

The Chimes
The Newsletter of Christ Church
Swansea, Massachusetts
August 2006



From the Rector

My dear friends:

God does have a way of getting our attention. For me, it came on July 5, when I fell while running down the stairs in the parish house and broke my foot. In a matter of hours, I

went from being busy and independent to being still and feeling rather helpless. God had my attention.

Now, I don't mean for one minute that I believe that God willed me to fall downstairs, any more than I believe God wills any harm or misfortune to come to any of God's people. That is not our God of love. But I do believe that God does find ways of breaking into our lives with a word, in all the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

And for me, that breaking in occurred in the many ways you all expressed care for me. As you may imagine, I did not care at all for having to sit still with my foot up and let people do things that I normally do. At first. And then, God spoke. And I saw once again that the power of Christian love to transform our lives is nothing short of a miracle. For it was in the many, many emails and calls, offers of help, the bringing of coffee and newspapers and food, the feeding of my cats, and yes – the cleaning of my cats' litter boxes! - along with the unfailing generosity and good cheer which I saw in you, that I experienced the presence of Christ in my weakness. St. Paul is always reminding us that Christ comes to us in weakness, but it is hard to believe sometimes. But I know it is true. Because of Christ in you, I feel stronger now than I have for a long time. Christ has sustained me through your care.

You know, recently in light of some of the desperate humanitarian crises in the world, most recently the Israeli-Lebanon conflict, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, said that the Christian voice can seem very small –

but that it is imperative that it be heard. And it is true. Because when it is heard, it ceases being small, and takes on nothing less than the hope of the world. We are called to speak that voice of hope, my dear brothers and sisters. You showed it to me in my weakness. And it changed me. Let us never, never be afraid to speak the voice of Christian hope to all our brothers and sisters in our world. You have shown what Christ can do in weakness. You have shown the profound love of God that is for every person.

Please pray for me as I do for you.

Faithfully,
Beth+

Summer Worship

Don't forget that beginning on **Sunday, August 6 through Sunday, September 3** (Labor Day Weekend), we will move to **one Sunday service, to be held at 9:00 am**. We will also have our Saturday afternoon "**Mass on the Grass**" at **5:00 pm on August 12, August 26, and September 2**. We will also have a service on **August 19. but it will be at 6:00 pm**, due to a marriage blessing that is taking place earlier in the day.

Parish Office Operations

Our Parish Secretary, Karen Remine, will be leaving Christ Church on August 25, in order to pursue other opportunities which have come her way. I am so grateful to Karen for her faithfulness, commitment, and friendship, and wish her Godspeed and all joy! Her absence will surely be felt in the office for all of us. The vestry made a decision some time ago to expand the position to 15 hours per week, with some additional responsibilities, and we are seeking qualified candidates now. If you know of someone who might be interested, please direct them to the Rector for a job description.

In the meantime, we may be in the position of having various volunteers help out in the office until someone new is hired and trained. If this is the case, I ask now for your patience and understanding in this time of transition. There may be some things that fall by the wayside temporarily, and there may be some things which will not happen as quickly or as efficiently as we all might like. It is important that we be patient with each other and the office operations, particularly as we approach the Harvest Festival. However, as members of the Body of Christ, we are to remember that we are all working together for the good of the whole; and that Christ will be with us and sustain us and, most importantly, draw us closer in community.

Many, many thanks to Karen for all she has done and all she has given to this community. And many thanks to each of

you for doing your part to bring this time of change to fruition!

Beth Grundy+

Vestry Notes

- At the Vestry Meeting of June 20, 2006, the following items were discussed and acted on the following:
- Bill Canning of the Case House Trust Committee presented Christ Church with a check for \$9,000, as a part of the Case Trust program for this year of giving all the parishes in Bristol County grants for the fulfillment of the mission strategy of the diocese. The decision was made to begin an initial discussion of the use of the gift in July, and in the interim to put the money into an interest bearing CD until a decision is reached on the use of the money.
- We voted to renew all CDs as of June 20, 2006 through December 20, 2006 at a rate of 6%.
- We continued a discussion on the future use of the basement, and brainstormed ideas. Testing for mold has continued and further cleaning is being undertaken.
- The new sign should be in place in 4 to 6 weeks.

A New Look for Christ Church

The Wardens and Vestry of Christ Church are planning a new look for Christ Church. A new sign with gold leaf lettering and a predominate Episcopal Church seal has been ordered for the front lawn of the church. The sign will be lighted at night until about mid-night so it will tell one and all who we are. The plan also calls for lighting of the front of the church to show off the details of its magnificent architecture as well as provide enhanced safety for worshipers during the evening hours. We all know that Christ Church is beautiful on the inside, but it is also a thing of beauty on the outside the Vestry's goal is to make the church more inviting to the greater Swansea community.

The estimated cost of the completed sign and lighting project is about \$5,000. The Vestry invites all parish members to contribute to the cost of the project either as memorial gifts or as simple gifts in support of the project.

If you would like to make a gift to support this very worthwhile project, please send your check earmarked for the sign project to the church office at 57 Main Street, Swansea, MA 02777

Outreach News

By Marsha Gauthier

Anne Beltran, Marsha Gauthier, Florence Lawrence, Olive Ormerod and Martha Fournier held a "Sing a Long" at the Somerset Ridge Nursing Home on Tuesday July 11th at 2:30. Martha Fournier accompanied us on the organ. Many thanks to Martha. We presented "Prayer Shawls" to 2 ladies who were celebrating their birthdays. Though we were not always on key we all had a great time.

At our July 25th quarterly meeting we voted to accept the proposals for the following donations from our Outreach treasury:

- \$100-- Lauren Scott's mission trip
- \$300-- Jubilee Ministry for Aids Orphans
- \$100-- St Luke's Cambodian Youth Program.
- \$100-- Feed the Children Program.
- \$200-- Somerset Community Crop Walk.
- \$100--Hope House Fall River.

Many thanks to our congregation for your continued support. Without your generosity this would not have been possible.

The Outreach Group is planning to send items of cheer to our servicemen and women in Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas and to two service people from the Swansea/Somerset area serving in Iraq. (If you know of anyone in either of these locations we will be glad to send items to them as well.

Please submit their name and address to Nancy Teasdale 508-672-6865, Peggy Deston 508-674-2245, or Marsha Gauthier 508-678-6486.)

We invite the members of our congregation, who wish to participate, to bring in any of the items listed below throughout the summer and place them in the red, white and blue basket provided at the bottom of the office stairs in the Parish House.

The items desired for the Medical Center where they have patients from all branches of the service are: Model kits, (Cars, Planes and Ships), microwave popcorn, DVD's, new or gently used. (No horrific war movies please. Comedies are best.) Phone cards that can be used within the Continental USA.

Items for Iraq: Chap stick, eye drops, gum, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dog flea collars (these are worn around ankles to stop flea bites), suntan lotion and baby wipes.

Letters and cards are welcome at both the medical center and overseas. Please address them to dear "Serviceperson" and place in the red, white and blue basket.

The deadline for bringing in these items will be Sunday September 3rd.

We are planning a Blood Drive for the American Red Cross again this year. It will be held Tuesday October 3rd from

2PM to 7PM. Betty Traynor, Nancy Teasdale & Marsha Gauthier are co chairs. Other committee members are Jane Robinson, Florence Lawrence, Chris Gillett, Garry Gillett, Pauline Doane, Joan Padrenoss and Olive Ormerod. Please mark your calendars and come to give the gift of life.

Alan Scott will be the co chair for the Community Crop Walk which will take place in October. Thank you Alan! More details will be following soon. Get those walking shoes ready!!

We are planning a meat pie supper to be held on Friday, Oct 20th, in the parish house to raise money for the Honduran church where Caitlin and Rev Beth went last year. We plan to divide these proceeds with the church in Biloxi, Miss. that was affected by hurricane Katrina and which Caitlin visited with the Episcopal Youth. Additionally, we are planning a "Gift Basket Auction" which will take place during the supper. Alan Scott will be our auctioneer. The proceeds from this fun event will go to our Jubilee Ministry for Aids Orphans in Africa. Please consider donating a gift basket for this worthwhile mission. There will be a preview of the gift baskets for those who wish to participate but are unable to attend the supper. Details to follow.

We have a mouth watering menu planned of meat pie, mashed potatoes, gravy, salad, beverage and dessert. Peggy Deston, Florence Lawrence and Marsha Gauthier will be the co chairs of this event. Other committee members are Jane Robinson, Garry Gillett, Nancy Teasdale and Ann Beltran.

Take outs will be available. The committee is planning to meet on Wednesday, Sept 30th at 7PM to finalize the details.

Wednesday, November 8th at 7PM, we will be hosting a Sojourn Teddy Bear Stuffing Party in the parish house. Please consider joining us. These Bears provide comfort to those living with cancer and are provided free of charge.

Please continue to bring non-perishables to church for our Food Bank/Soup Kitchen mission.

We are always open to new ideas. Please let any member of the group know if you have a suggestion. As always thank you for your support.

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on October 24th.

Tarnished Silver

By Sue Carvalho

I've been trying to figure out why sometimes things in life go from bad to worse and your left wondering if they will ever get back to normal. I sometimes think "Why me?" and what did I deserve to get this chaos in my life. Doesn't it sometimes feel as if every one else is living the charmed life? Oh I know I am suppose to give it to God and I do but sometimes it feels as if I give it him and he gives it right back. Why is that?

Tarnished silver, I finally figured it out, life is like tarnished silver, and every so often you have to really put some elbow grease into it to really put the luster back into it. The more you use, and polish it, the easier it is to maintain the luster.

Aren't our lives like that? How often are we staying in touch with God, checking in, telling him how grateful we are for where we are in our lives, letting him know he is in our lives every day. Or like me do we sometimes forget to do that and not until we really need him do we bother to have a conversation with? How hard is it to get the luster back in silver once we let it get tarnished? How much easier it is to maintain that luster once the polish is back. Tarnished silver. When God is knowingly a part of my life everyday, I know everyday is a day full of opportunities, a day full with shiny silver. With God the possibilities are endless. When I have something unexpected happen in my life that creates a twist and turn, when I ask the question why? And I wait, I usually will realize why and I can appreciate that. Life is not the smooth calm water; it often is the rocks skimming along the water creating the ripples. It is how we react to the ripples that will best prepare us for what life has to offer.

God is my polishing cloth and I know I need to maintain that luster everyday in my life rather than work myself into a frenzy trying to get the tarnished silver back to its luster. Every experience is a learning experience an opportunity for me to grow and understand. I know I am blessed even in the midst of Why me? Times in my life.

When I have had misfortune I usually realize how fortunate I am to have my faith to comfort me , my friends and family to

support me and the knowledge that I have another opportunity to learn and grow. Tarnished silver may have lost its luster but with God as my polishing cloth I know my life is full with shiny possibilities.