



Christ Church Chronicle

Fall 2011

From Paul Habersang, Priest in Partnership

One of my favorite verses from scripture comes from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, chapter forty three, verse nineteen: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Long ago, Isaiah preached and scribed these words for a people in exile; a people who desperately needed to know that God cared about them and that God would not abandon them in their distress. As a matter of fact, responded Isaiah, God was about to do something new, something radical, and something magnificent. God was about to lead the Israelites back into the freedom of a new day; into a new chapter of their lives that would be a turning point in the life of their collective community.

I love that verse from scripture because it holds as much promise for us today as it did nearly twenty five hundred years ago when it was first proclaimed for the ancient Israelites. Within that verse there are aspects of anticipation, hope, rebirth, surprise, and especially a sense of new beginnings - new beginnings that I frequently like to refer to as "resurrection opportunities." Through our faith and trust in God who can do more than we can ask or imagine, resurrection opportunities are often placed right in front of us; all we need to do to make them become a reality is to collaboratively act upon them...with God's help, of course!

Here at Christ Church, Montpelier, I believe that we have also begun a new chapter in our lives together; a new chapter of anticipation, hope, surprise, rebirth, and yes, even of new beginnings. As your Priest-in-Partnership, you've called me to serve collaboratively with you - in mutual ministry - as together we learn and discern who and what God is calling us to become in this, Vermont's capitol city. Through prayer, discernment, and responsive action we will move forward into a new day as missional disciples for Christ right here in downtown Montpelier, Vermont.

Personally, I am excited and thrilled to be here! I am so grateful to the Rev. Ann Grady for all the work and effort she put forth in her time as Interim Priest by preparing us for this new chapter and these new beginnings.

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The Episcopal Church

in the Anglican Communion:

A global community of over 80 million Anglicans in 44 regional and national churches in over 160 countries.

*Archbishop of Canterbury,
The Most Reverend and Right
Honorable Rowan Williams*
Lambeth Palace

London, England SE1 7JU

www.anglicancommunion.org

in the United States:

A community of over 2 million members in 110 dioceses in the United States and abroad.

*Presiding Bishop,
The Most Reverend Dr. Katharine
Jefferts Schori*

815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

www.episcopalchurch.org

in the Diocese of Vermont:

A community of 8200 members in 50 congregations.

*Bishop,
The Right Reverend Thomas Ely*

5 Rock Point Road
Burlington, VT 05401

(800) 286-3437

www.dioceseofvermont.org

in the Parish:

Christ Episcopal Church, a community of 388 members.

*Interim Pastor,
The Reverend Paul Habersang*

64 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

(802) 223-3631

www.christchurchvt.org

Still, we have many wonderful challenges that require our full attention; challenges that will bring us closer as we work together....and challenges that will build up our community and deepen our spiritual roots.

In the next several weeks you will see new seeds of change beginning to sprout forth. Already, there are several core task groups in place intended to enhance our community life; a task group that will update and improve our parish directory, a task group that will enhance our website, our internal, and external communications, and beginning very soon there will also be a series of small group "Cottage Meetings" where we will come together in fellowship to learn more about one another and to deepen our spiritual relationships. I'm hopeful that everyone will be able to attend a Cottage Meeting so that we may share stories and get to know one another on a deeper level.

Together, we move forward into the future, I encourage you to become active and engaged in the life and in the ministries of Christ Church. I hope that through the anticipation and hope of new life, you will be energized to become more engaged in our community. I hope you will speak the truth in love and offer your open, direct, and honest feedback. I hope and I pray that together with God's help, we will as a faith community, spring forth those visible and tangible signs of Christ's life, love, and decisive action both within our faith community and also as beacons of hope shining forth into our capitol city.

Yes, we have a lot of God's work to do...and there's no doubt that we'll have every opportunity to meet these challenges by working together in mutual ministry and trusting in faith that God will be with us leading us every step of the way.

Your Priest-in-Partnership, -- Paul+

Meet Our New Priest!

August has been a pivotal month in the life of Christ Church! With unanimous accord of the Vestry and MDC, the Rev. Paul Habersang was called to be our priest. Let us introduce him to you. Paul comes to us from Glastonbury, Connecticut, where he has held the three-year position of Assistant Rector at St. James' Episcopal Church. As the end of his term at St. James' approached, he felt called to explore opportunities for ministry in Vermont. From many years of summer vacations on the northern shores of Lake Champlain, Paul has been drawn to live and serve here.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and Administration from Quinnipiac University, Paul had a twenty-year career that included customer service, marketing, sales, and accounting, with General Electric and Square D Companies. Along the way, he found a spiritual home in the Episcopal Church. From this, a call to pursue the ordained ministry began to surface.

In 2005, he entered General Theological Seminary in New York City. His studies included internships within the Greater Hartford Regional Ministry and at St. John's Episcopal Church in West Hartford. His clinical pastoral education was carried out at Hartford Hospital in the Neuro-Trauma Intensive Care Unit. In 2008, Paul received his Masters of Divinity degree, was ordained to the priesthood, and began his tenure at St. James'.

At St. James', Paul was engaged in leading and developing Christian formation programs; preaching and liturgical leadership; collaborative lay leadership development; enhancing newcomer ministry and hospitality; pastoral care; community and ecumenical leadership; communications and web development; and facilities oversight, including participation and decision making in a major capital campaign. During his three years there, he also led a youth mission trip to Galveston, Texas, and a youth pilgrimage to the Borderlands Spiritual Ranch in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Paul describes his liturgical style as broad church, reverent yet relaxed. He is a supporter of Jesus' ministry of radical welcome - at the communion table and in all areas of our ministries. Paul played a role in a contemporary form of summer worship held on Sunday afternoons entitled Worship on the Lawn, and found that it attracted new families and seekers who were looking for something different than traditional worship. Paul embraces the practice of mutual ministry, where everyone's ideas, gifts, talents, and treasures are essential to becoming the best faith communities that we are called to be. With Paul as our priest, we can all expect to become more engaged in our parish life!

During Paul's visit to Montpelier the weekend of August 13th, he met with the interview team, and other members of the Vestry and MDC, and was given a comprehensive tour of the buildings and grounds. He delights in our strengths and sees our challenges as exciting opportunities. His energy is gently contagious! After our time spent with Paul, there was a palpable feeling of uplift and optimism that can best be described as the Holy Spirit at work among us.

Paul's family includes two sons - David, age 18, who is majoring in criminal justice, and John, age 20, who is majoring in psychology. Paul and his partner Rich Aronson will be moving to Montpelier in September, with Paul's first day at Christ Church scheduled for Monday, September 26th. We warmly welcome them into our midst! Maggie Thompson, MDC Co-Chair

Cottage Meetings to Meet Paul

Would you like to get acquainted with Paul Habersang, our new Priest in Partnership? He is as eager to get to know us, as we are to know him. Throughout the fall, cottage meetings will be held, to share conversation in relaxed, small group settings. We invite everyone to attend one of these cottage meetings. Sign-up sheets are posted in the parish hall. Carpooling is an option, if desired or needed. Thus far, the following dates have been set up. Additional dates are forthcoming, so stay tuned!

Tuesday, November 1, 6 pm, Potluck Dinner, at the home of Mary Jane Potter in Waitsfield. 496-2415 Call for directions, in hopes that the bridge will be open by then.

Thursday, November 3, 7 pm, at the home of Pat Carruth,
2 N. Franklin Street, Apt. 4, Montpelier. 223-7050

Tuesday, November 8, 7 pm, at the home of Kate and John McCann,
82 Trillium Hill, Montpelier. 229-6169

Thursday, November 10, 7 pm, at the home of Eunice Crosby,
Westview Meadows, Apt. 209, Montpelier 225-6044

Thursday, November 17, 7 pm, at the home of Ida and Willem Lange,
1309 Towne Hill Road, East Montpelier. 223-3223

Our Youth Ministry – Change is A-Comin'!

With the arrival of Paul Habersang, our new priest in partnership, I'm getting reenergized and excited about the new possibilities of growth in all areas with our youth ministry. Though we are presently small in number yet mighty, we are setting an agenda for the coming months. With the holidays fast approaching we want to get the word out about our new structure. Beginning in November we will structure the Sunday school time to a flexible yet consistent pattern. The first two Sundays of every month will be a lectionary based lesson that could cater to multiple ages. I hope to coordinate my lesson to compliment the homily given in the sanctuary. Ideally, this could foster family conversation for later. The 3rd Sunday of every month would be a "service day". Instead of a traditional lesson plan and discussion following, the children would do a service activity such as prepare food for coffee hour, make gift baskets for shut ins, rake leaves in the court yard, plant bulbs or sweep walkways. These are just a sample of the possibilities. Finally, the 4th Sunday would be Church Youth participation. Children would be lay readers, serve at the altar, help greet and usher. This structure helps facilitate a fuller and richer experience of church community for everyone.

I will also be talking to families about special times to get together. I would love to reestablish the wreath making party in preparation for Advent. We could also plan family nights with pizza, making Christmas cards for our friends and neighbors or making Christmas cookies for area nursing homes. If you have any ideas, let me know...And don't forget the annual Christmas pageant December 18th 10am service! Please don't hesitate to call me at 223-4766. -- Elizabeth Wilcox

Stewardship

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!" – Philippians 4:4

Paul's words to the people of Philippi rang through our sanctuary when Bishop Ely quoted them in his homily during his recent visit. I feel a rush of anticipation and excitement again when I read these words as I write this message, for indeed, Christ Church has much cause for rejoicing! Moving through a time of uncertainty, transition and faithfulness, we now emerge with a new Priest-in-Partnership, a new energy, and a renewed commitment to the promises of our baptismal covenant. In the past two years, we have seen anew that God has indeed blessed Christ Church and each one of us with an abundance of blessings!

What will your response be to the manifestations of God's grace and generosity in your life and in this place?

As Chair of this year's stewardship campaign, I invite you to prayerfully consider this question in the coming weeks ahead. During our Sunday services, you will hear the reflections and "Magic Moments" from folks in our parish family including our new Priest-in-Partnership, as together we share how God has worked in our lives in mysterious, mundane and even miraculous ways.

Our response to God's generosity – our own thanksgivings, our own alleluias, in times of both trial and triumph – are at the heart of this sacred responsibility called stewardship.

Please, be a part of our coming together within Christ Church. I invite you to prayerfully consider the many ways in which God is blessing you, and the many ways your time, talents and treasure can illuminate and enrich this holy space, this faith community, and our growing ministries.

Again I will say, rejoice!

Angie Simpson
Chairwoman

From the pen of the Senior Warden

In addition to the cooler weather and the bright foliage, the beginning of fall has brought about a series of significant events in the life of Christ Church. On September 25th, a large number of parishioners turned out to express their deep appreciation for the 18-month long ministry of the Rev. Ann Grady. Ann's steady presence during the transition was fundamental to granting the ministry discernment committee and the vestry the time and space needed to reflect upon our parish and to articulate a vision that ultimately led to the calling of the Rev. Paul Habersang our new priest-in-partnership.

The Rev. Habersang celebrated his first services at Christ Church on October 2nd and I feel everyone was immediately impressed by the level of commitment and energy that he brings to his ministry. I am confident that Paul's great gifts and skills will be used to help lead us to an exciting new chapter in the life of our faith community.

The third event in as many weeks occurred on October 9th with the annual visitation of Bishop Thomas Ely. During his sermon, the Bishop articulated his great affection for our parish and the high regard that he holds for Paul Habersang through his repeated exhortation to the congregation: "rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice."

After the 10:00 service and reception, the vestry met with Bishop Ely in the Chapel. The topics discussed included: his feedback on Christ Church's discernment process; how the diocese could assist the parish in the steps it needs to take in anticipation of a capital campaign; and, input from the Bishop on achieving the parish profile's description of Christ Church as "the Cathedral Church of the Capital City."

The Bishop felt that the greatest strength of our discernment process was that we give ourselves enough time. He also indicated that we were extremely fortunate to have had Ann Grady as our interim priest. He had great praise for the work of the ministry discernment committee in developing the parish profile and he expressed gratitude for the parish's faith in him and its support of his recommendation of Paul Habersang as our priest-in-partnership.

As many of you know, the diocese has also been considering conducting a capital campaign and he suggested that it might make sense for Christ Church to consider partnering with the diocese in undertaking such an effort. In his former parish, Paul Habersang was involved in two major capital campaigns and he looks forward to lending his expertise as we continue working to address the needs of our buildings.

Finally, the Bishop expressed support for the vision of Christ Church as a cathedral in the capital city and he suggested that we begin by focusing on ways to use our space in more creative and strategic ways as a benefit to the larger community. After he was presented with our financial reports and draft audit, he again expressed the diocesan council's appreciation for the effort the parish has made in being current in its diocesan assessment. We closed the meeting by Bishop Ely leading us in a circle of prayer.

Sincerely,
Paul Harrington

From the desk of the Junior Warden

I wish first to thank the group of eager workers who participated in our July workday. The mortar was removed from the windows in the dining room. And the windows were washed! :) The shelves in the kitchen were emptied, cleaned, and repositioned so the contents are easier to reach. There was even some wall washing that made the dining room look much better. Many thanks equally to those who attended the October 15

workday--winterization workday. The mortar went back on the windows, the drains on the parish house were checked and debris removed, and cleanup around the outside helped get us ready for the next season.

There are a few building related activities that will be taking place in the next month or so. The City of Montpelier needs to pave their section of the parking lot adjacent to ours. They will pave our section at the same time. On the day the pavers are there No Parking signs will be up. Please don't park there that day because they will tow. Their electrician will be disconnecting the Information Booth electricity from our building and tying it into the junction box connected to the State Street streetlight.

Farr's Tree Service still has us on their schedule to remove the trees over our sewer line. They got behind due to the first flood in May and then the incredible amount of rain we had during the months of July and August. They are based in Waterbury and their home was badly damaged by Irene so they took a week off to try to get back on their feet and will get to us as soon as they can. There will be parking spaces blocked off the day they come.

Irene only put 2 - 3 inches of water in the Parish House basement. Again the floor drains worked and once the river subsided the water drained. The electricity was turned off before the flooding occurred so we did not need to have Green Mountain Power turn the power off at the pole this time and the water did not get up to the level of any outlets so we did not need an electrician to ok turning it back on. The oil company came and checked the burners for the water heater and boiler. Both were fine this time. (The one on the water heater was replaced after the May flooding.) S/R services came to do the cleanup in the basement. We are still getting a very musty smell in the hallway at the bottom of the stairs so they will be coming back soon to remove the sheetrock outside the men's bathroom and off the under section of the stairs. If mold is found we will need to have that removed. I have checked with the insurance company and we will combine that work with the cleanup from Irene.

The bandaid that Headwater Construction put on the junction of the bell tower and main church building kept water from entering the tower from that level, but lots of water came in from the upper level and fill the container that was there and began leaking into the foyer. Paul Harrington and I emptied that container the weekend of Labor Day. Our houseguest from Massachusetts helped me construct a new drainage much like my rain barrel. There is a container with a spigot in the tower with a hose attached and the spigot on. There is another container just outside the small foyer door with another spigot and hose attachment. That spigot is turned off and the hose reaches out the door so we can empty the water outside and not have to haul buckets of water down the ladder any more!

Now that our Priest-In-Partnership is here we will be asking for more participants on the Building Committee. We need to decide what changes we wish to make to the building and get some plans together. We will then submit these ideas to the parish and begin a feasibility study before embarking on a capital campaign to raise the funds for the repairs that must be done and the changes we wish to make to make our facility more accessible and safe. Look for more information on this mission in the future.

Many of you may not be aware that we only have a part time sexton. She work 12 hours a week, usually on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. This leaves the weekends not covered when the snow begins to fly. I will be posting a signup sheet on the bulletin board for others to sign up to help with the shoveling ministry. The ramp must be shoveled and salted so the alter guild has access on Saturdays and a path through the courtyard as well as the ramp needs to be done before 7:30 AM on Sundays. Please consider signing up. If a number of us share the task it will not be a burden for any one person.

Thanks ahead of time for your commitment and always for your support. - Ruth

Please remember to save the date: November 19, 2011 - 9 AM - noon - General cleaning to get ready for Advent; December 17, 2011 - 9 AM - noon - General cleaning to get ready for Christmas.



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Ruth Beard, *Junior Warden*

Brian Webb, *Director of Music*

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Dorothy Albert, *Receptionist and Outreach Minister*

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Richard Herrmann, *Chronicle Editor*