

The Chimes

The Newsletter of Christ Church

Swansea, Massachusetts

August - September 2007

From the Rector

Dear People of God:

September is upon us and that always seems to mean a flurry of activity in all areas of our life. Wonderful though it is to have so many choices of work, family, and community involvement, I know that there are times when everything

seems to feel out of control! “My life is chaos!” I often hear people say, and I understand exactly what they mean.

Church, my friends, is supposed to be different. And I hope it is for you. Church – the *ekklesia*, the Body of Christ – is meant to be the time and place where we are nourished and nurtured to do the work God has given us to do, wherever we are. This sometimes mean working on behalf of the Church itself for the spread of the Gospel into the world; but even when that is the case, God hopes that what God calls us to do will be delightful and nurturing to us, even if at times a bit challenging. It has always been a part of Christian stewardship for a follower of Jesus Christ to set aside some of his or her time, talent, and treasure for the work of God’s church, and I hope that you will take some time of prayer and thought with your family to determine what this means for you. It may mean deciding to make Sunday morning a family time where everyone attends church and Sunday School together. It may mean deciding to become a part of a new ministry or to rededicate yourself to one in which you are already involved. But whatever it is, my biggest hope is that you will be able to see your church commitments NOT as “just one more thing” – but as a time and a place for Jesus to nourish you and refresh you and delight you. Remember – he is the one who said “my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

It is my great delight to share the delight of the yoke and burden of Jesus with each one of you at Christ Church. Know, as always, that you are constantly in my prayers.

Faithfully,

Beth+

Christ Church Harvest Festival

Saturday, September 8!

Don't forget to tell all your friends and to join us yourself for our annual Harvest Festival! We begin at **9:00 am** with a parade from the Brown School to the church – and then the fun begins! Great food, music, crafts, jewelry, baked goods, clothing boutique, country store, raffles, silent auction, children's toys and games, white elephant treasures, and our famous auction beginning at 1:00 pm – there is something for everyone!

This year, Elaine Gray and Beth Grundy will once again sponsor a “**Sneak Peek**” on **Friday, September 7, from 5:00 – 7:00 pm**. For \$5.00, you can enjoy soda, wine, cheese, hors d'oeuvres, and have the opportunity to get first crack at our white elephants and other “shopping areas” that are ready to go. Why not plan to come and help us set up and stay for food, fellowship, and shopping?

If you would like to help out on the day, even for an hour or so, but aren't sure where you might plug in, please call the Rector, Beth Grundy, at the Parish Office (508-678-0923), and she will put you in touch with the appropriate person. We really want to include as many people as possible in this endeavor.

Many thanks, and *see you at the Harvest Festival!*

Worship

Sundays and Tuesdays

We will resume our regular Sunday services at **8:00 and 10:00 am on Sunday, September 9**. We also continue to celebrate Holy Eucharist on **Tuesday mornings at 10:00**, and please remember that everyone is invited to and welcome to this service!

Healing Service

There has been some interest in starting a regular Healing Service at Christ Church, and/or a time during a regular service of Holy Eucharist for special prayers for healing and laying on of hands. This is a ministry which can be shared by many people who feel called by God to pray with and for those with special needs or concerns. It does take some planning and a group of people willing to learn, and work together, however. If you are interested in seeing what this is about and working with the Rector, please call her at the office or put your name on the notice at the back of the church. Thanks!

Education and Formation

Bible Study

Bible Study will be held one again on **Tuesday mornings immediately following the 10:00 service, beginning on Tuesday, September 18**. We usually begin at about 10:45 pm in the church, and we study one or two lessons for the upcoming Sunday.

Adult Christian Education

Beth would like to see if there is **any interest** in an **evening Bible Study** or a **class on the history, doctrine, and worship of the Episcopal Church** (particularly interesting for those who do not necessarily come out of the Episcopal tradition). There will be a sign up sheet at the back of the church for each of these, and if you are interested, please write your name, your phone number, and list some times during the week that might be possible for you.

Discernment Group

Discernment is a spiritual practice of prayer and discussion, to try to determine how God is moving in our lives. **Do you sometimes feel that God is calling you to a new thing, or wonder how God is at work in your everyday life and work?** Would you like an opportunity to talk about this and to receive and offer some guidance, using storytelling, prayer, Scripture, and discussion? **If so, you may be interested in becoming part of a Discernment Group here at Christ Church!** The Rector is interested in starting such a group, and if you are interested, please let her know, or put your name on the notice at the back of the church.

Resource Day for Congregational Development

This day of fellowship and practical support for parish ministry will be held on **Saturday, September 22, from 9:00 – 3:45 at Bentley College in Waltham**, and we will be carpooling. Workshops will include topics of evangelism and church growth, parish business systems. Spirituality and leadership, formation of adults in discipleship, stewardship. Communication, environmental stewardship, ministry with families and children, and much more. The cost is \$20 and you can register online at www.diomass.org on the “Resource Day” icon – or you can just let Beth Grundy know if you would like to attend. There is money available to cover the cost. **Let’s send a team from Christ Church this year!**

Sunday School is starting up!

The first day of Sunday School will be **Sunday, September 23!** Sunday School begins at 10:00 in the Parish House, and then our children join the whole community in the church at the Peace for Holy Communion. Registration will take place the two Sundays before the first day, and you will also find a registration form in this issue of the newsletter. We are so pleased and blessed to have a new clean space in our basement for our Sunday School and education programs, and we will shortly plan a special service to bless it!

This year, we very much want to establish an education **program** that is suitable for **young people in grades 6,7, and 8** (and those who are older if there is an interest). So if you have children in that age group, please do sign them up as well.

Visioning and Mission

You will remember that last spring, the Vestry solicited people who were interested in serving on a sub-committee to look at our mission at Christ Church, in order to begin some visioning and planning for our future. Together with our consultant, Lynn Smith, Steve Carvalho, Muriel Driscoll, Marsha Gauthier, Lorna Gregory, Rich Mezzanotti, Pat Redfearn, Diane Stains, and Beth Grundy have been working hard during the last several months to plan for how we might gather some data and thoughts about what makes us tick here at Christ Church. To that end, you will be receiving a letter from them right after the Harvest Festival, inviting you to participate in this process. We expect it to be a lot of fun, and a way to increase our sense of mission and fellowship, so watch for our letter!

Vestry Notes

In May and June the Vestry undertook the following actions/discussions:

- To sponsor a lasagna supper in the fall to benefit the Sunday School
- Formed a Vestry liaison and sub-committee to work on our partnership with the Day School. The group, headed up by Diane Stains, includes Jacki Laxon, Garry Gillett, Alan Scott, and Sue Pavao.
- Received an update on the basement renovation, which is nearly complete
- Discussed support of the Harvest Festival

We also continue to start every Vestry Meeting with Bible Study and an opportunity to share how God has been working in our lives since we last met. Occasionally, some of us share dinner together. Vestry meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:15, and all parishioners are most welcome.

Outreach News

By Marsha Gauthier

Summer Greeting Cards- Many members of the congregation sent summer greeting cards to our Homebound parishioners. It's so important to them and makes them feel included in our church family.

Sojourn Teddy Bears-There will be a Teddy stuffing "party" on November 7th at 6:30 in the parish house. All are invited to share in this heart warming event. We get to stuff and name the bears. Sojourn Teddy Bears are made by many members of our parish for those living with cancer. 50 bears are provided each month to local hospitals. Please contact Marsha if you would like a bear free of charge for someone you know who has cancer.

Back Packs-Our heartfelt thanks to all who sponsored one or more 3rd grade Swansea students. They recently received a back pack from us filled with school supplies. It is not

too late to make a donation for this cause. Please place your contribution of any amount in the alms basin clearly marked "Back packs". You may also mail you donation to the church office again clearly marked "back packs". The delightful thank you notes received from these children are on display at the back of the church for all to enjoy.

Prayer Shawls-Many shawls have recently been presented to those who are ill or in need of a spiritual lift. If you are able to knit or crochet consider joining this great mission. Patterns available upon request. Many thanks to those who have made, and continue to make them. Please contact Betty Traynor, Marsha Gauthier, or the church office 508-678-0923 if you know of someone in need.

Hope House-Your Outreach Group recently provided a cookout for the residents of Hope House in Fall River. Hope House is a residence for those living with AIDS/HIV and are homeless. Without your support this mission would not be possible.

Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen-Thank you for continuing to bring food in for those less fortunate than we are. Families from the Somerset, Swansea, Fall River area receive groceries each month from the Annelle Delorme Hagerman Food Bank at the Church of our Saviour.

Artificial Kidney Center -We recently presented the Artificial Kidney Center in Fall River with 10 blankets and 20 gift cards for food for the patients. We are currently collecting aluminum tabs for them which will be sold to provide additional support for these patients. Please bring them in baggies (if possible) the 2nd or 3rd week in December. A container will be provided for them in the parish house. Further instructions will be provided in the near future.

Meat Pie Supper/Gift Basket Auction -Tickets for the Meat Pie Supper, planned for Friday, October 5th at 6PM in the parish house, will be available at the Harvest Festival.

The menu is as follows: Meat pie (again from Continent Bakery, Swansea), homemade baked beans, cole slaw (provided by Chris Munro), bread (Continent

Bakery) & butter, assorted pastries and beverages. Alan Scott will be the auctioneer again this year.

The cost is \$7.00 for adults, \$3.50 for children under 10. Take out tickets are available for \$7.00. The food was delicious, the auction great fun and the camaraderie was the best. It was a sell out last year.

In order to avoid disappointment please call Marsha Gauthier to reserve your ticket if you will not be able to attend the festival.

UPCOMING EVENTS: (Mark your calenders)

October 5thMeat Pie Supper & Gift Basket Auction

October 16th American Red Cross Blood Drive

November 7th-Teddy Stuffing Party

January 2008 Kids Shoe Box USA Project

Our next quarterly meeting will be Tuesday, October 23th at 7PM in the parish house. Please consider joining us and enjoy a great experience.

Honoring our past, anticipating our future

The Long Range Planning Committee has met several times to begin planning on how we are going to solicit information from the parishioners on how we see Christ Church 10 years from now.

We are planning dinners late in September and early October. After the meal, we will break into smaller groups where we will think about the future of the church as far as how we want to be seen in the community, what we want to be doing for the community and, pushing this thought a bit further, where does our community begin and end.

A letter will be going out to all parishioners with more details about the dinners. The letter will be followed up with a phone call to reserve your spot for one of the dinners. As a member of the parish, your input will help to determine the path we take together. Be on the lookout for the letter and join us for the fellowship and round tables.

A letter to Christ Church

Dear Parishioners Friends,

Last year I applied for and was accepted to become part of a mission leadership team to Tanzania, Africa along with a group of Lay and Clergy from the Diocese of Massachusetts. Together our group of nine Missionaries prepared to embark on a journey that would take us to Tanga, Tanzania as a guest of Bishop Baji, and to connect with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in Africa. Our Mission was to take place in August of '07.

A major focus of this mission was to involve and include our local parishes in our journey and to fund gifts of mosquito netting to Africans that we encountered on our mission. I immediately enlisted the help of Rev. Grundy who wholeheartedly supported my journey and helped me spiritually prepare for the upcoming year. I also had the wonderful support of our Church School that helped with the "Change for Change" canisters to collect for the nettings. The Outreach committee received me with open arms as I told them of my mission and raised over 600.00 dollars as well. We also had a four part Aids series during the Lenten season where we educated ourselves on Aids in Africa.

Unfortunately, during this time the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion in Africa continued to strain with differences of opinion in reference to Homosexuality and Women in particular. These differences eventually became too overwhelming for Bishop Baji to continue to welcome our mission leadership program and our trip has been cancelled for the time being.

Reverend Grundy and I have decided to ask the parish to hold any funds collected thus far for the mosquito-netting project. All checks will be returned at this time and we are graciously asking the Outreach committee to oversee the remaining funds, i.e. Change for change canisters and bake sale profits, for mosquito nets until we are certain that the mission to Tanzania will not take place and then to defer the netting funds to Episcopal Relief Development to purchase netting on behalf of Christ Church.

It is said that life is a journey and not a destination and this statement cannot be more pertinent than in this circumstance. For in my journey, I have truly encountered the spirit, charity, and love of my fellow parishioners at Christ Church. My mission was warmly and enthusiastically accepted and I was overwhelmed by the support provided by everyone. I cannot say that this mission has failed because my heart has been warmed by your grace. It is because of your actions that I will not forget my brothers and sisters in Africa and know that there is hope for them. Please continue to pray for Africa and for missions throughout the World and pray that our leaders will learn to put aside prejudice in order to better serve their people and their faith.

Peace and Love,

Chris Munro

Christ Church, Swansea, Massachusetts

Directory

The Right Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE

Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts

The Right Rev. Roy Cederholm

The Right Rev. E. Gayle Harris

Suffragan Bishops

The Rev. Elizabeth Grundy

Rector

The People of Christ Church

