandfather's Stewardship Campaign."

In the next few weeks, we will be Walking the Way – offering everyone an opportunity to be part of the new life that is brewing here in the name of Christ.

This is NOT your grandfather's Stewardship Campaign.

Each week you will be given something – something to take home – something that will provide a cornerstone for spiritual enrichment.



**Walking
the Way**

Our goal – 100% participation.

Everyone has something they can contribute – time and treasure – even if only a dollar a week, or an hour a month. We want you to feel ownership in what all the incredible new life happening here at Christ Church, because we know just how incredibly transforming it can be when you feel that you were a part of making something wonderful happen in the name of Christ.

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live... grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 134)

Adult Formation Programs Begin

We begin our Adult Forums, which happen several times throughout the church year, with a wonderful selection of topics this Fall. All Adult Forums are on Sundays, and go from about 12pm-1pm in the Coursen Room, so stop by coffeeshour for a bit, and then come over to engage with others on topics that interest you. See the schedule below:



Sept. 28th, Oct. 5th, & Oct. 12th: What does the bible really say about homosexuality?

Oct. 26th: Saints and Spooks: A primer for All Hallow's Eve and All Saints Day

Nov. 9th, Nov. 16th: Episcopal 101

Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, & Dec. 14th: Advent: Mary's, Ours, & the Church's

Music Notes, cont.

Pastoral: There are two related questions to be asked here. 1. Does the congregation know the hymn? 2. If not, is it a hymn worth introducing? There was a time when the first was easy to answer. More recently, however, it is increasingly unlikely that a congregation is so stable that one can assume common knowledge of



a body of hymns. What is loved in one Episcopal Church may be unknown in another, and of course people move among denominations as well as within them. So, I tend to modify the first question to wonder, "Do at least some people know the hymn?" There is admittedly guess work involved. The second question recognizes the fact that every hymn was new at some point. (Check the composition dates on some of your favorites.) This question also begs the question "What is meant by 'worth introducing?'" and that brings us to the other two categories.

Theological: The text of a hymn should express a theology we want to express and also one that is appropriate to the particular readings in question. In thinking about the first part of that

statement, you might consider "Onward Christian Soldiers." This hymn was once one of the most popular hymns in America. Today, though, it strikes many as entirely too martial. Do we want to imagine ourselves as metaphorical soldiers "marching as to war," especially in a world context which is already fraught with actual wars which have their bases in religion? The hymn is still in the hymnal (the committee!), but I, for one, would hesitate before using it.

More significant still is the theology suggested by the readings. Hymns tend to function as a kind of subliminal sermon, and they should reflect, as far as the available texts allow, the thrust of the Sunday's theological point. Presumably, a preacher would not preach about Lazarus if the gospel for the day related the story of the Wise Virgins. Hymn-choice should be similarly careful, since the sum of a liturgical experience should be greater than its parts. It isn't that one needs to be blinded by the insight and relevance of a particular text (thought that's nice); rather one should have a sense of cohesiveness resulting from the entire service.

Musical: It's not a very democratic sentiment, but it's simply true that some music is better than other music. That doesn't mean that some genres are better than others, it just means that even Beethoven wrote some clunkers. What makes a hymn musically interesting? Mostly, it's melody and harmony. While rhythm is interesting, it needs to be fairly regular in a hymn, lest it cause immense confusion. As with many things, a well-composed hymn achieves a balance. It's simple enough to be singable, but not so simple that it's boring. One of the reasons that Welsh hymn tunes, for instance, tend to be so popular is that they almost always achieve this balance by presenting melodies that are actually fairly complex, but which are repeated. Lots of bang for your complexity buck.

It's lovely when all three of these factors align, but that is often not possible. One often has to be satisfied with two out of three. I hope I've at least given you a sense of what one thinks about in choosing hymns, and also a way to think about *why* you may like or dislike your personal favorites and least-favorites. I began by suggesting a wide spectrum in the context within which hymns are chosen, from the tightly controlled Christian Science version to the "sing what you want" world of non-liturgical traditions. As in many things, the Episcopal Church finds itself between the extremes. In this case, I'd say the constraints under which hymn choice should happen in our tradition are wonderfully positive ones: the liturgical year, scripture, musical and textual excellence, and pastoral sense.



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 will be published four 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
74 Park Avenue
Glen Ridge, NJ 07028**

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!

