

The Chimes
The Newsletter of Christ Church
Swansea, Massachusetts
January/February 2007



From the Rector

Dear People of God –

I write this to you at the very beginning of some time off. As usual, I am having a hard time letting go of everything at the parish, even though I am greatly looking forward to this time of rest and reflection. However, I am more and more sure

that God not only offers us times of Sabbath, but that God begs us to take it. It is easy, when we are so very busy or preoccupied, to forget that God calls us first as God's beloved children, just as we are. We do not have to prove anything to God, or earn God's love. All we have to do is to seek him, love him, and, as he tells us in the beautiful psalm, "Be still and know that I am God." I hear God clearly telling me that in overworking, or being too busy, or becoming overtired, I am not truly hearing God and being aware of how God is present. And I know that I am called first to hear God, and pray that my life can be a way of letting his love shine forth. I pray that this time off may be a time to hear that call in a new way.

And may God work this way in your life. In the midst of business, overwork, and stress, may you too be reminded that you do not have to prove anything to God. You are precious as you are, and God seeks to nurture and love you. Although there is always a lot of "work" to do for church, I hope that this work might truly be for you a ministry, a way for God to nurture you and work through you.

Be still and know that God truly is God. And know of my prayers and thanksgivings for you, every moment of every day, even when I am on vacation!

Faithfully,
Beth+

Annual Meeting is Sunday, February 11

Please mark your calendars now for the Parish Annual Meeting, which will be held on **Sunday, February 11, beginning at 10:30 in the Parish House**. The vestry will host a delicious brunch, and we will gather together to reflect on the past year at Christ Church, and to think about the future! We will have **one** service, at **9:00 am**, so that folks from both our 8:00 and 10:00 congregations can join us. This is the one time of year when the entire parish gathers together around our common life together, and it is a most important event – a time for sharing, listening, and especially for coming together in community. I ask each of you to make a special effort to join us this year. There will be delicious food, great company, exciting discussion. We are also looking into the possibility of having some activities for children while the meeting takes place.

February Vestry Meeting

The February Vestry Meeting has been moved to **Thursday, February 8, at 7:15 pm** in the Parish House.

Join the Christ Church Book Club

Our February book is Geraldine Brooks' March. For anyone who has ever read Louisa May Alcott's Little Women, this book about the girls' father and his experience in the Civil War should prove a good read.

If you like to read, please come join us! Our next gathering is **Thursday, February 22, at 7:00 pm in the Parish House**. We always have a good time discussing our book of the month and what to read next. Some of us have come without having read the book – the discussion *usually* makes us eager to do so. We have read a variety of books, some new, some involving family, some historical fiction, and some that are very tough emotional reads. We always have fun.

And then we have refreshments!

Some buy the book and some use the public library. If you have trouble obtaining a copy, please let the church office know, since someone usually has a copy that can be borrowed.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

We will continue our tradition of sharing a Pancake Supper together on **Shrove Tuesday, February 21, from 5:30 – 7:00 pm**. There will be pancakes with butter and syrup, sausages, juice, milk, and coffee. Please call the office or sign up at the back of the church if you are planning to come – it is always helpful in planning food. But all are welcome!

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 21

Ash Wednesday is **February 21**, and we will have two services of Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes on that day. Service times are at **12:00 noon** and **7:00 pm**.

Lenten Series

There will be a four part Lenten series entitled “Serving the Body of Christ,” which will help us to learn more about the AIDS crisis in Africa, and how the church is called to respond and be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Africa. It will be led by Chris Munro and Beth Grundy, and will take place on four **Wednesday evenings: February 27, March 6, March 20, and March 27**. We will begin each evening with a simple supper at 6:30, followed by the program, which will last approximately 1 ½ hours. This is an opportunity for us to truly grow in the sense of what it means to be a mission minded church, and also to grow in prayer for all of God’s people. We will kick the series off with an introductory movie and coffee hour on **Sunday, March 25**, sponsored by Chris Munro. This will be **after the 10:00 service**; but we sincerely hope that many of you who attend the 8:00 service will plan to be in attendance.

Chris has been chosen as one of six members of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts who will accompany Bishop Bud Cederholm to Africa this summer to observe and encounter first hand the work the Diocese is doing to minister to and with those affected with HIV-AIDS. Our congratulations go to her – and our prayers that we can support her in this mission, and continue to make it one that we continue to be

proud to share with our brothers and sisters throughout the Diocese and in Africa.

Please plan to attend the movie and the Lenten series! We are looking into having some activities for children during the series as well.

Nursery

We desperately need to organize our Nursery Corner for Sunday morning child care. Please call Rev. Beth if you can help in any way! Thanks, and thanks to those of you who are already at work on this!

Youth Group

We here at Christ Church are committed to provide opportunities for our youth to experience and explore their Christian faith in today’s world.

It is our goal to provide a safe and rewarding environment for our youth to be in community with fellow believers.

In the coming year, we are trying to model our efforts with the following goals:

We as a group want to have some form of outreach experience every 12 weeks or so, (we are currently planning a trip to Boston to work with Ecclesia Ministries and help

participate in the Common Cathedral, a worship and feeding ministry with those who are homeless).

We plan to meet every two weeks with a revolving agenda for each meeting. The first meeting would have an element of Christian study and formation, the next would be working session on outreach, and the third meeting would be free time to socialize, enjoy music and each other's company.

We hope to be able to plan fund raising events throughout the year not only to support our outreach efforts but also to help pay for some fun outings such as our trip to Six Flags last year, things like going to the movies or other fun activities.

We want to have are youth plugged into our Church life not only socially, but also spiritually and would hope that our youth can be more visible in our worship, and also in other areas of ministries of the Church.

We are excited about what today's young people can contribute to our Church life and we would like to make that a reality here at Christ Church.

Please consider being part of the vital ministry by prayerfully considering your support and involvement. In today's world when it's not so cool to be to part of something like this, we want to help change that little by little, and we look forward to working with you in making a difference.

Please contact one of us for more information, to express your interest, or find out how you can help.

Peace,
Christ Church Youth Group advisors Alan Scott, Shelagh Wood, Beth Grundy

WANTED

Wanted: Stewards!

Stewards wanted for a two-year term on the **Christ Church Stewardship Committee.**

Experience: No experience needed! Just the willingness to study and share the concepts of Christian stewardship to your fellow parish members

Compensation: Pay for this work is commensurate with your experience with the Holy Spirit.

All interested parties please contact the office

What Makes Me Smile

Things that make me smile:

The stained glass window I stare at on Sunday mornings. No matter what the weather outside it always appears that the sun is shining through.

The thought that if Jesus were here right now he would be the best friend ever.

Sometimes when I am at work I catch myself whistling, and think that I must be happy after all.

Sometimes on my ride into work I remember how it was when my kids were born, the feeling of relief that they were healthy.

When my dog that is so happy to see me jumps up on the bed, and in her excitement falls off the other side. (Great to be loved with so much energy)

Knowing that Santa Claus really exists. (just look into any 4 year old's eyes on Christmas morning)

Realizing how strong and resilient you are (I am amazed how you cope with the world)

When we pass the peace on Sunday mornings your smile always makes me smile.

Friday night out to dinner with my kids.

Knowing that no matter what happens God will always be there for me. (I will never be alone.)

I could probably go on and on forever with this, and that makes me smile.

So what makes you smile?

A.....

Outreach News

by Marsha Gauthier

Outreach Donations for 2006

Jubilee Ministry HIV/AIDS \$1100.00
Episcopal Diocese-Katrina Relief 325.00
Honduran Church 300.00
Somerset Community Crop Walk 200.00
Hope House-Fall River 200.00
Christ Church Youth-Mission Trips 150.00
Feed the Children-Kids Stuff USA 100.00
St Lukes' Cambodian Teen Program 100.00

Family Shelter- Saturday, December 16th, the Outreach Group provided a Christmas breakfast for the Fall River Family Shelter. The following menu, prepared by the Outreach Group, was 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 were also provided to children and adults. Please see below Chris and Garry Gillett's article describing this most rewarding event.

Thank you notes were received from several recipients of Prayer Shawls stating how very much they mean to them. Additionally, we received a "Certificate of Appreciation" from Fort Sam Houston Soldier and Family Assistance Center for our contribution of DVD's, Calling cards and many other items donated by the parish. These will be posted on the church bulletin board.

A Telephone Committee Chair is needed as Ann Beltran resigned from this position. Many thanks to Ann for her great job.

Quarterly Meeting - A very enthusiastic group of 17 people attended the January Outreach Quarterly Meeting. We discussed various possible missions and set up our schedule for 2007.

Prayer Beads - Several Prayer Beads have been presented to those who are ill.

They are becoming very popular and many people are requesting them as a means of focusing while praying.

We will be holding another workshop in February. The exact date will soon be announced. Please consider attending to make a pair for yourself or one to be presented to someone who is ill.

Sojourn Teddy Bears - A Teddy Bear Stuffing Party will be held on March 7th in the parish house at 6:30PM. People of all ages have a great time socializing as well as stuffing bears. There will soon be a sign up sheet at the rear of the church. These bears are to be presented to those living with cancer free of charge. 50 bears are provided each month to local hospitals. Please contact Marsha if you would like a bear for someone who has cancer.

Greeting Cards - Sunday, March 25th names will be available for the congregation to send Easter cards to our Homebound parishioners. Thank you everyone who participates in sending these messages of cheer.

Family Shelter - An Easter breakfast and Easter baskets for the family shelter will take place on Saturday, April 7th. The following menu has been planned: Strata (Egg casserole), baked beans, coffee, hash browns, bacon, coffee cake, bagels & cream cheese, munchkins, small boxes cereal, juice, milk, cream, fruit salad, and French toast with syrup. We will also fill Easter Baskets for the children

Bake Sale - Our bake sale/raffle will take place on Sunday, May 6th. We need donations for the raffle please, and of course baked goods. Details to follow. Please save your bakery boxes.

Harvest Supper - Our Harvest Meat Pie Supper/Gift Basket Auction is planned for Friday, October 5th. Please note your calendars. Details to follow.

American Red Cross Blood Drive is tentatively planned for October 16th.

Clothe a Child in November we will again have a Salvation Army Clothe a Child Mission.

Homeless - The parish will be invited to join their Outreach Group in providing new or gently used hats, scarfs and mittens/gloves for the 100 homeless people who will be attending the Christmas Brunch at the Church of the Ascension. We will soon have a collection receptacle in the rear of the church for this purpose.

Back Packs - The parish will be invited to participate in a local area schools back pack project. More details to follow.

Service Personnel - We are looking for the names of local Service Personnel, serving in Iraq, in order to send cheer packages once again.

Donations will be made to the following:

Hope House - We will be providing ten much needed complete sets of bed linens to Hope House in Fall River.

\$100 to the Society for the Increase of the Ministry

\$100 to the St Luke's Teen Program

Chris Munro Mission Trip-amount to be determined after May bake sale/raffle.

Our next quarterly meeting will be Tuesday, April 24th at 7PM in the parish house. Please come and enjoy a great experience.

Outreach Breakfast at the Family Shelter by Chris & Garry Gillett. This was our third Holiday breakfast at the Family Shelter in Fall River and every one has been special in its own unique way. The faces and names change but the gratitude in a parent's eye and the smile on a child's face are never changing. The image of a 13 year old girl running her hands across a beautifully wrapped gift and fifteen month old twins playing with stuffed animals they received would warm the heart of anyone. God works through people and the folks of our parish who contributed their time, gifts, and kindness are to be commended for helping to maintain a working relationship with the Family Shelter in Fall River. Thank you all for your consideration, kindness, and example.

