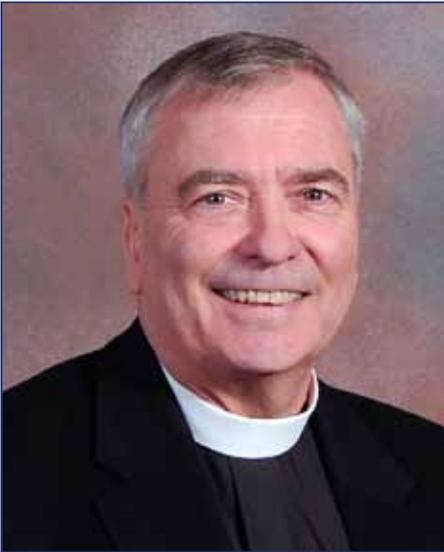


The Epistle

December, 2017



A Message from Your Priest in Charge



Dear Friends,

One of the reasons Advent is my favorite season is that we get to enjoy the event, the birth of Jesus, before it happens! Jesus is born every time you and I are generous, when our focus isn't on ourselves, whenever we bring life to someone else. Advent is the season in the Church calendar that is full of joy, anticipation, gift giving. For me it is the expression of Christianity at its best.

There's another aspect of Advent that brings life to us, although a bit more covertly. We are invited to greet with joy the coming of Jesus by forsaking our sins and repenting. One of the meanings of repentance is "to feel sorry for," like to feel sorry for the sins of our past. In the spiritual journey, however, the word repent means to turn, to turn around and face a different direction. This is crucial to our vitality, our joy, living in the Spirit.

Notice when I feel sorry for my past, when my focus is on what I've done wrong, it takes all my energy, vitality and joy away. It's like a fifty pound weight attached to my leg that I drag around with me. When I define myself by my past I'm no good, or at the very least, I am not good enough. It's deadly!

Now another way of looking at repentance. The sin of my past is the vehicle through which God teaches me, lessons in life that God would have me learn. The kingdom of God is always presented as something in front of us, not in our past. Forsaking my sins is to acknowledge the past, and then to repent i.e. change the direction of my focus. Thank you God for teaching me those difficult lessons in life that have allowed me to learn and grow for what's next, to face the kingdom in front of me, like being reborn.

Jesus once said "None who has his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom." This is the kingdom: to live in the joy of "what's next." Not to live in the context of "what's wrong."

The joy in Advent is all about the excitement of what's next. You and I experience hell, a living hell, when our focus is on the past, i.e. what's wrong with me (or you.)

The invitation is to repent: to turn from our past to what's in front of us. It is to bring forth the Kingdom of Heaven

Warmly,
Father Stephen

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

In the season of Advent there are some prayers that are read at the beginning of each service during the lighting of the advent wreath. It has become our tradition over the past 10 years to have members of the congregation read these prayers with their families. There are only a few sentences each week, and they can be read alternately by any number of family members.

Please consider volunteering to read the Advent prayers at either the 8:00am or 9:30am service on December 24th, and let Erica Stewart sammysmommy1124@aol.com or 973-219-0491 or Maureen Kilian office@christchurchpompton.org 973-835-2207 know. Thank you. God bless.



The fruit of silence is prayer.

The fruit of prayer is faith.

The fruit of faith is love.

The fruit of love is service.

The fruit of service is peace.

Mother Teresa

submitted by Deacon Barbara

Alleluia Songs of Advent

Each day during the 22 days of Advent 2017 a new Advent meditation will be posted on the Diocesan Meditations blog and emailed to subscribers. You can subscribe at dioceseofnewark.org/meditations. This year's Advent meditations, *Alleluia Songs of Advent*, will be reflections and stories inspired by the Psalms appointed for the Advent season, written by recipient ministries of Alleluia Fund grants.



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year. We will have the usual Sunday morning services at 8 and 9:30 am on Christmas Eve. In the evening on Christmas Eve the Cherub and Junior Choirs will sing at the 5:00 pm Family Service. The Adult Choir will sing at the 10:30 pm service. The Christmas Day service is at 10:00 am.



Rachel Gasataya Recognition Day

Our Organist, Rachel Gasataya, will be leaving Christ Church as of December 31, 2017. Rachel will be pursuing her extended education. We will celebrate Rachel's giftedness with our music program over the past 6 years and have a reception in her honor on Sunday, December 17 after the 9:30 am service. We will miss Rachel and wish her well in her new endeavors.

A Reminder

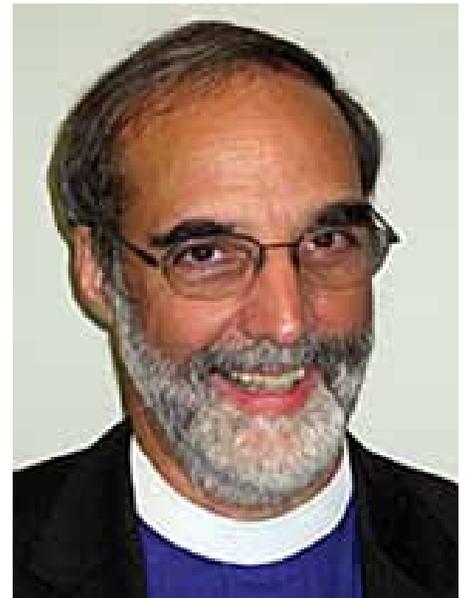
If you have not already done so, please renew your commitment to our Christ Church ministries by filling out and returning a 2018 Pledge Card. Extra pledge cards are available in the Vestry Room and in the Parish Office. You can put your card in the collection plate on Sunday, or bring it or mail it to the Parish Office, 400 Ramapo Avenue, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442. Thank you very much for your stewardship of our congregation and of those who are served by our ministries!

Christ Church Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School Christmas pageant is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 17 during the 9:30 service.

Financial Clerks Needed

Volunteers are needed to be Financial Clerks, those who count and deposit the Sunday offering. If you are interested, please see Bruce Hetzel, or call him at 973-800-2725.



Bishop Search

As you may know Bishop Mark Beckwith has announced his retirement. Read about the search for the XI Bishop of Newark at www.dioceseofnewark.org/bishop-search.





News from the Sunday School

The children celebrated Halloween with a Halloween party following the 9:30 service on Sunday, October 29th. Everyone had great fun and the decorations were festive and scary! The fundraiser for this year for Seeing Eye Dogs and Service animals started with the Wreath Sale. Christmas gift collection for Eva's Village is underway and will continue until early December. Everyone is invited to join the Sunday School children for the Christmas Sing-along at the Pasta Dinner on December 14th, starting at 6 pm. The Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, December 17 at the 9:30 am service. Holiday cookie baking, where the children bake cookies for members of the parish who can't get to church, or who need some extra kindness, will be after the pageant. Thank you for your help with these events.

*Karen Cahill, Louise Hanania
and Debbie Onderlinde*

The Thrift Shoppe

The Thrift Shoppe would like to invite you to visit our page on Facebook and on Yelp. We are in the process of trying to find new ways of advertising and are hoping to get you to help. If you are on Facebook or yelp, please visit our site and give us a review and Like our page. Please share our page with your Facebook friends. Our volunteers work very hard for an amazing cause and we want everyone to know about us!



Treasurer's Note

In an effort to appropriate funds to the correct accounts, any checks intended for the Capital Campaign should be made out to Christ Church noting "Capital Campaign" on the memo line. Thank you for your attention to this detail.

Christ Church is on Facebook

Christ Church is now on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com/christchurchpompton to become a fan.



Capital Campaign Offering Envelopes

Capital Campaign Offering envelopes are available for your convenience, and can be found on the table in the Vestry Room or in the Parish Office.

Food for Friends

The second Sunday of each month is the traditional day to receive your contributions of canned or packaged food stuff and for personal hygiene items for distribution through our Food for Friends program. Items may be placed in baskets at the baptismal font or in the Children's Chapel. You may also bring items any time during the month and leave them by the box in the Guild Hall.



Choir Fund Raiser

Do you have old cellphones, ink cartridges or other small electronic devices such as games, MP3 players and Ipods? Don't toss them in the trash!! Bring them in and leave them in our box in the church office. The choir can recycle these items and receive cash for them! It's a win, win...the choir can buy more great music and you can help the environment at the same time.



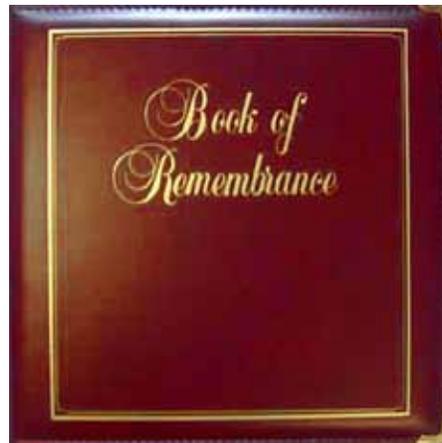
Openings for New Clients at Shepherd's Haven

We would like to cordially invite you to come and spend time with us at Shepherd's Haven. We are a nonprofit activity and social center, where there is good food, great conversations and a lot of laughs. Our clients are great at trivia, enjoy painting, bingo, gardening, cooking, and games of skill and so much more. Come and meet some new people, our fabulous volunteers, and excellent staff. We are offering you a free day, with no obligations. We would love to see you and share with you a fun filled day. We are open Monday through Friday until 3:30pm. Call Leigh at 973-835-4747.

Book of Remembrance

You may have noticed the red book on the Prayer Desk on November 2, and when the Lay Reader read the Prayers of the People, names you haven't heard in a while were read along with the names of those in whose memory altar flowers were given, or who were recently deceased. Once a year, on All Saints' Day, or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, names added to the Book of Remembrance over the past 5 years or so are read.

If you would like a loved one's name inscribed in the Book of Remembrance, which normally resides in the case on the wall to the right of the Baptismal Font, please see Erica Stewart or any one of the Altar Guild members. The person's name, as you would like it to appear (for example, with or without a middle initial or name, etc.), and their birth and death year, will be inscribed in the book and read aloud next year during the Prayers of the People on All Saints' Day. A \$5.00 donation to the Altar Guild is requested.



Parish Family Birthdays-December

If you have not yet informed the parish office of your birthdate, please call Maureen at 973-835-2207.

December

- 1 - Donna Birch
- 1 - Cindy McNamara
- 4 - Tom Falk
- 13 - Michael Falk
- 13 - Cheryl Finger
- 14 - Logan Swanson
- 14 - Blake Wolfson
- 16 - Christian Longo
- 17 - Brian Liston
- 18 - Herb Gaiss
- 20 - Emily Shepard
- 22 - Gary Geresi
- 23 - Barbara Kida
- 24 - Kathleen Valle
- 24 - Elizabeth Kostyn
- 27 - Dave Miller
- 28 - Maria Elliott
- 28 - Matthew Cahill

Luxury Vacations in Mexico and the Dominican Republic

Luxurious accommodations await you at fabulous resorts in both Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Prices are extremely affordable. Dates and accommodations are quite flexible. Advance planning is advisable. For pricing, availability, and accommodation details please see or call Cheryl Finger at 973-723-5044.



Personalized Cards

If you are looking for a convenient way to send out cards to friends, family, and/or business relations...look no further!

Order personalized cards with your name or signature printed directly on the card and return address printed directly on the envelope! This is a huge time-saving convenience!

Best of all, these cards are offered at a 20% discount and, in addition, Christ Church receives 7% back on the order...making your order a win-win for everyone.

The entire line of cards are available online for perusal at www.graphicinnovations.carlsoncraft.com. On the website, you will be able to select a stock verse or create your own, select typestyles, and personalize it

further by adding your name.

There are cards available for all budgets – go on, have some fun! Call Cheryl Finger with any questions or if assistance is needed at 973-616-0309.

To preview products online:

www.graphicinnovations.carlsoncraft.com

Help Wanted

Women's Way Fitness Center is looking for a responsible person to open and close 2 weekends per month. Saturdays, 8am – 3pm; Sundays, 8am – 2 pm. \$10 per hour. Includes free gym membership. Call Rachel at 973-305-1003

Our Communal Kitchen

There are many of us who use the kitchen at the church. Those who do should bear in mind the following guidelines:

- Leave the kitchen the way you found it. Everything should be cleaned, hand-dried, and put away. The counters and work surfaces should be clean and free of clutter. It's really nice to come into a clean kitchen.
- If you use cloth towels it would be greatly appreciated if you can bring them home, add them to your own laundry, and return them.
- Make sure the refrigerator doors are completely closed.
- Lock all lockable cabinets before your departure.

- Your help with maintenance is greatly appreciated since there is no particular person in charge of our kitchen; therefore, we all are. Thank you in advance!



The Thrift Shoppe
at 420 *One Step Up*

The Thrift Shoppe is now open on the second and fourth Sunday of each month from 11:00 am until 12:00 noon. We are also open Tuesdays from 3:00 pm until 7:00 pm, Thursdays from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm, and Saturdays from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Donations can be left in the shed located in the church parking lot to the right of the permanent storage shed. It is clearly marked with a sign for Thrift Shoppe drop-offs. The Thrift Shoppe is always in need of shopping bags. For more information please call Florence at 973-962-6289 or 925-640-3421.

Florence Loscalzo



Baptisms

November 25

James Maxwell Smith

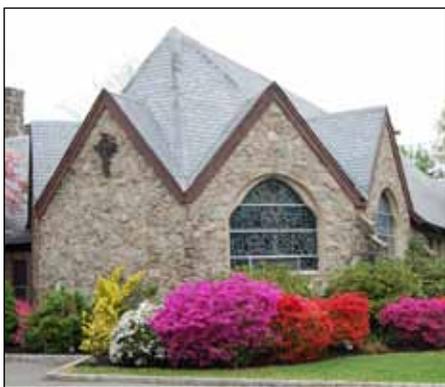
Pledge Card Reminder

This is a reminder to return your 2018 Pledge Cards. You can mail them, put them in the offering plate, or bring them to the Parish Office.

Just a Reminder

We recycle at Christ Church. Plastics, glass, and metal cans should be placed in the large white plastic containers with the red tops, near the dumpster outside the kitchen. Paper and card board should be flattened and stacked neatly in the blue wire cart, also outside the kitchen, next to the dumpster.

Your help with these items is greatly appreciated since there is no particular person in charge of these tasks, and they shouldn't accumulate in the kitchen. Thanks in advance!



Grocery Gift Cards

The painless fundraiser!

When you buy Grocery Gift Cards today, you'll have a good feeling knowing that Christ Church receives a Nickel for every dollar you spend! Grocery gift cards are available from ShopRite, and Stop & Shop in \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100 denominations. All of the cards will carry any unused balance until you use it up. Perhaps you would consider donating a Shop Rite gift card to Shepherd's Haven or to Food for Friends. Cards are available from Joe Blauvelt, Linda Meyer after the coffee hours and Maureen Kilian in the church office during the week.



Cards of Remembrance

Cards of remembrance are for those who, on the death of a friend, desire to send a memorial offering to Christ Church, instead of sending flowers. The cards are available through the Parish Office.

The Episcopal Diocese of Newark Mission Statement

Equipping congregations...

Empowering people...

Engaging the world...

...with the hope and justice of Jesus

The Epistle

*The newsletter of Christ Church, Pompton Lakes, New Jersey
973.835.2207
www.christchurchpompton.org*

December 2017

Please submit all copy to Maureen Kilian, Parish Administrator in a typewritten format or e-mail to office@christchurchpompton.org by the 15th of each month.

*The Epistle is designed by Graphic Innovations
www.graphinn.com*

Visit the parish calendar at the website at www.christchurchpompton.org