

# **Christ Episcopal Church 178th Annual Meeting**

**January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019**



*Christ Church is a Christian faith community that welcomes all, worships together, transforms lives, and engages in God's work in greater Montpelier and beyond.*

**64 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602**

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**2018 Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**Christ Episcopal Church**  
**Montpelier, Vermont**

**January 28, 2018**

Senior Warden Bruce Story convened the 177<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at 11:50 a.m. in the parish hall, following brunch provided as a gift to the Christ Church congregation by George Estes, who now operates the Open Hands Café five days a week in this same space.

Attendance: 59

1. Priest-in-Partnership Paul Habersang opened the meeting with a prayer and expression of thankfulness.
2. Rev. Paul singled out numerous members of the congregation, including Office Administrator Kathy Preis, for their exemplary work in preparation for this meeting. He also expressed appreciation for the contributions of the three outgoing members of the Vestry – Helen Bryan, Steve Dale and Corrie Wilcox – and pointed out that they will all continue in leadership roles, which he described.
3. Bruce in turn warmly thanked Paul for his outstanding leadership at Christ Church, which was followed by a warm round of applause from the assembled group. He went on to praise the contributions of the three retiring vestry members and of the many leaders and volunteers of the various church ministries. After commenting on the nature and importance of the leadership team, Bruce reviewed highlights of the history of Christ Church. This year marks the sanctuary's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, and he observed that it is time to recognize the legacy of our sacred space, of which we are the caretakers for future generations. There will be events in June to celebrate this milestone.
4. Approval of 2017 Minutes: Steamer Walke moved approval of the minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting as submitted and included in the 2018 Annual Report. Diane Holland seconded the motion which then was adopted.
5. New Vestry members: Nominees for three-year terms to the Vestry were Diane Holland, Sarah Hofmann and Shawn Bryan. They were duly elected on a motion by Wibs Fitzhugh, seconded by Judy Walke, and adopted.
6. Diocesan Convention Delegates: Nominations for 2018 were Deborah Barnwell and Maggie Thompson, with Kathy Preis as Alternate. Diane moved their election, seconded by Shawn, and the motion was approved.
7. Finance Committee and 2018 budget: Helen Bryan was presenter of these items, first reporting a very strong closeout of 2017 at 102% of budgeted income. The 2018 budget

proposal, which was available to the congregation prior to the meeting, will be subject to approval by the Vestry at its organizational meeting following this gathering.

After observing that the proposed budget is close to that of 2017, Helen called attention to two increases over the prior year. The most significant of these was an increase of approximately \$3,000 in the Diocesan assessment based on an incremental 1% increase in parish assessments. The Finance Committee chose not to include in the 2018 budget an additional contribution which the

Diocese will seek from all parishes shortly into this year to help cover the shortfall it experienced in 2017. That exact figure, which is not yet known although Rev. Paul estimated it will be about \$70,000, will be assessed on parishes according to the same formula on which the 2018 assessment is based.

Rev. Paul at this point expressed strong disagreement with the assumptions on which the Diocese constructs its budget. He described the basis for his dissension – which he registered in the form of a no vote on the 2018 budget at the Diocesan Convention – and expressed the opinion that a different model must be created for determining Diocesan assessments. To that end, he now serves on the Diocesan Council as one of the representatives from Mission District 2 and has volunteered to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee.

The second increase in the Christ Church budget to which Helen called attention was a very modest increase in the salaries of three of the four paid staff, the exception being Rev. Paul who declined to accept an increase despite the urging at this gathering of several members who lauded his exceptional leadership as Priest-in-Partnership at Christ Church.

There was minimal discussion of the Finance Committee report, other than a jocular observation by Josh Fitzhugh that the record should reflect that was the first Annual Meeting he had attended in several decades in which Ed Skea did not ask a lot of questions about the budget.

8. Housing Committee report: Steve Dale presented an update on the status of the effort to pursue creation of affordable housing resources for an as-yet undetermined population on the footprint of the current Parish House. His remarks were in essence a recap of the information in the housing committee's report contained in the 2018 Annual Report which was circulated to the congregation electronically and also was available in hard copy format prior to and at this meeting.

On the subject of the Bashara family's intention to erect a Hampton Inn and a four-level parking garage in the parking area behind and adjacent to their Capital Plaza Hotel, with the garage to be sited a scant few feet behind Christ Church, Steve suggested that progress toward the early summer 2018 construction start date for that project may be less rapid than the Basharas had hoped, due to numerous factors which he mentioned. Steve assured those assembled that Downstreet Housing and Community Development remains committed to Christ Church's vision of building affordable housing.

During the ensuing discussion the members learned that the hotel and parking structure will be considered at upcoming meetings of the city's Design Review Board and possibly the Development Review Board. Shawn Bryan will represent Christ Church's interests at these meetings, but his doing so will not preclude interested members of the congregation from attending and expressing their views as individuals. Shawn explained that the church's position is that the city should consider the proposed hotel-parking complex and the church's future erection of needed housing with a comprehensive view of the esthetics. He viewed these projects as a unique opportunity for the city to approve major attractive additions to the landscape and the vibrancy of the downtown.

9. Report on sanctuary renovations: Shawn Bryan brought the congregation up to date on the most critical needs for rehabilitation masonry and related work on the exterior front side of the sanctuary and the estimated costs. These are: addressing the bulge in the vicinity of the State Street façade in the area of the rose window; other masonry and related repairs to the front elevation; and badly needed, overdue repairs to the bell tower. The relevant section of the 2018 Annual Report provided additional details and cost figures on these projects and what is and is not included in these estimates, such as installation of a glass storm window covering the rose window and masonry repairs other than to the bulge. He also reported that the State Division of Historic Preservation has approved a grant of \$20,000 toward the work.

Shawn went on to describe other projects which should be methodically addressed in the future, but undertaking the needed work on those will depend on funding capability. The three projects he outlined are high priority, although work cannot begin until fall of this year due to the fact that the pertinent building trades already are booked through the summer. Shawn observed that it is imperative to have a clear idea of the financial resources that will be available before undertaking not just the most critical work, but longer range projects as well.

10. Capital campaign feasibility study: Josh Fitzhugh pointed out that aside from interior renovations, there have been no major exterior repairs to the sanctuary since 1963. Given the increasing urgency of the projects Shawn described, the Vestry has had numerous discussions about addressing those needs through a capital campaign. To that end, Sharon Winn Fannon, an attorney and member of the congregation, has been engaged to conduct a feasibility study involving what Josh estimated to be about twenty-five households in the parish identified as significant and committed donors to the church. She has met with nearly all of those families or individuals as the first step in determining the feasibility and scope of a capital campaign, and Josh reported that the results reflect a willingness of very generous proportions to contribute toward one.

Sharon will attend the Vestry's February 19 meeting to review and discuss her findings, which will be used as the basis to determine whether and how to proceed with either a limited fund raising effort or to launch a broad, large scale capital campaign to fully restore and renovate the sanctuary. Josh was reluctant to provide preliminary estimate(s) from Sharon, preferring to wait until she discusses her findings with the Vestry in February.

11. Small group formation: Steve Dale described his vision for strengthening the Christ Church community through the formation of small groups to meet monthly for fellowship and a structured discussion on a predetermined subject. Ideally these gatherings will be held in the participants' homes and include a meal, although each group will make such decisions. Details of his proposal were set out in a letter recently sent to all the members, with February 5 as the deadline for people to communicate their interest in participating.
12. Other matters: (a) Deacon Beth Ann Maier reflected on the fact that we are a rich parish in many ways - our relationships and the property and land we have inherited - and she beseeched the members to reflect on those who once lived off this land, who have not had the rights and privileges that this congregation has had; and to remember that it is as important to heal and repair those relationships as it is to repair our buildings.
- (b) To a warm round of applause Paul recognized Don Lyons, who recently turned 92 and continues to be an active contributor to the life of the parish.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

***Virginia Catone***

Secretary of the Vestry



## **Priest in Partnership Report**

Dear Friends,

As I reflect back on 2018, I am reminded at just how full the year was, as we celebrated our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in this vibrant and historic church. In that year of celebration, we both looked back and we looked ahead, by preparing the way for the future of Christ Church and her ministries. The following list of events reflects only a brief snapshot in time of the many highlights from 2018:

- Early in the year, we mixed things up a bit by engaging in a “pulpit swap” and welcomed local clergy from Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre and St. John’s in the Mountains, Stowe.
- In the spring, the Social Justice Team sponsored three Sunday liturgies which focused our attention on racial awareness and reconciliation.
- Also, in the spring our own parishioner and local artist, Mike Ridge, designed for us a contemporary and biblical depiction of the Holy Spirit. This iconic dove has been brought to life both in a celebratory banner that hangs from the front of our church and as a

brilliant new stained-glass window that was created by yet another local Vermont artist, Chris Jeffrey.

- Our anniversary weekend of June 2-4, 2018 was wonderful and celebratory thanks to so many people who contributed to its success. During that weekend, we enjoyed an organ recital on Friday night, an abundant community meal and performance of the “Vermont Civil War Songbook” on Saturday night, and concluded the weekend with a festive Eucharist and the burial of a time capsule on Sunday morning. In addition to all these celebrations, we also kicked off the “Hearts on Fire” capital campaign led by Sharon Winn Fannon and Helen Bryan. The weekend was absolutely sublime!
- In September, we celebrated a “Homecoming Sunday” in which many alumni from Christ Church returned to share in our sesquicentennial celebrations.
- In early October, we celebrated another “Blessing of the Animals” at the 10:00AM liturgy on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Present for that blessing were seventeen of our canine companions, not to mention several felines whom we blessed in absentia!
- Finally, we wrapped up the year with noon day Advent concerts and a beautiful season of Christmas celebrations.
- And on top of it all, because of your generous hearts and spirits, the “Hearts on Fire” capital campaign ended the parish phase with a tremendous success. Because of your generosity, the repairs necessary to our historic sanctuary will now become a reality in 2019, insuring that Christ Church will continue standing strong on State Street for generations to come.

To be sure, 2018 was a historic year for the record books! One other thing I would like to point out to all of you is this: none of these events and celebrations would have taken place if it were not for the incredibly strong, organic leadership that has risen from this incredible congregation. You should be proud of yourselves, for what you have become and for what you have accomplished. Christ Church has absolutely embraced mutual ministry. Christ Church has become that cathedral in the city that you have dreamed of becoming. And Christ Church and her family has truly become one of the most vibrant churches within the entire diocese of The Episcopal Church in Vermont. You are all incredible people and I consider it to be a blessing to serve as your Priest-in-Partnership.

Well done people of Christ Episcopal Church and here's to your future!

Respectfully submitted,

***Paul Habersang***  
Priest-in-Partnership





## Altar Guild Report

This year, the Altar Guild had one new member, and one fill-in member join the team. It is a joy to have them with us, and we are grateful for their service to Christ Church.

However, our numbers are dwindling, we have enough members to take care of each step, but it would be awesome to have some new additions. Does anyone feel a pull toward this ministry?

The altar guild sets up for each service and twice a year polishes the brass and silver. It takes very little time to do.

It is a simple task and one done in the quiet which can bring a sense of peace. Please contact Liz Slayton or Kathy Preis if you feel called to do this work.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Preis*

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## Altar Guild Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand January 1, 2018		\$1691.31
Income:		
Christ Church transfers:		
Easter flower donations	\$295.00	
Christmas flower donations 2017	200.00	
Sudan communion	300.00	
Interest – Taplin Fund	151.51	
Interest – Unit Fund	<u>64.53</u>	
	\$1101.04	\$2702.35
Disbursements:		
Palms & Easter flowers	\$191.55	
Wreaths	148.50	
Christmas flowers	245.00	
Reimburse Liz Slayton	26.96	
Sudan communion project materials	138.71	
Return unused funds		
to Sudan communion	161.29	
Diocesan Altar Guild dues	<u>50.00</u>	
	\$962.01	
Balance on hand December 31, 2018		\$1740.34

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Money Market Account:	
Balance January 1, 2018	\$2823.63
Income:	
Interest	<u>1.42</u>
	\$2825.05

Balance on hand December 31, 2018 \$2825.05

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2 Year CD balance December 31, 2018	\$1333.27
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***Sue Skea***  
Altar Guild Treasurer



**Sanctuary Repair Update**

Thanks to the generous support of our congregation and friends and neighbors of Christ Church we are well on our way to having the financial resources needed to begin restoring our beloved sanctuary. Our architect is in the process of completing the specifications needed for our project to go out to bid in February. Because we have received a grant from the state historic preservation department, we must seek three proposals for that part of the project using state monies. We expect to have final firm bid proposals by the end of February or early March, with work to commence in the spring, as soon as the weather permits. If the finances permit, we will complete repointing of the bell tower and the front of the sanctuary facing State Street, replace the rotten louvres in the bell tower, and restore the woodwork around all the windows in the bell tower and the rose window. Depending on how the bids come in we will adjust the scope of the work to fit within the funds available.

On behalf of the vestry and our facilities team we want to say thank you to everyone who has made it possible for us to begin to realize our dream of restoring this grand old sanctuary so it can remain our cathedral in the city for another 150 years.

Respectfully submitted,

***Shawn Bryan***



**Capital Campaign Report**

In June, in connection with the 150th anniversary of our beautiful building, the vestry announced a capital campaign to raise funds for building repair. The Hearts on Fire campaign launched with a goal of \$700,000 and half of that is already pledged through the generosity of a few parishioners! As of January, 2019 the campaign has raised more than \$625,000 and enjoys

participation from 50 percent of the parish! With 90 percent of the goal raised, the campaign is already a huge success. To wrap up well and give everyone a chance to be part of this success, the final few weeks of the campaign will focus on boosting parish participation to at least 75 percent. Look for a yellow pledge card to make your donation — whatever you can give is exactly right.

***Sharon Winn Fannon***

Hearts on Fire Capital Campaign Coordinator



## **Long Range Building Vision Report**

For the past three years, Christ Church has been exploring the possibility of providing affordable housing through a project involving the parish house space. You will remember that we began by discussing how best to use under-utilized space in the parish house. After an extensive review of needs in our community, we determined that affordable housing is the greatest need in Montpelier. We felt that a housing project on space owned by the church could be a tangible way to respond to our weekly Prayer to End Homelessness. We could help meet the most important need for citizens of our town and could help stabilize costs associated with maintaining the building to help us sustain Christ Church's overall ministry for future generations.

It is important to emphasize that this project has always been separate from our efforts to restore the sanctuary. None of the efforts around the capital campaign are directed toward the parish house nor the housing project.

We were progressing nicely with our partners at Downstreet, when in the spring of 2017, our project was pre-empted by the need for Downstreet and its funding partners to go all-in on the Transit Center. A developer, Redstone, had just pulled out of the project, jeopardizing a major city priority. Affordable housing is one feature of that project and available funding sources needed to be directed toward that effort. As we can all see, that project has progressed and will be a reality in the near future. As a result of this change, the Christ Church project was pushed back two years. Instead of doing detailed planning in 2018 and seeking funding in 2019 and constructing in 2020, all of those dates were pushed back two years.

In the meantime, in December, 2017, the Bashara family announced plans to build a hotel and parking garage right behind the church. Needless to say, that effort consumed our attention for the past year. Our priorities as a church have been, first, to make sure the project did not harm the current building and operation and, second, to make sure it did not prevent us from developing affordable housing. The parking garage, which will have the biggest impact, became a city project and was approved by Montpelier's voters in November. It appears that that project will move forward. We believe both objectives were met for the church, although there is no question our project will be more challenging given the size and scope of the garage.

So our task now is to take stock of where things stand and to determine what type of project can still be designed and funded on the space with its current realities. Creative ideas have been put forward. Those are being explored and we will need to decide fairly soon on a path ahead.

All of this has taught us a great deal about patience and about God's timing vs our timing. As soon as we have assessed the situation, we will convene the congregation for a detailed update and discussion.

Thanks to all of the committee members for your patience and perseverance.

Respectfully submitted,

***Steve Dale***

Housing Committee Chair



**Stewardship of our Space:**  
**Building Partnerships within Christ Church's Walls**

Throughout 2018, the following long-term relationships have been forged with folks who now use portions of our facility for their own missions and ministries:

Capital Community Church	Yoga & T'ai Chi Classes
Alcoholics Anonymous (four groups weekly)	Rev. Steve Reynes, Esq.
Montpelier Alive!	Maggie Thompson, Writing Instructor
Onion River Chorus	Business Network International
Transcendance	Ron Thompson, Psy. M. A.
AFLCIO	

The following organizations partner with Christ Church who donates our space for their missions and ministries:

Vermont Red Cross	Grieving Parents Association
VT Persons with AIDS Coalition	Green Mountain Club
VIA – Vermont Interfaith Action	VT Child Advocacy
VT Domestic Violence Network	Meditation & Book Study Groups
Foster Parents Association	A Course in Miracles
Little Explorers – Capital Community Church	

The following organizations gratefully use space within Christ Church on an occasional basis:

Village Harmony	Rural Vermont	Sarah Blair,
Recitals		
VPIRG	House Democratic Caucus	Allison Mann, Concert
University of Vermont	Summit School of Music	Wilderness
Fusion		
Earthwalk	Lost Nation Theater	VTIPL

350 Vermont  
Circle of Women International  
VT Symphony Youth Orchestra  
Central Vermont Home & Hospice

Onion River Exchange  
Vermont Symphony  
Bread & Puppet Theater

Office on Aging  
ECHO  
Mother Up

Respectfully submitted,

***Kathy Preis***  
Administrator



## **Music Ministry**

2018 was another great year for music at Christ Church. An important part of this celebratory year was the weekend of June 2-4, which included an organ recital, a concert of music from the 1860s, as well as a special Sunday morning anthem written for the occasion by Michael Sitton.

In addition, our doors were open for many concerts during the year. Noon-time concerts in April and December raised money for the new stained glass window. Several groups gave performances in the sanctuary, e.g. Village Harmony, guitarist Peter Griggs, a Bach ensemble from Woodstock, and two theater productions. The Bach organ marathon was successful again this year and raised money for the Montpelier schools music program.

The church has six instruments – the Wilhelm pipe organ, two spinet pianos, an electric piano, a reed organ, and a harpsichord - which are available to the public for rehearsals and performances. All are in good working order, except for the harpsichord. I am especially pleased that the piano in the parish hall is played frequently by guests.

The essential part of the church's music program – the choir – was outstanding again this year. We participated in Choral Evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral, hosted the Community Christmas Carol Sing, offered Lessons and Carols and Tenebrae services to the community, AND provided the musical underpinning at 52 worship services.

I greatly appreciate all who make the music ministry successful: the choir, Linda Radtke and Marty Roberts, website and publicity help, greeters and ushers, Denise Womer, extra help from Kathy Preis, and especially YOU, friends and members, who believe in and support the music ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

***Lynnette Combs***  
Organist and Choirmaster  
Phone: 802- 371-5066 Email: [homeplacegirl@gmail.com](mailto:homeplacegirl@gmail.com)

## **Outreach and Discretionary Fund Ministry**

The Discretionary Fund (DF) continues to be a source of modest assistance in emergency situations to individuals and families located primarily in central Vermont. Its primary funding comes from the undesignated loose plate collection at worship services on the first Sunday of each month. Through a partnership with The Salvation Army (SA) of Northern New England we are blessed to receive a moderate amount of annual funds which we administer through purchase orders to assist folks in need, according to SA guidelines and quarterly reporting requirements.

For several years we have helped stretch the benefits of our available funds through a monthly donation to Another Way, an important local drop-in community center which provides support and a variety of services to a broad population. The organization in turn provides us with periodic reports on the array of seemingly small but diverse and important benefits which our contributions make possible.

During the mid-late winter of 2018 we also made an unsolicited donation to Good Samaritan Haven to help support the weekend evening meals program for folks who availed themselves of the overnight shelter at Bethany Church, and in December 2018 we were able to supply Good Samaritan with some local pharmacy/store chain gift cards to put in seasonal gift bags distributed at the area overnight shelters. More recently we sent a donation to the Northfield Senior Center in appreciation for their occasionally providing soup for Christ Church's weekly community lunch program. These and other creative uses of our DF are much appreciated by other organizations as well as the individuals who have very limited recourse to flexible funds to help meet their most essential daily needs.

Respectfully submitted,

***Virginia Catone***

Discretionary Fund Manager

Phone: [802-272-8992](tel:802-272-8992) E-mail: [vcatone@comcast.net](mailto:vcatone@comcast.net)



## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review the financial statement prepared by the treasurer, to prepare and revise a budget for the church for the coming year, and to discuss other financial matters that may arise. Members in 2018 included JJ Jaworski, Josh Fitzhugh, Helen Bryan, David Blythe, Corrie Wilcox and our PIP, Paul Habersang. Josh Fitzhugh is stepping down for 2019 to pursue other committee work and the new Vestry representative is Shawn Bryan.

We finished 2018 with a small deficit; income was down and expenses were modestly up. We are proposing a flat budget for 2019 with one exception. The cost of using District Heat is increasing by approximately \$4,000. This increase precludes the Finance Committee from recommending any increases in any other areas of the budget and will most likely result in another deficit year.

A positive development is the migration of our finances to the Quickbooks system recommended by the Audit Committee. It has been a challenging transition and a work in progress, however, we plan to have it fully operational for 2019. Both JJ Jaworski and Kathy Preis have worked hard to make this change.

If you have an interest in finance, the committee would welcome your participation. We usually meet the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm in Paul's office. Our discussions are not as dry and mechanical as you probably imagine.

Respectfully submitted,

***Helen Bryan***



### **Full Ladle Soup Kitchen & Community Meals**

Every Wednesday, the Full Ladle serves a nutritious noon meal to guests from our community. We serve 60-70 guests each week. In 2018, we served approximately 2,800 meals.

We would not be able to provide the variety of delicious food without the generosity of local restaurants, bakeries and local chefs. A very special thanks go to NECI, Uncommon Market, Sarducci's, Julio's, Westview Meadows, Capital Plaza, Wayside Restaurant, Susan Reid, Laurie Labarthe and Pete Clark, Northfield Senior Center, Manghi's bakery, La Panciatta Bakery, and LaBrioche.

A dedicated crew of volunteers come each week to set up, prepare food, serve our guests, wash dishes and clean up. The kitchen crew for this past year included the following parishioners and community members:

Mulu Kidane  
Aldora Chamberlin  
Gloria Walker  
Susan Reid  
Sue Skea  
Linda Prescott

Wendy Dale  
Don Lyons  
Kathie O'Connor  
Amy Kuzio  
BethAnn Maier  
Michael Katzenberg

Bobbie Sleeper  
Ellen Doyle  
Paige McInite  
Madeleine McIntire  
Bill Beard  
Ginny Catone

The Soup Kitchen operates with donated funds and volunteer labor. We raised funds at the Sharon Rest area several times this past year.

We truly appreciate the generous support of the parish and the community. Please consider coming and spending time at the Wednesday Community Meal. Our work is rewarding and fun!

Respectfully Submitted,

***Sharon Wilson***

Phone: 802-244-8037 E-mail: [sharonw52@comcast.net](mailto:sharonw52@comcast.net)



### **Usher Ministry**

Our usher ministry at Christ Church is vibrant and exciting. We help prepare the church for the service, are familiar with the service to help with many parts of it, from greeting and distributing bulletins, to engaging others to bring up the elements before communion, collecting the offering, helping to direct the flow at communion, and finally cleaning up after the service. We may be the first person a newcomer will meet, and our welcoming hospitality is our most important role!

We are scheduled for a particular Sunday each month, but often trade or substitute for one another. We have many active volunteers in our ministry, and welcome more. Please let me know if you would like to join our ministry!

Respectfully submitted,

***Jody Pettersen***

Phone: 802-522-6171 Email: [jodypettersen@gmail.com](mailto:jodypettersen@gmail.com)



### **Hospitality Team Report**

Again, this past year in 2018, the Hospitality Committee worked closely with the Youth and Family Ministry to serve community meals in the fall, at Christmas, and at Easter. Many people within Christ Church stepped up to participate in these events which are always very well attended. We are grateful for some of our newer parishioners for becoming involved, especially at our community events. The Hospitality Team also helped to support several of our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and we were especially pleased to be treated to a catered luncheon at our Alumni Sunday this past September!

The Hospitality Team is comprised of several faithful leaders who have supported our ministry for a long time. However, as things change, our ministry has had to change, too. Due to a



shrinking number in volunteers, we are no longer able to provide elaborate funeral receptions. Instead, we now ask families to help with receptions by catering in or providing food for their guests. The Hospitality Team is happy to set up the Parish Hall and provide coffee, tea, and light refreshments. If you are interested or willing to serve on the Hospitality Team, please contact me and I will be happy to make you part of our ministry.

Thank you,

*Aldora Chamberlin*



### **Lay Readers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers**

Christ Church is fortunate to have a dedicated group of Lay Eucharistic ministers and readers totaling 28 in all. We schedule in two to three month periods so that all have the opportunity to serve at least once. We welcome any who wish to become a Lay Eucharistic minister or a reader. You have only to ask Rev. Paul or Steamer Walke.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steamer Walke*



### **Christ Church Connections (CCC)**

Since its establishment in late 2017, Christ Church Connections (CCC) has continued to grow and function effectively as a ministry of mutual caring within our parish. We promote connections by helping members of the congregation during times of health issues or other personal circumstances who need some kind of support or help (e.g., home and hospital visits, rides, meals, errands, dog-walking, emergency babysitting, cards, prayers, home Eucharist). We rotate the coordinating responsibilities among active members on a monthly basis. We meet the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. to share updates and new information, and everyone is invited to join us and this ministry. All members, regardless of their ability to attend meetings, are available and willing to help in fulfilling our mission of intra-parish support.

We encourage you to let someone on our team or in the office know if you, your family or someone you know could use a visit or another kind of help. The weekly bulletins contain

monthly contact information, or you can leave a message with the clergy or the office administrator. Please speak to me or the monthly coordinator if you would like more information or would like to participate.

Respectfully submitted,

***Ginny Catone***

Phone: 802-272-8992 Email: [vcatone@comcast.net](mailto:vcatone@comcast.net)



### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

*May God's grace be upon this shawl....warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing. May this mantle be a safe haven, a sacred place of security and well-being, sustaining and embracing the good times as well as difficult ones. May the one who receives this shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love.*

The Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to be a warm outreach to community members and parishioners in the midst of challenges or transitions, who are in need of comfort and solace. Blessings are woven into every shawl, beginning with prayers for the recipient. Intentions continue throughout the piece's creation. Shawls given out are always very much appreciated as a tangible cozy reminder of friendship and God's love.

Our biggest need right now is for more knitters! This year, several of our faithful knitters have had other commitments arise that have lessened their available knitting time. Shawls can be knit with a very basic easy pattern. If you'd like to give it a try, please do! We also knit small "pocket shawls" which can be found in the baskets by the office and in the narthex. These are super easy to knit, and they get taken frequently.

Those interested in supporting this ministry can do so in several ways:

- Knit or crochet full-size shawls or pocket shawls.
- Suggest names of individuals who would appreciate receiving a shawl.
- Make donations for materials.
- Partial balls of yarn left over from other projects are perfect for pocket shawls or can find their way into stripes on a full-size shawl.

We are committed to continuing the Prayer Shawl Ministry, and would love to have others join us!

***Maggie Thompson***

***Rilla Murray***

Phone: (M) 802-454-4635  
(R) 802-272-2663

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## **Regional Deacon's Report**

Greetings! I am writing to you from my sabbatical time in North Carolina. As I write, you are being hammered by a ferocious winter storm. I pray that you are warm and safe, and that you remain strong and courageous in doing the work God has given you to do.

Our diaconal work together for the last year has included:

- The Social Justice Committee focusing our attention and commitment to the lifelong work needed for racial healing, offering films, book studies and three Sunday homilies.
- Vermont Interfaith Action organizing toward raising the minimum wage, producing more affordable housing and ending homelessness, promoting dignity for all in our immigration practices, and mitigating racial injustice. This work included meetings with legislators, the governor and our partners in the service sector; testifying in legislative committees; participating in rallies and vigils; and convening public action events here at Christ Church.
- The Full Ladle Community Meal and Food Shelf, in its third decade of not only providing a nourishing midday meal for around 70 people each week, but forming strong bonds of relationship that nourish the souls of both the servers and the guests.
- The Evening Warming Shelter, a new ministry this year, offering a meal and a warm safe space for individuals experiencing homelessness. Our shelter is open each Monday evening from 5-8PM before the emergency shelter at Bethany Church opens for the night.
- Christ Church Connections whose focus is maintaining strong connections of love and support with parishioners who are experiencing life challenges.
- Camp Agape, an ecumenical ministry in which Christ Church participates, that provides a free week of summer camp for children with a parent in prison.
- The Youth and Family Ministry Team themes focused on community outreach that include festive community meals, the massive Bag of Basics drive, the pet supplies drive, the Angel Tree gift giving, the Heifer Project, and other activities.
- Weekly worship together, focusing and recommitting ourselves to be the Body of Christ in the world.

On the Feast of the Epiphany this month, I observed the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination as deacon in the Episcopal Church. During my sabbatical time, I am continuing to discern what that means, both the deacon part and the church part. I have been re-reading one of my favorite Episcopal theologians, Verna Dozier, who was a 20<sup>th</sup> century saint, an African-American woman committed to the Christ-centered life. She discerned her call to be a layperson in the church with more intentionality and vigor than many give to ordained ministry. She wrote:

*"God has paid us the high compliment of calling us to be coworkers with our Creator, a compliment so awesome that we have fled from it and taken refuge in the church. The urgent task for us is to reclaim our identity as the people of God and live into our high calling as the baptized community, that the dream of God for a new creation may be realized."* (The Dream of God).

Dear Reader, if you have read this far, you are among those who continue to seriously discern the mission of the church and your call as a member of the Body of Christ. God bless you in your discernment.

***Rev. Beth Ann Maier***



## **Social Justice Committee**

The Social Justice Committee continued to meet monthly this year. We primarily focused on issues about racism and racial justice, and we offered opportunities to the parish for reading and discussion.

During the month of February, in support of the students at Montpelier High School who raised the Black Lives Matter flag, we flew our Black Lives Matter flag in front of the church and held a vigil every Wednesday noon.

In the homily period for one Sunday each in April, May and June, we had a presentation that related to racism: Montpelier High School students Nicole Riby-Williams and Mandy spoke about their experiences; parishioner Allen Gilbert spoke about how his faith impacts his response to racial profiling in school discipline and prisons, and we listened to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's speech from Trinity Institute.

These were followed by viewing the film "Mirrors of Privilege, Making the White Visible," and a workshop on racism led by Yvonne Bird of the Montpelier Community Justice Center.

Other activities this year have included a fascinating visit to the Rokeby Museum of African American History in Ferrisburgh and participation in discussions of the book "The Hate U Give" with the people of St. John's Episcopal Church in Randolph.

We are working on setting up an ongoing reading group for books about racism, to become more informed and to look at our own attitudes, and we would like to offer this group to the community. We also want to continue to offer information to the parish about opportunities for learning and participation.

Members of the Social Justice Group also participate in the Central Vermont Refugee Assistance Network, Vermont Interfaith Action, Central Vermont SURJ (Stand Up for Racial Justice), Migrant justice and participation in advocacy for homelessness and disability rights.

***Social Justice Committee:*** Roberta Downey, Wendy Dale, Jean Jersey, Beth Ann Meier, Joan Murray, Kathy Preis and Marty Roberts.



## **Stewardship Committee**

To date, we have received 63 pledges for 2019 that total about \$145,000, which is slightly below last year's total of \$150,000. While this pledge amount is still encouraging, we must remain cognizant of the fact that as our congregation's demographics change, it is very likely that the way in which we build and finance our budgets must also change. While the number of pledges and the total dollar amount reported are indeed positive, there are a number of parishioners who choose not to pledge and that makes it difficult for the Finance Committee and Vestry to build an annually balanced budget. For several years now, we have embraced a "faith budget" which means that there is always a financial stretch on the projected income side, in order to meet our budgetary requirements.

The following is a breakdown of 2019 pledges by pledge contribution:

\$0 - \$1000:	18 pledges
\$1000 - \$2000:	24 pledges
\$2000 - \$3000:	10 pledges
\$3000 - \$4000:	4 pledges
\$5000- \$6000:	3 pledges
>\$10,000:	4 pledges

We are fortunate to have several significant pledge contributions that contribute substantially to our budget process. While this is wonderful, it also presents a concern should one or more of these pledging families either relocate or pass away. Pledging and committing to sacrificial giving is a very personal thing and often it is a spiritual practice that is built over one's lifetime. As we continue nurturing the spiritual roots of stewardship and sacrificial giving in our congregation, we must also think creatively about how we will generate the necessary time, talent, and treasure to continue funding Christ Church's mission and ministry.

Thanks to each and every one who has made the sacrificial choice to pledge by supporting the mission and ministry of Christ Episcopal Church.

Respectfully submitted,

***Bruce Story***  
***Rev. Paul Habersang***



## **Fellowship Ministry**

In 2018, Christ Church began a Fellowship Group ministry. This was designed to create opportunities to build relationships within our faith community. During 2018, two cycles of

Fellowship Groups have been convened. One was held in the spring from March-May. The second met September-November. In each cycle, we had 6 groups of 8-10 people each. Nearly 50 people participated in each cycle with nearly 70 different individuals participating in at least one. Groups were redistributed for the second cycle.

Each of the two cycles was organized for a three month period, with three two-hour meetings held as scheduled by the individual groups. Each group was coordinated by a leader and each took on an individual flavor. Meetings were held in homes. Most split the time block for each meeting between gathering and socializing, eating, and some kind of structured discussion designed to help participants get to know each other on a more intimate basis and to build our faith community.

The overwhelming feedback from participants is that these opportunities helped them get to know others in the parish. Many felt it helped them in their personal and spiritual growth.

A decision will be made soon on whether to continue this ministry and have it be a regular offering through Christ Church. We urge all connected with Christ Church to participate in future offerings.

Thanks to all who have provided leadership for the groups and hospitality in their homes. Thanks to all who have participated in this important opportunity.

***Steve Dale***

Coordinator



### **Sudan Communion Prayer Group**

In 2018 Sudan Communion continued to meet and pray for the peoples of South Sudan. A mission trip was made to the village of Akobo bringing a \$1000 grant from the Vermont Episcopal Grants and Loans committee to help the Mother's Union of St. John's Episcopal church, Akobo set up a microloan fund. They were able to make several loans to members of the church community and as far as we know it is still an ongoing project. The Altar Guild at Christ Church helped make some beautiful vestments for Bishop John Jock Chol, Bishop of the newly formed Akobo Diocese, which we hand delivered to the Bishop.

Another part of our mission was to present funds to assist with clergy education. We were able to send four members of the community to Bible College in Nairobi, Kenya.

While in Akobo, some medical education was delivered, and looking forward to the New Year 2019, we hope to gather some funds to help the church set up a clinic. The International Medical Corps which had been running a hospital in the community has pulled out, leaving the area without much needed health care. We are looking to raise \$6000 to help with the expense of sending medications and equipment that have already been gathered.

We have many memorable tales to tell of our time there and for those of you who are interested we can provide a copy of the sermon that was given last August outlining some of our experiences.

As always you are invited to come and pray with us every other Sunday after church.

***Deborah Jerard***

***Martha Holden***

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### **Senior Warden Report**

I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Vestry and as Senior Warden during this special sesquicentennial celebration year. The Vestry was energized by the concept of starting a capital campaign to fund the highest priority repairs to the sanctuary and bell tower so that this building can continue to be the Cathedral in the City for the future. We hired Sharon Winn Fannon to be our campaign consultant and asked Helen Bryan to be the campaign chairperson. We are very pleased with the results to date. Many of you have stepped up to help with your resources and time. Christ Church has received much needed publicity for the Capital Campaign and we are beginning to receive contributions from friends in the community!

The “Hearts on Fire” window was commissioned with special gifts and was installed in the sanctuary to commemorate our 150th year. Every time I look at the window, I am inspired and thankful for the grace of God in the amazing symbolism of the Holy Spirit as a dove with fire from above descending on us right here in Central Vermont! God reaches out to us with never ending love.

I want to recognize and thank members completing their term of service on the Vestry: Liz Slayton, Josh Fitzhugh and our Junior Warden, Ted Long. All will continue to be very active in other forms of service in this parish. Special thanks go to Ginny Catone, secretary to the Vestry, John Jaworski, treasurer, and to Shawn Bryan for his tireless negotiations with Capitol Plaza and the city to protect our interests during the parking garage planning.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Bruce Story***

Senior Warden



## **Junior Warden Report**

My tenure as your Junior Warden has come to an end, but I will continue to assist the parish in helping with routine maintenance and providing technical assistance, as needed, during the restoration of the Bell Tower and Sanctuary this fall.

Our building and grounds are too extensive for one person to maintain and the creation of a Building & Grounds Committee will do much to help catch up on many items of deferred maintenance and conditions that have been ignored and/or out of sight and therefore out of mind.

Although I don't like the idea of "work parties", the time has come to consider them.

As we move forward into the new year, and excluding the anticipated repairs to the bell tower and sanctuary, the following maintenance items, listed in no order of importance, will need to be addressed by the Committee:

1. Repairs and upgrades to the electrical system in the Courtyard.
2. Removal of lantance and debris from the Undercroft.
3. Installation of a secure secondary access and egress to and from the Undercroft.
4. Removal of "combustibles" from the Undercroft per the 2016 inspection by the Montpelier Building Inspector.
5. Installation of a Fire Alarm System for the Sanctuary (Narthex, Nave & Undercroft) including a connection to a Central Station. This may be a requirement for future insurance coverage.
6. Repairs to the existing windows (and storm windows) in the Parish House. The existing windows are original, and any funds spent on repairs will more than be returned by reducing heating costs. The windows in the Taplin Auditorium are the most severely deteriorated, followed by the ones in the Parish Hall.
7. Repair of the accessibility ramp, stairs and rear access door (remote door switch).

We have tried to keep the cost of maintenance to a minimum, and as such, we have fallen behind, and maintenance is in many cases not feasible and repairs and/or replacement is becoming more common.

I will continue to assist in the operational maintenance of the church, but help is needed.

Working together and accepting our responsibility to care for our "church home", Christ Episcopal Church will continue to serve us and the community for generations.

Respectfully submitted,

***Ted Long***  
Junior Warden





## **Worship Committee**

The Worship Committee is another collaborative team of mutual ministers at Christ Church who meet on the second Tuesday of the month. We are a creative team that thinks theologically about the choices we make in our liturgies and our meetings are always spirited. The Worship Committee is comprised of leaders from the following ministries:

- The Altar Guild
- The Lay Eucharistic Ministry
- The Lector/Reader Ministry
- The Usher/Greeter Ministry
- The Music & Choir Ministry

If you are interested in exploring liturgy and would like to join the Worship Committee, please know that you are welcome. If you have any questions, please see me at any time.

Respectfully submitted,

***Paul Habersang***

Priest-in-Partnership



## **Youth and Family Ministry**

Wow, What a Year!

Youth and Family Ministry is an intergenerational ministry that focuses on God's never-stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love for each and every one of us. We learn to live the Gospel through outreach, community engagement, and an active Youth Church School Program.

This year we sponsored sixteen events and outreach activities. These included the Many Hands of Christ Church, (the handprints in the sanctuary), gathering art supplies for and learning about the Sudan Communion, and even had an Easter Egg Hunt. We created the Time Capsule and served at the Ice Cream Social for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. During the fall we sponsored the "Blessings Four Animals" a drive for the Humane Society, collected Halloween candy for Operation Gratitude, as well as basic needs items for the BOB Drive. We finished the year with the Angel Tree drive, and the finale was the Children's Christmas Pageant. Additionally, with the help of the Hospitality and Full Ladle Soup Kitchen Ministries, we sponsored the Fall Blessings Luncheon, Jingle for Jesus Pot Luck, Easter Sunday Community Dinner" and the 150<sup>th</sup> Hearts on Fire Anniversary Dinner.

We took a hard prayerful look at our Church School Program and tweaked it to meet the needs of our families and children. We now meet three Sundays a month (2nd, 3rd, and 4th) instead of two. This decision was definitely God's work because our attendance has improved and our relationships are stronger than ever before.

Our curriculum follows the church calendar and the ebb and flow of our congregation. Our program is full of love and unconditional acceptance. It begins with a prayer, is organic, and always includes juice, chocolate milk, and goldfish. One parent said "I think she likes to go to church school just for the chocolate milk." The reply was something like, "Really, does it matter? She wants to be here, and God wants her here. So, that's that."

At Church school, learning about God is fun and even sometimes messy. This year during church school we made Valentine cards for members of our congregation and learned about taking care of the earth by trying to clean dirty water for Earth Day. We created a Resurrection Garden for Easter Sunday and made He is Risen Rolls for the coffee hour. We learned about taking care of God's creatures, with activities such as "Bats and God's People both have Echo-location" and tried to thread a "Camel through an eye of a needle." We made cards for Veterans Day and Angels for the Angel Tree and hosted many coffee hours!

Throughout the year, Lynette Combs visits Church School and teaches short hymns that the children then sing with the choir during the service. Her time at church school along with Pipes and Pizza creates a love for music and helps pass along the traditions of our Episcopal faith.

While we no longer officially, have a Youth in Church Sunday, our children are still an essential part of our Sunday Service. They are always eager to be gift bearers, ushers and help with announcements. Moreover, the Children's Worship Area in the sanctuary continues to create a sense of love and a welcoming atmosphere for our youngest members and their families. It is a vital part of our ministry and boldly proclaims that children belong here.

Twice a year, Youth and Family creates craft and activity bags for our children to take home during Advent and Lent. These bags are an excellent way for our families to bring the Gospel home with them. Before the school year begins, a calendar is created and is available to help busy families plan ahead of time. A few days before church school, an e-blast is sent out as a gentle reminder, and to share important information, like "Please, wear play clothes this Sunday."

This year we had some families move away and they will be missed. However, we've also added some new members including Baruch, a seven-month old Golden Retriever. The children are helping to train him to become a good therapy dog by teaching him important commands, such as, "Four on the floor" and "Drop it" when he thinks Legos are a dog toys.

In a nutshell, we hope that all these happenings will help develop, enrich, and strengthen our understanding of our faith, create tighter community bonds, and deepen our knowledge of God's unbreakable love no matter where we are in our faith journey.

What's next year's plans? Well, maybe collecting some trash like toilet paper rolls and dryer lint. Possibly, Coins and Cans drive after Easter? But no matter what it is, I can say it will be meaningful, fun, and for sure, "God's got this!"

Lastly, Youth and Family Ministry is a small team of dedicated volunteers and despite our numbers; we do tremendous work. I would like to thank everyone who supports, and honors our children and helps to make this ministry possible especially, Ethan Parke, Stephanie Kucinkas, Aldora Chamberlain and Sharon Wilson. We are an integral and vital part of the parish life at Christ Church, and we could use a "helping hand" or two. If you are interested in being part of this exciting and growing ministry or would like to receive our e-blasts, please contact us about enrolling and our available volunteer opportunities.

***Denise Womer***

Youth and Family Ministry Director

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**Angel Tree Ministry**

Every year, the Youth and Family Ministry sponsors an Angel Tree during Advent to help the neediest of children and their families in our community. This year, Chris Parker, a Union Elementary School Social Worker and Montpelier Public Schools Homeless Liaison sent us requests from 13 families, totaling 33 children for basic needs, such as coats and boots, and a "want" gift.

This year was very successful in many ways. First, we introduced a sign-out sheet and increased the gift card requests. This allowed many more members of the congregation to participate, while limiting individual wrapped gift requests. This was the first year, that no Angels were misplaced, or arrived late ... Amazing!

An extraordinary thanks to Bruno Gubetta of Alpine Restoration for his generous donation to the Angel Tree Fund and to Jenn Ingersoll for her help organizing, sorting and delivering the Angels. Lastly, thank you to all those who contributed this year. You are the heart of this ministry. It's because of you that so many children and their families believe in the hope and wonder of Christmas.

If you are interested in helping coordinate the Angel Tree Drive next year, we would love your help!

***Denise Womer***