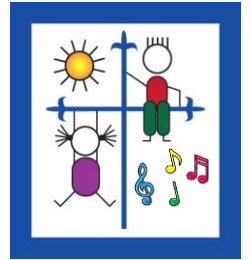




CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE



Growing in faith ~ Serving our neighbors ~ Creating community

OUR NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2016

From The Rector

One of the joys of Christmas is being a part of a loving parish family – and we have that here at Christ Church to be sure. As we celebrate this most Holy Night, we are given new life in the light of Christ that is born in us again, and we are blessed to share that with one another, tonight, and every time we gather here.

While for some there have been great joys this past year, 2016 has been for many people a dark and difficult year. The hate and fear post-election, the violence in our streets and around the world, and personal tragedies some have experienced, are a reminder that our work as bearers of Christ's light is far from over. In a world in distress, we are not a people without hope. We know, through our Savior Jesus Christ, that life is stronger than death, and no darkness can ever overcome the light of God in Christ! And so, we are given a gift at Christmas, one that we are asked to share beyond our doors. We need to take that light of Christ out into a world still filled with "people who walk in great darkness." And we need to invite them in too – into the church, and into our hearts. When we do, no one is ever the same – not us, nor those we meet.

In this Christmastide, may we be reminded that Christ came into the world as a humble and poor child, and He calls us all to recognize that our salvation lies not in tangible riches, but in spiritual ones. It is the humble, the meek, the lowly, the oppressed, the forgotten, and the lonely that are closest to God's heart. May we also remember Mary, the God bearer, the one who was chosen, the one who said "Yes" to God's call. God calls each of us to say "Yes" too. To give birth to Jesus in our lives, by proclaiming good news to the poor, in our love and service. Christ does not ask us to judge one another, but to welcome all, and love all, as he loved us. That is how we proclaim the Gospel – the good news that is born to us at Christmas.

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 Bill Seeman

As I complete my last year as Warden, it is natural to reflect on the past four years and the progress we have made at Christ Church.

Many of you will recall that the future of the church seemed to be in doubt as we began 2013. Our financial position appeared to be tenuous as we became increasingly dependent on endowment funds to support church operations, and it was estimated that we would not be able to sustain our level of draw against those funds beyond the middle of 2015. The way forward seemed to involve continuous cost cutting and downsizing to keep the church open in the face of declining revenue. It was suggested that we would not be able to afford our beautiful and beloved sanctuary for much longer.



Fortunately, the new Rector, the Wardens and the Vestries of 2014-2016 found the downsizing alternative unacceptable and, with your consent, embarked on a new course. The plan featured a synergistic approach that combined the strengths of the church and the nursery school to ensure our future in a sound financial environment. You have all seen the results of the plan, but as a reminder:

- We have survived and flourished well beyond the middle of 2015.
- We have developed a first-rate music program.
- We have refurbished and beautified the church buildings.
- We have grown the congregation.
- We have expanded the nursery school to generate necessary revenue for the entire organization.
- We have rebuilt our Sunday School.
- We have become a positive force in our communities.

These accomplishments have been achieved through the tireless work of not only the Rector, Wardens,



Vestry and Treasurer, but also through the talented staff that has been put in place in the music, nursery school, finance and youth leadership positions. Our excellent lay leadership and staff position us well to continue a high level of achievement for the foreseeable future. And of course, the support and involvement of each and every one of you, through your ministry, pledges, and time, made all of this possible.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve you, the people of Christ Church. Thank you for the opportunity!

Editor's Note: We are grateful for your service as Warden, Bill. Your leadership, in partnership with David, has brought us into a new and brighter future. We are so grateful.

Music Notes by Bill Davies, Director of Music

Winter Is Icumen In

There is a famous medieval round – “famous” to music nerds, anyway – that begins “Sumer is icumen in/ lhode sing cucu!” Which means: “Summer has arrived/ Sing loudly, cuckoo!” Inevitably, the discovery of this song led a twentieth century wag (Ezra Pound, in fact) to pen a parody. It begins, “Winter is icumen in/ ludhe sing goddamn!” Yes indeed, winter is here, with its snow, slush, cold, and other unpleasant stuff. Not only that, but the zippy music of Christmas will soon be past until next year. But wait! There’s some really good music coming up during the winter here at Christ Church, and it may well help you get through the gray days of winter until the cuckoo sings again. Here’s preview.

“These Are They Which Follow the Lamb,” John Goss: An English composer of the late 19th century, Goss is probably best known as the composer of the hymn “Praise my soul the king of heaven.” He was director of music at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, having assumed the position at a time when musical standards at that important church were quite low. He struggled to improve them, and many of his compositions emerged from that

struggle. This anthem is a beautifully simple setting of a text from the Book of Revelation. “Simple” in the sense that there aren’t too many acrobatic choral moves, but the harmony requires immense precision and a sense of musical line. The effect is stunning.

“The Beatitudes,” traditional Russian chant, arranged by Richard Proulx. Proulx was an important twentieth century American church musician (He died in 2010), who had a broad influence, having edited hymnals in use in the Methodist, Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches. Here, he has brought the wonderful Russian Orthodox tradition of rich chant

singing into the modern western canon. There is, however, a long history of theological and liturgical dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church, so Proulx’s foray is only a recent example of a rich tradition. The text is from the Gospel of Matthew.

“Blest Are the Pure in Heart,” H. Walford Davies. This is a setting of the familiar text by John Keble, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement. The music is a little gem, just two pages long, of lush, and sometimes unexpected, harmony. The composer, though not terribly well known to Americans, was something of a public personality in England because he served as the music advisor to the nascent BBC, and provided on-air explanations of musical selections from the 1920s into the early years of World War II. He served also as Master of the King’s Music.

And there’s more, including some perennial favorites such as John Stainer’s “God So Loved the World,” and Samuel Wesley’s “Lead Me, Lord.” So, don’t hide from the winter and rough weather. Come to church and be warmed by the sounds of great choral music.



Nursery School News by Jean Bannon, Director



We have been so busy here at the Nursery School of Christ Church!



Our annual Holiday Show was another huge success! It was held Friday, December 16th in the Parish Hall, with all of the children smiling and singing. The children were surprised when Santa came in ringing his bells and having gifts for everyone. Friends and relatives joined in singing Feliz Navidad, wishing all a Merry Christmas.

Our Dance and Yoga programs had their end of the session recital on Wednesday, December 14th. All of the ballet, tap, peanuts group, and yoga classes performed in front of their friends and family.

The Staff enjoyed a holiday party on Friday, December 16th at Fitzgerald's. The food was fantastic, the ambiance was warm and inviting, and we all loved relaxing by the fireplace. It was a perfect way to end our day!

We are really enjoying all of our new spaces that

were the result of the Infrastructure Project, and the ability to expand our classes to meet the demand. In fact, we are scheduled to have four new infants, and twin toddler boys, join us in January! It is so nice to welcome new members to our school family! None of that would have been possible without the Infrastructure Project.



The pictures are (from top to bottom): The Halloween Parade, Graduation, the staff putting together the new furniture, the old bookcases painted by the parents. Merry Christmas to you and yours!

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

Advent is my very favorite time of the year! I'm so happy to be back from maternity leave just in time for all the fun and festivities the season brings. We had our Christmas pageant last Sunday on December 18th, and infinite 'thank-yous' to Danielle Treuberg for stepping in for me and helping with the pageant this year. While it was a busy and tricky weekend with the snow/ice storm, and so many of our kids being away, it still turned out to be so much fun! It was nice having the congregation participate and be involved in the telling of the birth of Jesus. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to play a role in our pageant; you all did a great job!



Our "Giving Tree" has been a success yet again, and so many children and families are blessed by the generosity of people who have contributed. Thank you to the youth group for creating the beautiful ornament tags, to the Sunday



School children who helped, and especially to Yvette, Rhonda, Dan, and Danielle, who helped organize and coordinate the making and completing of the tags. This is such an important ministry and I'm so happy to be a part of it!

I also want to thank everyone who helped with Sunday School while I was away: Bonnie, Nadine, Kelly, Danielle, Pat, Christina, and Syndie. I am so grateful for the time away that I got to spend with my sweet baby Emerson, and I couldn't have done it without all of your help! I appreciate the dedication, flexibility, and support from all of you. It feels good to be back, and I hope we can continue to have Sunday School

helpers as this program grows!



This summer, there was a reunion of former Sunday School teachers and children (now adults). So much fun. Thank you Clara and Josie for organizing it! It is a reminder of just how important church is to children and youth.

There are so many thanks to give this year; it has truly been a season of giving!

Youth News

Last Summer, our Youth Group had artwork displayed in the *People Who Love Us/People We Love* exhibit of Children's Art at St. Luke's Metuchen. The opening exhibit & reception was Saturday, June 11th and we couldn't have been more proud of them.

In the Fall, our Youth Group shifted from a mostly High School age group to one that is more middle school aged, with 2 high schoolers as well, due to many of our high schoolers heading off to college. They are very excited by their new space in 74 Park! We hope to furnish that early in the new year.



The youth also made tags for the Giving Tree (See Outreach Notes for more information). In January, the Youth Group will again participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring (the picture below is from last year's effort – so much food for those in need!) The Souper Bowl is a nationwide outreach effort aimed at using the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and 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, due to scheduling conflicts, there has not been as many Adult Forums. The topics we did cover were The Letters of Paul, The Gospel of Luke, The Episcopal Church, and a Diocesan Convention report back. Other topics in the past have touched on 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, and Ways to Pray. Coming up this Spring will be forums on: The Gospel of Matthew, and Women at the Well. 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 a Women's Group in the Spring, and perhaps a few other groups too, so check it all out.

Outreach



In the past few months, Christ Church has been busy doing the work of Christ in the world. During our annual Blessing of the Animals in October, we presented checks and supplies to PAWS Montclair, and to the Bloomfield Animal Shelter (see pictures at left). We are always so grateful to our Warden, David Drislane, who organizes this service. The donations were from the parish, but the blessing of animals brings in people from all over our community, and is itself an outreach program.

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 three 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! Thank you Christopher Dwyer for helping get the food to them.

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! The highlight of the event every year is the singing of the 12 Days of Christmas by the carolers and the residents.

So much fun!

The Infrastructure Project Changes Everything!!!

This past year, we finally were able to realize the plans for our renewed and restored Church and Nursery School spaces. It all began in February of 2014, when a group of lay leaders, Mother Diana, and the leadership of the Nursery School, gathered in the Coursen Room to talk about the space issues each were facing, and to determine what opportunities existed to remediate them. Specifically, the Nursery School was at capacity (with wait lists for every class), and more space for an expanded Kindergarten was needed. Also, the Pre-School II Class was in a rather uncomfortable space on the 1st floor of 74 Park. The church had space issues as well. We needed to



have the Rector's office on the first floor to make it more accessible to people, and we needed a parlor or a library (see final space below), with sofas, and chairs, allowing for a more intimate sacred meeting space.

We also changed the Coursen Room itself, realizing that, due to the old casement style single pane windows, with the heat registers just below, we were losing heat, and we could not cool the space either. To add to that problem, we had those large walls (see them in the picture at left, as they were being removed) that essentially blocked whatever heat might have made it into the room. This was a problem not only for the church, but also the school, as that room is used 6 days a week by both. And then there was the unused space on the 2nd floor of the Parish Hall, that had been the church's Sunday School classrooms. We managed to get the bathroom working up there, but the space itself was in need of a major overhaul, and so it went unused.

The project cost \$350,000 for the construction, and another \$50,000 for related expense (legal paperwork, furniture, architectural plans, etc.). The Ribbon Cutting and Blessing was on Oct. 4th, and we were happy to have our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith, there to consecrate the newly renovated spaces.

As a result of this project, both the church and our school have a brighter future. The ability to offer better church program and office space, to increase our infant room capacity, and even to add a new class – PS III (the age just before Kindergarten) has breathed new life into Christ Church. This was a project that was truly Spirit led, but it took this congregation's willingness to go where She was leading, to make it all happen.

LIVING OUR FAITH



BUILDING OUR FUTURE



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



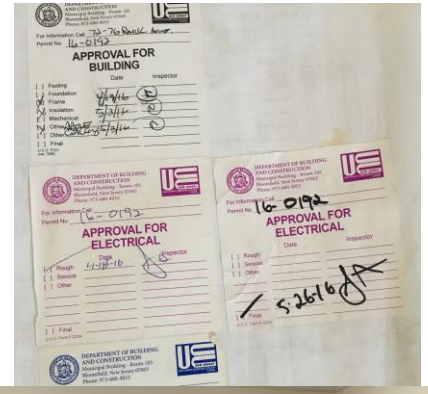
Advent Lessons & Carols, Parish Hall & Church decorated for Christmas, Nursery School Christmas Show, Christmas Caroling, Greening of the Church.

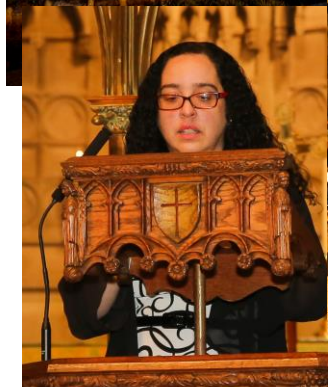


Nursery School Halloween Show, Blessing of the Animals, Choir in construction hats (part of our Stewardship campaign, Vestry Retreat, and the Fall Founder's Fest.

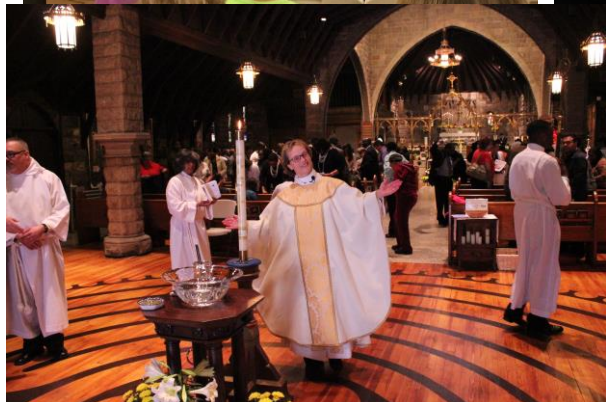
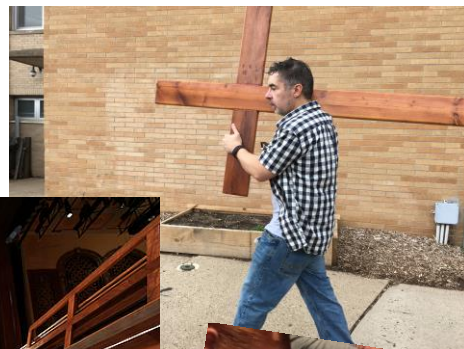


Infrastructure Project & Bishop's Blessing.



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New banner outside our church, Colin Lynch organ recital, Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross, PFLAG Events, Easter, VBS, Mass on the Grass with Brass, baptisms and the Bishop's Visit.



You are welcome here if you are gay, straight, imperfect, lonely, young, not so young, trans, male, female, spiritual but not religious, seeking, physically challenged, a refugee, black, white, brown, purple, green, blue, (well, you get it), Muslim, conservative, liberal, Jewish, can sing, can't hold a note in a bucket, poor, rich, Hindu, Buddhist, wouldn't be caught dead in a church, spiritually dead, monastic, a student on campus or a student of life, a thinker, a dreamer, an artist, a scientist, a teacher, an immigrant (recent or not), a native, sees the glass half full, sees the glass half empty, what glass?...in other words
YOU!



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](https://www.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.

Christ Church
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