

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



From the Rector's Desk

My dear friends:

This will be a rather shorter issue of the newsletter than usual, as I am late with it, and feeling more behind than usual! So I am especially grateful this month to our anonymous guest

writer, and our Outreach folks, who can always be counted on to have something interesting and uplifting to share with us.

The more behind I got with the *Chimes*, the more anxious I became; until it finally dawned on me that perhaps God had something to show me in my anxiety. That is usually the case when I feel I am not working up to capacity; and it was true this time. Those of us who have the privilege of serving you as clergy often speak about the importance of being a “non-anxious presence.” In other words, when anxiety is going up all around us, we pray that we will be able to stay centered and focused on God as the center of our lives, remembering that God is with us always. Often, this works. Sometimes we forget, and this is when God leaps in with the reminder that our trust is to be put only in God!

I think this is important to share with you, because behind anxiety – mine and yours – lurks *fear*. And this is one thing that Jesus always tells us not to give in to. “Do not be afraid,” he says numerous times in the Gospels. And then he heals, and feeds, and calms the storm. And I think he does this so often because he knows how much we can let fear rule our lives. It can take over and undermine our confidence and our sense of self. And ultimately, it can get in the way of our ability to see the abundance and goodness and generosity of God clearly.

What are these fears? Fear that we will fail; or that we will not be liked or even loved. Fear that we will somehow lose out. Fear that there will not be enough. These fears can wrap around us and hold us tight, and try to prevent us from living

life to its fullest, from giving of ourselves and finding the joy promised by Jesus.

But it cannot win. For fear might wrap itself around us tightly; but the loving arms of God in Jesus Christ wrap themselves around us even more tightly, and refuse to let go. And when we know this, we find we can relax and let God take our lives; and that God can do more than we can even imagine.

I invite you, especially as you prayerfully consider your pledge of your time and your talent, and your treasure to Christ Church, to let go of fear. Let it go, and allow the spirit of life and generosity that is God flow in and through and around you. Like me, you will find that God has much to say to you. And you will find that the “non-anxious presence” of Jesus Christ also dwells in your own heart.

Please pray for me as I do for you, always –
Faithfully,
Beth+

Fellowship

Potluck and Revue

Please join us for our Second Annual Christ Church Potluck and Musical Revue! On **Saturday, November 11**, we will gather at **5:30** to begin dinner together and then enjoy a really great show! If you are interested in being a part of the show, please let Al Deston or Beth Grundy know. And please do plan to come and enjoy yourself! This is a treat for all ages.

Stewardship

Breakfast

Please join your Stewardship Committee for a delicious breakfast on **Sunday, November 12, at 10:30 am** in the Parish House! We will have **one service, at 9:00 am**, and then all are invited to enjoy great food and fellowship immediately following. This is a great time to begin to think about ways you might want to offer your time, talent, and treasure to Christ Church. Also, please note the letter from a sub-committee of the Vestry in this issue of the Chimes, telling you some of our ideas about how we might use a gift from the Case Trust Fund. We would love to have your input at the Stewardship Breakfast!

November 19 – Commitment Sunday

On **Sunday, November 19**, we will make the offering of our Commitment Forms a part of our Offertory at both services. Please take some time to pray about what portion of God’s gifts to you will be given back to God through the ministry of the Church; and either bring your form to Church on that day, or mail it to the office beforehand. We would love to have as many pledge forms back by then as possible!

Christian Formation and Worship

Thanksgiving Eve

On **Wednesday, November 22, at 7:00 pm**, there will be a service of Holy Eucharist to celebrate Thanksgiving. We will

sing some Thanksgiving hymns, have some time for reflection, and share Holy Communion together. Please invite your family and friends.

Advent Program on *The DaVinci Code*

Those of you who enjoyed the mystery, intrigue, history, and spirituality of Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*, please plan to set aside several **Wednesday evenings** during Advent to join the Rev. Dave Milam, Rector of the Church of Our Saviour in Middleborough, as he leads us through the journey behind this bestseller! We will meet in the Christ Church Parish House over light refreshments, and learn more about what makes this book so fascinating! Why not start rereading it now, and plan to join us? Dates and times TBA!

Evening Advent Services

During the season of Advent, which begins on December 3, we will have Sunday evening services of Holy Communion, as well as our Sunday morning services. We will gather in the church at **5:00 pm** on the following Sundays: **December 3, December 10, and December 17**. We will combine various elements of Anglican and Celtic spirituality into these services, with reflective music, meditative prayer, and the lighting of the Advent Wreath. We hope that these services will provide another alternative for time out during a busy season. These services will be most suitable for all ages.

Vestry Notes will return in December. In the meantime, please remember that you are always welcome at Vestry meetings, and that the Minutes and Financial Reports are posted and available to everyone through the Parish Office.

The deadline for submissions for the December issue of the Chimes is Sunday, December 19.

Dear People of God:

You may remember reading in the *Chimes* that Christ Church received a gift from the Case Fund Trust for \$9,000! The trust was set up by the Case family of Swansea for the purposes of expanding ministry in Bristol County. This year, the Case Fund Trust Committee, made up of laypersons and clergy from several of the Episcopal Churches in Bristol County, awarded each Episcopal parish in Bristol County a grant of \$9,000. Each parish can use it in any way they see fit; the one request from the Committee was that we all try not to put it in our regular operating budgets, but use it for outreach of some kind – in some way that will help us as we serve our present community, invite people to join our congregation, and serve the greater community around us.

Your Vestry has met and brainstormed about possible uses of the money, and we would like to share with you our Top Four Ideas, and give you the opportunity to VOTE for your

favorites(s) – or to make other suggestions! On Sunday, November 12, we will have some ballots available during our Stewardship Breakfast, and ask you to cast your vote – we will have an opportunity for discussion as well. Ballots will also be available in the church for the next few weeks.

The Vestry’s Big Top Four ideas for this gift are:

1. **Use for local outreach projects.** This might mean researching some of the particular social needs in Swansea and surrounding communities, and providing funding to various agencies, as we develop partnerships with them – such as a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, for examples. Or it might mean starting our own local ministry – such as a program for single women and children who are displaced or need help with parenting.
2. **Continue our support of the Jubilee Program of the Diocese of Massachusetts.** This could mean using a portion of the money to become an official partner with a congregation or agency in Tanzania or Kenya, where we are engaged in feeding and education programs for children and adults around the relief and treatment of those suffering the ravages of AIDS in these countries, and the eradication of this disease.
3. **Develop an Outreach Trust.** This would mean creating a trust that would allow us to use the interest

at the discretion of the Outreach Committee, With the guidance of the Vestry.

4. **Use for Capital Improvements.** We are especially thinking about converting the Parish House basement into a comfortable and clean space, suitable for meetings, Sunday School, and Christian formation programs. One way in which we provide outreach to our community, in town and through the church is to develop and maintain welcoming, adequate space.

These are our ideas! What do you think? Do you have others? Please join us on November 12 and join us in using this wonderful gift to further the commitment of Christ Church to the ministry to which God calls us!

Faithfully,
Matt Croft, Peggy Deston, Rich Mezzanotti, and Beth Grundy
Vestry Task Force on Case Grant

Sunday School

Sunday school began its second year of the Workshop Cycle curriculum with a unit entitled *The Bible*. Through this unit the children gained a better understanding of the different books of The Bible. We are currently completing a unit entitled *Before Judge Judy: Deborah, Samson, and Gideon*. Through this unit the children are learning about three judges from The Bible. During this unit we have been blessed to

have Holly Silva sharing herself and her time with our children. It has been very exciting for all of us!

On Friday, October 27, our Sunday school held its annual Halloween party. We had many wonderful costumes and fun games. A great time was had by all!

On Sunday, November 12, Sunday school will be held at 9:00 a.m. Beth will be a special guest and will be sharing some of her time, thoughts, and ideas with us.

Our next unit will be: *Be Alert, Shepherds!*, in preparation for the Christmas season. We are very excited to be having Shirley Stasiowski and Lorraine Dufault joining us as teachers for this unit! We would love to have more parishioners join us during Sunday school. This only requires a commitment of one week or three weeks! Please consider sharing yourself with our beautiful children. Whatever you may be interested in can be worked into our curriculum. Art, music, theater, reading, knitting, sewing, games, computers, cooking, or any other interest or hobby will benefit our children. If you are interested in it, our children will become invested in it! Not only would you help teach our children about our religion, but you would also get to know a lot of our younger friends! Stop in and visit on Sunday morning. We would love to see you!

Finally, our annual Christmas pageant will be held on Christmas Eve. A rehearsal schedule will be available soon.

I Want to be a “Baby Christian”

I want to be a “Baby Christian.” Have you ever met a newly “born again” Christian?

You know the type - they are usually in their late teens or early twenties and they have just found God usually through an Evangelical Bible Church or group.

Their enthusiasm is wonderful, but also can be scary for some, because they are on fire with the realization of their newfound understanding of the Gospel. You all know them, because at one time or another they professed their newfound faith to you and they were not bashful about it. They are full of Bible references outlining Christ’s promise to all of us, and how his selfless act has paved our way to eternal life. They are baby Christians, brand new in the world, hopeful that their new faith will make a difference in not only their lives but also the lives of others.

The infant Christians that we support at the Baptismal font is naïve to the message of God but yet, we who love and support them, profess our commitment to support these children in the teachings of the Lord and the hope we all have in the Gospel message. How wonderful for these “Baby Christians” with so many people supporting them!

Sometimes in our busy and hectic lives it is hard to remember what its like to be a “Baby Christian.” We lose our enthusiasm; thoughts of the promise of the Gospel are replaced with bills, deadlines and commitments, both personal and business; the everyday stress that we all face.

Many years of life experience, trials and tribulations, can work to distance us from those memories of our early Christian experience.

I want to be a “Baby Christian” like the child at the font. I want you all to support me, and like the “Born Again” Christian I want to be on fire for God and not to be bashful about proclaiming it. I want to see the possibilities in myself and in others that we can all make a difference in the world.

I want to be a “Baby Christian”

A...

Outreach News

By Marsha Gauthier

Blood Drive- A letter of thanks was received from Laurie Texeira, Blood Drive co-coordinator for the American Red Cross, stating that 46 pints of blood were collected at our recent blood drive. (It was previously stated incorrectly that 36 pints were collected.) Many thanks to all who helped in any way.

Supper- Our meat pie supper, held on Friday, Oct 20th, raised \$644.00 for the Honduran church, where Caitlin and Rev Beth went last year, to be split with the Church of The Redeemer in Biloxi, Miss. Additionally, \$800.00 was raised at the "Gift Basket Auction" for the Jubilee Ministry for Aids Orphans in Africa. This was a fabulous success!! Thank you for supporting us by participating in this fun event.

Family Shelter- Sunday, October 29th, the Outreach Group met in the Parish House to fill Halloween pumpkins and bags with treats for the children at the Family Shelter in Fall River. Garry Gillett delivered the bags to the shelter on Monday the 30th.

A Christmas breakfast will also be provided for the shelter on Saturday December 16th. The following menu, provided by the group, will be served by Garry & Chris Gillett, Olive Ormerod & Joan Padrenoss: Hash brown potatoes, Strata (egg type casserole), baked beans, coffee, juice, banana bread, coffee cake, individual boxes of cereal, and bagels & cream cheese. Gifts will also be provided to children and adults.

Greeting Cards- We will soon be providing names of our Homebound parishioners to our congregation for those wishing to send Thanksgiving and Christmas cards.

The Sojourn Teddy Bear Stuffing Party originally scheduled for November 8th in the parish house has been postponed. Unfortunately we do not have enough sewn bears. If you have a sewing machine and would consider sewing some of the pre-cut bears, please call Marsha Gauthier at 508-678-6486. These Bears provide comfort to those living with cancer and are given to them free of charge. 50 bears are provided each month to local hospitals.

A prayer bead workshop will take place on November 8th at 6:30 in the parish house. (Please note time change.) The cost of materials is \$5.00. If you have a set of beads already you may want to come and make a gift for a friend, family member or someone in the parish who is ill. There is a sign

up sheet at the back of the church. Or you may call the church office.

We will be again be offering the Clothe A Child Program from the Salvation Army to our congregation. Twenty children's names with sizes and item desired will be distributed to those who sign up. Why don't you team up with 1 or 2 friends or family members?

We are planning a Spring "Kids Shoe Box USA" program inviting the entire congregation to participate. Details will soon be announced.

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on January 23rd at 7pm. Why don't you plan on coming and take part in the enjoyment!

