The Good News
from
Christ Episcopal Church

A Monthly Publication To Serve Our Members and Friends February 2009

On December 21st of this year, my mother achieved a significant milestone. She completed all of the work for her bachelor's degree. She will officially graduate this May and 'walk' with her class, most of whom are 50 years younger than she. Needless to say, we are all extremely proud of her. Making that kind of commitment of time and money to formal education, especially after retirement, shows real dedication, and she deserves the public affirmation that receiving a diploma confers. Funny thing is, a degree doesn't change who she is, how intelligent she is, or minimize any of her achievements prior to completing college. Instead, it is a piece of paper, a document, that affirms what we all knew before she went back to school – she is incredibly intelligent and hard working and can run circles around most college grads.

For some reason, in contemporary society, we have come to conflate being intelligent and thoughtful with having a formal degree. In the last 20 years or so, it has become more common for people to go to college after high school in order to acquire the qualifications needed for most better paying jobs. In the past, good jobs were available to people with a high school education and many companies provided training for their employees that rivaled post-secondary education. Going to college was a privilege reserved for the elite. That isn't really the case anymore.

Sometimes, this leads to a bit of tension. It can foster a sense among those who don't have a degree that somehow they are less intelligent or less qualified than those around them who stayed in school longer. It can also result in those with degrees thinking they are somehow superior or smarter than others. Neither view reflects reality.

At our January 4th meeting, one of the pieces of information that was presented as part of our 'target market' research was that the Episcopal Church typically appeals to highly educated people. Usually this is measured as people who have two or more years of college. This statement is a reflection of national church studies of what part of the population usually comes to the Episcopal Church, and formal education attained is the easiest way to quantify that. It doesn't mean that people who have not attended college are not part of the church nor does it imply that they are not wanted or welcome in the church.

The reality is that historically people who come to the Episcopal church are intelligent people who like to learn more about their faith. They are people who are not happy with easy black and white answers to difficult questions. They do not want to be told what to do or what to think by some authority figure. Episcopalians like to be able to ask questions and think and pray about situations until they can come to their own conclusions. They don't look for easy answers and are suspicious of people who want to make things too simple. Yes, some are very highly educated. We are a church that is filled with doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, and engineers. We are also a church with a strong base among working people who for any number of reasons may have very little formal education but who take their faith very seriously and seek always to learn more about how God is active in the world and how He is calling them to live.

The church needs this diversity within it. We need to have all types of people, and we value all of the gifts they bring. It may be true that some categories of people are more drawn to this expression of faith than to others, but it doesn't mean that any are excluded. On the contrary, by coming together we learn from each other and better see God at work in the world.

Eileen+

Seeking, Serving, and Sharing Christ

DUSTAN FAMILY UPDATE

Ian was in the hospital recently, for about ten days with a viral respiratory infection, ear infection and central line infection. He was discharged on Friday and happy to be back at Ronald McDonald House. He has not yet been cleared to return to "school" or to see his brother. Jaime had very limited contact with Ian during this time so as not to infect Evan, whose immune system is still compromised.

Evan is in the process of engraftment-which means that Jaime's cells from the transplant have won and have taken over his body. Evan's body, though, doesn't know this is a good thing and is still trying to fight his mother's cells. Comes to no one's surprise! We hope this is only an acute problem, but the on-going concern is that he may have chronic symptoms. Right now he has an ugly rash-actually a different rash is on his head than on the rest of his body. Currently, the doctors are trying to determine the actual cause of the rashes. He will likely have a skin biopsy later this week.

Long and the short-we are on the road to recovery, but there are lots of bumps and detours along the way. We had hoped for a discharge at the end of the month, but we're now looking beyond that date.

The family continues to feel the strength of prayers from around the world-especially from those close to home! Posts from friends and unknown prayer partners on the caring bridge continue to boost morale for all.

The web site, if needed, is www.caringbridge.org/visit/iandustan.

Thanks again,

Dorothy

If you' re admitted to the hospital, please notify the church office so that your church family may pray for you. It will also assure a visit by our clergy or one of our Stephen Ministers.

Christ Episcopal Church
410 Grand Avenue
Waukegan, Illinois 60085
Church Phone (847) 662-7081
Church Fax (847) 662-7173
E-mail Address: parishoffice410@sbcglobal.net

Staff

The Rev. Eileen Shanley-Roberts, Rector
Shanleyroberts@gmail.com
cell phone: 1-847-894-7986

The Rev. Peter B. Irvine, Precentor
pbirvine@yahoo.com
cell phone: (262) 995-3125

Mrs. Jen Winston, parish administrator
parishoffice410@sbcglobal.net

Mr. Walt Givler, Treasurer
Mr. Chuck McBride, Asst. Treasurer
Mr. Harvey Biddlecom, Asst. Treasurer

ElderCARE@ChristChurch 1-847-406-4683

Newsletter Editor: Jan Nelson 1-847-746-8510
E-mail anjn72@comcast.net

Senior Warden	Mr. Charles McBride c.mcbride435@sbcglobal.net	1-847-265-2848
Junior Warden	Mr. Ken Hairrell kenhairrell@comcast.net	1-224-643-7466
	Mr. Walt Givler givlersr@execpc.com	1-847-623-3485
	Mrs. Jan Hairrell janhairrell@comcast.net	1-224-643-7466
	Mr. Pres Helgren	1-847-680-8109
	Mr. Matt LaForge jpearce11@comcast.net	1-847-910-8062
	Mr. Peter Lukas peter.lukas@sbcglobal.net	1-847-662-3740
	Mr. Ben Martindale benmartindale56@hotmail.com	1-847-623-9036
	Mrs. Tina Mathews mictina@comcast.net	1-847-244-1947
	Mr. Matt Nordigian matt@norstaninc.com	1-847-782-7415
	Mr. Quentin Schwarz qbeck@mcleodusa.net	1-847-623-8863
	Mr. Greg Thompson gregory.thompson@uop.com	1-847-336-2514
	Mrs. Cindy Tippet cyngda@hotmail.com	1-847-746-5170
	Ms. Katharine Whitney katharine.whitney@abbott.com	1-847-549-1254
	Mr. Frank Winans frnkwinans@aol.com	1-847-662-8362
Clerk of the Vestry	Ms. Julie Lundquist juliealundquist@yahoo.com	1-847-249-2914

The Good News

2008 Epiphany Pageant: A Piquant Pleasure

by Bill Weber, Critic-at-Large

This year's Epiphany Pageant really was something special. Beginning with Matt LaForge's stentorian narration from the Gospel of John and continuing through the harrowing tale of the nativity of Our Savior Jesus Christ, the production thrilled an appreciative sanctuary audience on Epiphany Sunday. Highest praise to producer/director Cheryl Ptasienski for a brilliant blend of color, movement, drama, and sound.

Starting simply with the angel Garbriel's (the exquisite Lindsey Bennett) stunning message to Zacharias (terrific Ricky McLaughlin) that Elizabeth (incredulous Emily Shanley-Roberts) will give birth to John, the tension builds when the angel tells Mary (spot-on Kate Stevensen) that she will bear the Savior of the World. The first reversal held the rapt audience spellbound as Joseph (marvelous Tim Athans) wrestles with his excruciating fate. Then the first of a glittering host of angels (eloquent Jaime Barber) calms the distraught husband.

The scene then shifts to "Once in Royal David's City," trilled in the dulcet tones of young Shanley-Roberts, a reprise of her lilting Christmas Eve solo. More complications emerge here as Herod (scary Jake Andersen), the callous innkeeper (Richard Barber, tough) and a Roman soldier try to derail destiny. But the second innkeeper (precious Marty Goldman) saves the day, sending the bereft couple "Away in the Manger" (children and congregation accompanied on guitar by Janet Irvine, lovely).

You know the rest. The shepherds (Dan the Man; Amarr, Derrick and Benjamin McLaughllin; Xavier Alfaro and Steve Joyce, all impressively resolute) see the star (stellar Zach Andersen) and seek to honor the Savior, and the gloriously arrayed "We Three Kings" (Peter Irvine, organ and Tim Phillips, flute) march in with sponsors singing of their gifts: gold (Ryan LaForge/Quentin Schwarz, hopeful) frankincense (Nick Bennett/Bill Weber, majestic) and myrrh (Michael Bennett/Charles Schaller, haunting).

For the denouement, yet another angel (sensational Lexi Nordigian) intervenes, warning Mary and Joseph of Herod's nefarious plot. As the cast left the stage/altar singing "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (Peter Irvine accompanying), the audience rose as one and applauded a most memorable experience.

Special mention must be accorded to the angel host, shimmering in glorious halos, wings, and gowns throughout the entire performance (Julia and Janelle Athans; Ava, Amanda, Alyssa and Abby Nordigian; Maddy Beach and Larissa Eaker). Michael Harland was outfitted as a convincing scribe, and Abigail Shanley-Roberts, Benjamin McLaughlin and Isabel Winston were the most adorable lambs.

Off-stage effects and sound were the province of Dan Ptasienski and Ross Shanley-Roberts. Credit is due also to Mary Sedar for her assistance in planning and at rehearsals.

Let us not forget also that Baby Jesus played Himself.

Kudos for this spectacular "Cher-Ptas Production!"

Vestry Highlights, December 2008

The vestry's final meeting of 2008 was canceled and re-set for December 16 when we had another heavy snow. Thus, January and December were combined on January 13.

You all will be surprised to hear that, like almost all of us, the Church has suffered financial losses this year. We'll have to do some serious fund-raising this year to keep the doors open and the lights on. I know everyone is asking you for financial help, but I also know how important Christ Church is in all of our lives. So please, if you can't tap into the checkbook, tap into your brain and be willing to step up and help.

Jen Winston is the new parish secretary, and all scheduling goes through her, or it probably won't be scheduled. She is making a few changes, so be patient as we all get used to one another.

Greg Thompson and his committee are waiting for more feedback on the Long Range Plan so the committee can move on with the details. If there are things you like, don't like, or question, let Greg or another committee member know. Without all of us buying into the plan and supporting it, it will just go the way of all the prior plans -- resting quietly in a drawer somewhere. We do need to grow financially and pack the pews with people, and all of us have some responsibility for these two things. So, please help.

Respectfully submitted, Julie Lundquist, Clerk

The Shack
Reviewed by Bill Ashley

William P. Young, in collaboration with Wayne Jacobsen and Brad Cummings, has written a superb secular mystery that evolves into a deep theological interchange between the central character, Mackenzie Allen Phillips, and God.
The story begins when Mack takes his family on a vacation to a remote location. One of his children disappears and evidence found at an old, dilapidated shack indicates a horrible tragedy occurred there.

Four years later, Mack receives a mysterious note inviting him back to the shack. The note is signed, Papa. Still grieving for his missing child, Mack hesitantly accepts the invitation to return to the shack. He hopes to find a lead as to what happened to his precious child. He finds more than he ever expected. The shack becomes the connection point where Mack encounters God. He discovers astonishing insights into who God is and how God deals with our lack of faith and our weaknesses. Mack's discoveries, I believe, will change the way you think about God in a most extraordinary and delightful way. I will never again think of God the Father or God the Holy Spirit in the same way after reading this book.

The Shack is a fast-paced novel that draws the reader into the story and it is thoroughly engrossing. It will satisfy your appetite for a great mystery and, I believe, it will help the reader understand how God deals with each of us as we struggle with pain, suffering, justice, forgiveness, and a host of other questions.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book. After you read it, if you would, please email me at bgashley@comcast.net or jot a note and send it to Bill Ashley, 197 Enfield Lane, Grayslake, Illinois, 60030 telling me what you thought of The Shack.

Just a reminder…
The church office is closed on Fridays.

Back by POPULAR Demand☺…

Our youth have kept their end of the bargain…they're once again sponsoring the annual Shrove Tuesday Spaghetti Dinner.

And their HOPE, and EXPECTATION, is that "YOU'LL ALL COME" and help make it a big success again! This is their major fundraiser of the year, not to mention being a good time with great food (David La Forge has agreed to an encore performance as Chef) and a last chance to "celebrate" our life together as a Parish before Lent kicks in with Ash Wednesday!

In keeping with Shrove Tuesday, the dinner will again have a Mardi Gras theme, complete with music provided by our talented youth, face painting, and a chance to mingle with friends, families, and visitors to Christ Church.

So…mark your calendars for February 24th, 5-7 pm, to sponsor our youth, enjoy a great dinner out, and join in our annual "passage" into Lent. Prices are $5 for senior's and youth, $7 for adults, and children under six eat free! You won't find a better deal anywhere that night and our youth will greatly appreciate your attendance! So will I☺!Hope to see you all there!

Peace in Christ,

Mark Agin

Dear Parishioners,
I have recently made the difficult decision to no longer serve as one of the parish nurses. I will be focusing my time and energy on the outreach efforts of this parish. I will have office hours through the end of February. I would like to have the opportunity to finish work with those of you engaged in the health initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you over the past decade.
Best regards,
Jan Hairrell

FEBRUARY EVENTS

GROUPS

MEN'S GROUP
FEB. 4 & 18

WOMEN'S GROUP
FEB. 5 & 19

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
FEB. 16

St. Margaret's Guild will have their first formal meeting of 2009 on Thursday, February 26th beginning with morning prayer at 10:30 am. Reverend Eileen has graciously agreed to be our program presenter. The regular business meeting with final report on the Candy Project will follow.
Hope to see everyone there.

Prayer Group
Meets every Wednesday
At 4 pm.

SPAGHETTI DINNER
MARDI GRAS STYLE

FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Joint Chorale Evensong
At Annunciation of our Lady
Feb. 22 at 5 pm

Deanery Valentine's Day Dinner Dance
Feb. 14
7-9:30 pm
Sponsored by Annunciation of our Lady

For details call the church office at (847)-662-7081. Jen Winston will have the meeting places and other information.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Dan Ptasienski grew up in North Chicago and attended school there until he and his family moved to Libertyville. After attending high school there, he served two years in the Air Force. He came to Christ Church in 1980 and was received by Bishop Griswold. He met his wife Cheryl, and they became a family of five which has been expanded by two grandchildren. After experiencing many jobs, he drove a truck for twenty-five years and is now enjoying retirement. He is presently the commander of the American Legion in Waukegan where he said he gets to do whatever no one else wants to do.
He has been very active at Christ Church over the years serving as usher, verger, and working with the Sunday school. He appeared as one of the tallest shepherds we have ever had this year in the Epiphany Pageant. He is currently very involved with gardening and grounds keeping under the leadership of Ken Hairrell. I wouldn't be surprised if he got involved with helping the candy makers.
He is definitely someone you should know.
Mary Campbell

STEWARDSHIP

"All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine Own have we given Thee."

We say these lines upon presentation of the alms. But do we really think about what we are saying? It helps us to be generous if we believe that everything belongs to God. Only you can decide what is right for you to give. A person who is relatively poor and gives little is more generous, in God's eyes, than a wealthy individual who writes a check for a much larger amount of money that is relatively insignificant to him or her.

Pledge Sunday has passed, but stewardship goes on every day of our lives.

How we use our time and our talents, in addition to our money, are some aspects of our stewardship.
Pres Helgren

For Whom We Pray

Harvey Biddlecom reports that Marge had a recent mishap resulting in cracked ribs. She is experiencing much pain. We pray for Harvey and Marge.

Edith Wilson
Margaret Harris
Cora Rosenthal
Barbara Langan

The Alleyne Family, Gary &Lee Alwardt, Ray & Ryan Ames, J. Richard & Joan Bickham, Marge & Harvey Biddlecom, Jeanette Burson, Mary & Russ Campbell, Aimee Chamernick, The Conkle Family, George & Dorothy Cooper, William Dowden, The Dustan Family, Dwayne, Paul Elloian, Breanna Engelhardt, Steen Foster, Simone Gibbs, Melissa Goddard, The Goldman Family, Linda Hale, Kathren Humes & Family, Doris Johnson, Willie Johnson, Judy, Jean Keehn, Debbie King, Malcolm Layson, Lisa, Paul & Donna Manahan, Michael Mathews, Charlie & Sean McBride, The McCaffery Family, Jack McDonald, Yvonne McMinn, Patti Miller, Liz Misunas, The Moon Family, Jack Nicholson, Nick Nickels, Carol Niemi, George & Rose Obenauf, John Obenauf, Richard G. Obenauf, Jody Ohlwein, Janis Pearce, Dennis Scarborough, Laura A. Schall, Pat & Charles Schaller, Sue Slocum, Vi Van Pelt, Art & Betty Wagner, Shawn & Beth Walker, Mike Warthren.

PARISH OFFICE
Phone: (847)662-7081
Office Hours: Monday to Thursday
Hours: 8:30a.m.-1:00p.m.

SUNDAY SERVICES

7:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m.	Family Eucharist
10:30 a.m.	Adult Forum

The deadline for the March newsletter is Monday February 16.

Christ Episcopal Church
410 Grand Avenue
Waukegan, Illinois 60085

Address Service Requested

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Gurnee, Illinois
60031
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