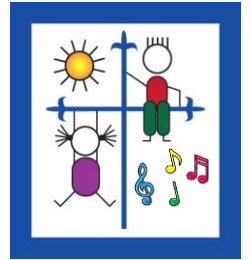




# CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## BLOOMFIELD & GLEN RIDGE



*Growing in faith ~ Serving our neighbors ~ Creating community*

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2018

## Reflections from The Rector

by Mother Diana+



One of my favorite Christmas stories (outside of the gospels of Matthew and Luke of course) is *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*. My mom would read it to me as a child, doing all the voices of the characters. It was wonderful! Sometimes, for our Christmas Day service, I have us read this scene from this iconic children's story by Dr. Seuss:

"Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small, was singing! Without any presents at all! He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming! IT CAME! Somehow or other, it came just the same! And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so?" "It came with out ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!" And he puzzled three hours, till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! "Maybe Christmas," he thought,

"doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

We can sometimes make Christmas so complicated that it is barely recognizable for what it is – the most miraculous love story ever told. Maybe that's why you come here tonight, because you know there is more to this story too. More than the ribbons, more than the tags, more than packages, boxes or bags. As the Grinch figured out: "Christmas doesn't come from a store – Christmas, really does mean a little bit more" – well really, a whole lot more. Christmas still came. Jesus came, just the same, into a world that wasn't ready, to a world not expecting Him, to a mother that said YES!, in a place unexpected, to a people unwanted, or unknown.

That's the promise of Christmas - that no matter how cold this world may seem, no matter how small we may feel, the light that shines in the darkness will always come. There is always hope, always love. You don't have to puzzle in the snow for three hours, because it isn't as complicated as we try to make it. It really is that simple...and that amazing.

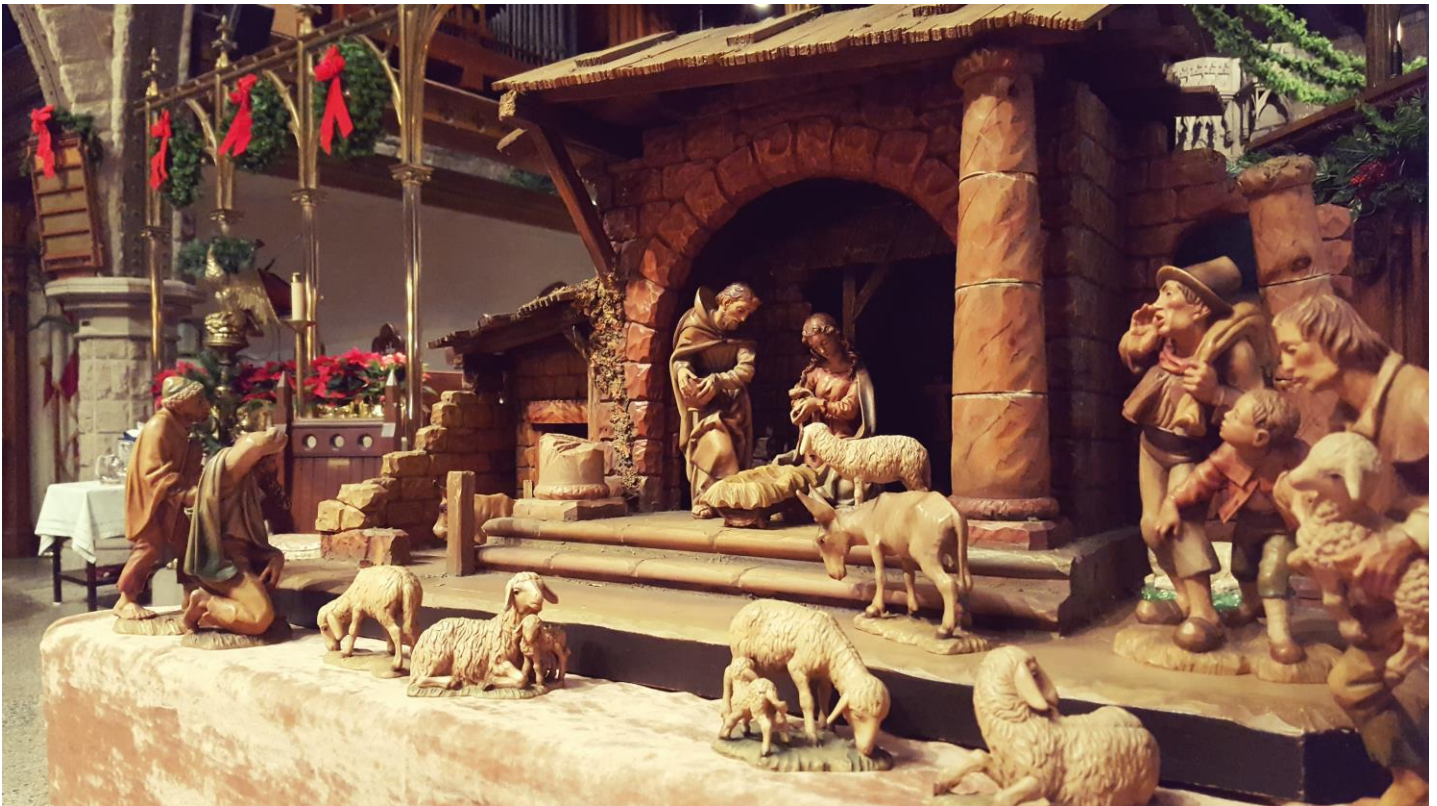
May Jesus be born anew in your hearts this night, that His light may shine forth from you, filling the world with love, grace, and peace. Merry Christmas!

Mother Diana+

# What Gifts Will You Give?

Reflections from our Wardens, Denise Massay-Williams and Leamon McKenzie

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The great gifts of this season can't be put under the tree; you can't wear them or eat them or drive them or play with them. We spend so much time on the lesser gifts – toys, sweaters, jewelry, electronics, candy – and so little on the great gifts – **understanding, encouragement, love, peace and forgiveness**, among others. It is no wonder that at times, the holiday leaves us empty, because when it is over, the only reminders we have are the dirty dishes and the January bills.

The great gifts are like the one gift – the gift of the Christ child that began back in Bethlehem of Judea. You can't buy them, and they are not on anybody's shopping list. They come as He came – quietly, freely, unexpectedly – and if we are not careful, we will miss them entirely.

So for this Christmas, I join you in asking God to help us build each other up by:

- being **understanding** of others shortcomings,
- **encouraging** each other at all times to be more like Christ,
- spurring one another on toward **love** and good deeds,
- choosing to be a channel of **peace**, thus contributing a ripple of peace to the world at large;
- forgiving each other -- remembering the great gift of God's **forgiveness**. When we struggle with forgiving, it is good to Remember a verse like **Colossians 3:13**: *"Make allowance for each others faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others"*



One great gift that the Christmas story brings us is a message of peace that can soothe anxious hearts and calm interpersonal strife. May we willingly accept this gift and may His blessings overflow us all this Christmas season.

Wishing each and every one a blessed and meaningful Christmas season.

Denise Massay-Williams and Leamon McKenzie, Wardens

## Nursery School News

**by Jean Bannon, Nursery School Director**

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Greetings to All!

After much internal processing, I have decided to retire at the end of this year. It was a very difficult decision, but I believe it is what's best for myself and my family.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank Christ Church and the Nursery School of Christ Church for allowing me to be a part of the Christ Church “family” for the past 17 years! It has been an incredible journey for me. I have grown as a person, met some wonderful people, and became aware of what is truly important in life. I began here as the Preschool 2 Teacher after teaching for 10 years at another preschool. Both schools gave me the opportunity to be an administrator as well, so I was able to be in classrooms with children as well as working alongside some wonderful colleagues. After the previous Director of the Nursery School of Christ Church retired in 2009, I was asked to become the Director. Although I went into the roll kicking and screaming, I

realized that this was truly my passion. I have truly enjoyed my years here, and will take a lot of fond memories with me.

Have a blessed Christmas and may we all find Peace in the new year.

Fondly,

Jean



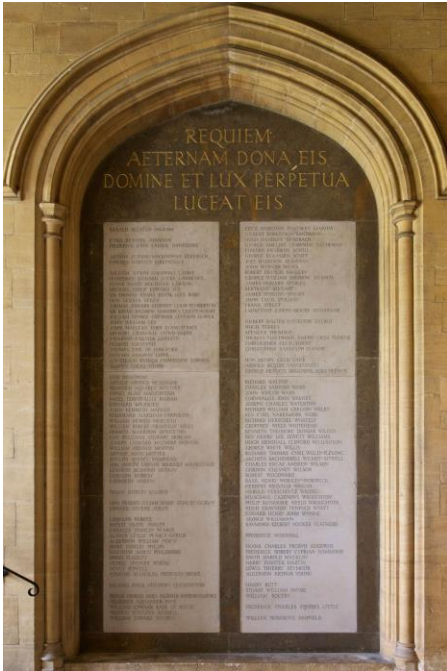
# “Of War and Peace and Music”

by Bill Davies, Director of Music

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When we imagine the intersection of religion and politics, we often imagine lots of noise, Accusations, shouting, denunciation – these all seem to be implicit. Perhaps, though, that misconception results from the assumption that religion implies judgment, and, of course, in my judgment, God is on my side.

World War I provides both a condemnation of this point of view and a welcome salve for the wound it



produced. There are numerous examples of members of each alliance accusing the other of atrocity and ungodliness. But, in December of 1918, the aftermath of the war produced an enduring tradition of peace in the celebration of Christmas with the first Ceremony of Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge.

To understand the context within which that first service of Lessons and Carols happened, one need only visit the seat of another famous English choir, Christ Church, Oxford. There, just outside the entrance to the cathedral, are inscribed the names of 226 men of the college killed in the 1914-1918 War. In the war years, Christ Church would have numbered about 500 students. Though the memorial recognizes both students and staff, the impact would still have been tremendous. Historians point out that, since Oxford and Cambridge so over-represented the upper classes in the early twentieth century, the War robbed England of a generation of

men who would have been its leaders.

But it was not only these “important” families who suffered. Fully 25% of England’s male population died in World War I, a number which explains why the cultural impact was so cataclysmic, and so different from the American experience of the same conflict. Virtually every family in England lost a father, son or brother, and by methods previously unimaginable.

And yet, within a month of the Armistice of November, 1918, a congregation gathered in Cambridge to hear the first service of Lessons and Carols, and to draw hope from a scriptural and musical retelling of the story of salvation, surely a salvation that many in the chapel at King’s desperately coveted for some young man recently killed. The service opened, as it still does, with “Once in Royal David’s City” and ended with “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” The service has been sung every year since, including during the next war, and even during the Blitz. A note at the start of the 1940 service booklet gives instructions about what to do in case an air signal sounds during the service. (“No person in the Choir should move unless or until a Responsible College Officer gives instructions.”)

War and politics. Choral music does not seem their usual companion. Yet this very simple service has endured through a century of warfare as a beacon of peace and a source of comfort. Such is the power of music.

# Children and Youth

**by Candice Whitaker, Director of Family Ministries**

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I am truly blessed to work at Christ Church with our wonderful families and parishioners. Though it can get a little crazy working in a church during the Advent season, our calendars are filled with all the things that bring families together and I'm so grateful to be a part of it!

Sunday School is offered every Sunday morning during the 10:30am service. We flexibly follow the Illustrated Ministries Curriculum. We are currently in the Compassion series, which uses stories from the Bible to demonstrate elements of compassion and how we can learn to love others as God loves us. 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 and hang out in. I'm excitedly planning events for the year to help build and grow our Youth community. We are also one of the host churches for a new diocesan program and collaboration for youth, and I think this will be a really great way to build our program! If you're interested in working with me and our youth group, let me know!

In August, we hosted Cross Roads for our 4th Annual Day Camp. We have had a different group of kids every year, including children of our church, children from other churches, and children of our community. We had a great group of kids this year! The word is finally getting out and it will continue to grow! We had so many more volunteers this year, which was amazing, and a very clear sign



of growth and support for this ministry. It is always my favorite week of the summer!

Our Christmas pageant was Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. We did it a little differently while we have so many little ones not quite ready for speaking roles. We invited the entire congregation to participate and it was so much fun!

The ministry for children and youth continues to grow, and I can not thank everyone enough for all the support. I have the best job as Director of Family Ministries, and it is because of all the fantastic kids, parents, parishioners, and staff with whom I get to work. We will keep growing, and I look forward to all the fun we will have again this next year!



# Office and Communications

by Candice Whitaker, Director of Communications

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As both the Director of Family Ministries and the Director of Communications, I have been able to connect with more people and parishioners and it is truly a community I am blessed to be a part of.

We have been putting a lot of effort 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. In addition to Facebook, we have also added a Twitter and Instagram account. Make sure you are following us (cc74park)!

We have made Welcome Bags as a welcoming gift to our visitors, which include a Christ Church mug, letter from the Rector, and a Christ Church Brochure. We will soon be providing name-tags for our parishioners and visitors, also! We have been sending out weekly emails to help you stay better connected. 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! We also offer a text service to provide you with last-minute updates, closings, news, events, etc. If you haven't done so, you can text **CHRISTCHURCH** to **313131** to receive these messages.

My two-year-old, Emerson, helps load up our bulletins each week; he's the best helper! We continue to produce the bulletins and Sunday Papers for every worship service, all of which are uploaded online each week, as is the most recent newsletter. There are plenty of ways to stay connected at Christ Church; don't miss out!



## Outreach

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Again this year, we partnered with PAWS Montclair, the local animal shelter, to provide needed food and supplies. We collect each week, and once per month bring those items to PAWS.

During our annual Blessing of the Animals in October, we presented checks and supplies to PAWS Montclair Animal Shelter. We are always so grateful to 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.

We also continued our food ministry to those in need by working in cooperation with the Food Pantry of the Presbyterian Church on the Green in Bloomfield. We collect donations each week, and then once per month move those donations over to their food pantry. That pantry serves an average of 50-60 families per month, which ranges between 75 and 165 individuals. 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!





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.

On December 23, 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!



Our Outreach Group is responsible for helping us to engage in the work God is already doing in the world – helping us all to remember that church is not a destination, but where we are given strength for the journey. That journey is one that calls us to follow the Holy Spirit outside of our walls, and to be the Christ in the world, living into our baptismal covenant to love and serve others. If you would like to be a part of our wonderful outreach team, please see Mother Diana.

## UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS AT CHRIST CHURCH



Come celebrate the arrival of the Kings to pay honor to Jesus at our Epiphany service on **January 6th**.

We begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on **March 6th**. Our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake fundrasier will be **Tuesday, March 5th**.





## **WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT CHRIST CHURCH?**

Here are some of the ways you can find out more:

**The website:** <http://christchurchepiscopal.org>

**Follow on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter:** cc74park

**Our Sunday Paper, an insert in our Sunday Bulletin,** available on the website for download to your e-reader or iPad.

**By email:** [office@christchurchepiscopal.org](mailto:office@christchurchepiscopal.org)

**By SMS:** Text christchurch to 313131 for event reminders and emergency announcements.

And the best way...**come to church!**



