

The Grateful Heart

CHRIST CHURCH EPISCOPAL
December 2010 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

In her book Wisdom Distilled from the Daily, Joan Chittister tells an ancient story of a student coming to a Teacher to learn wisdom. The student is gifted with the power of walking on water, and invites the Teacher to walk away to a far away island to talk spiritual things. The Teacher responds by saying he has the ability to fly, and instead suggests that they talk in the quiet of the open sky. "I can't do that because the power you mention is not one that I possess," says the disciple. Any fish can swim, and any fly can move through the air, responds the Teacher. So "if we're going to talk about spiritual things we should really be talking here."

Here. Not there, but here.

It is a truism to speak of the commercialization of Christmas. Really, "commercialism" is a code word for something greater...how we fill our lives this time of year with so much, often without thinking. Some of those things we do, of course, are really fun and important and worth doing. But still, so much busyness and filling, and so little stillness and emptying.

It happens in my own life. An indicator that I am less present to God and others than I would like to be is when I get to focusing too intensely on how to get done everything I think needs to get done between now and Christmas, finding myself running hither and yon. But not infrequently I wonder whether all the things we tell ourselves must happen to make this season fit our often unreasonable expectations aren't some device we use to distance ourselves from what is real; fly in the air or walk on water away from what is present, and who is present. After all, "what's next," and the busyness we engage in to get there, we often allow to be powerful forces in our lives.

I would suggest, however, that "here is where it's at," where we are and with whom we

are; and that in a very real way, this is a truth proclaimed in Christmas. Christmas is certainly the celebration of Jesus' birth. Deeper than that, however, it is the celebration of God's decision to come and be here; to come and be human, one of us. It is the miraculous (and that is too light a word) and mysterious phenomenon of the Incarnation. John the Evangelist says it this way: "The

Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." A more literal translation is that he "pitched his tent" among us; set up shop; moved into the neighborhood. It is a sacramental act. The "here" of humanity, of our neighbors and friends and families and strangers and even those persons we don't care for very much is consecrated by the action of God becoming human in Jesus.

In The Human Face of God, John A. T. Robinson writes of a little girl who feels sorry for God because he's so far away from everybody up in heaven. They are the charming, innocent, and honest words of a young child. Except Christmas declares exactly the opposite. That is not how God chooses to be. The Lord is not distant, but present; not removed, but here...and in so doing, sanctifies the here and now and asks of us faithfulness in the here and now.

So there are many things we do this time of year that make the season special. May we enjoy each and every one of them. But may we remember powerfully, and live out, and allow to transform us, the Christmas truth that the birthday present Jesus desires most is us; our presence...to him, and to others, and even to ourselves...is the present that matters most. For it is true...Jesus arrives not somewhere else, not over there or in the far off, but in the "here."

Paul

Advent Daily Prayer

The word Advent comes from the Latin and means, "coming". We're reminded that the stable door to the Christ child's manger is said to be very low. Coming to our Savior's resting place, we must kneel very low. Advent is not just a time of cards and presents. It is a time of humbly, lowly, turning, coming before our Lord with praise and thanksgiving in worship. So, we gather, every day during Advent to worship our Lord. May you find this Advent season a coming of peace and fulfillment in preparation for the birth of Christ born into each and every one of us. We look forward to joining with you in daily worship.



SCHEDULE

Morning and Evening Prayer during Advent

Monday	7:45 am and 6:00 pm	(Worship Space)
Tuesday	7:45 am and 6:00 pm	(Worship Space)
Wednesday	7:45 am Eucharist	(Worship Space) & 5:00 pm Evening Prayer (Rm 202)
Thursday	7:45 am and 6:00 pm	(Worship Space)
Friday	7:45 am and 6:00 pm	(Worship Space)

Missions and Outereach Ministry

**Do you own rental property?
Would you like to help change the lives of a wonderful
family this Christmas?**

Christ Church has been given the opportunity to change the lives of a wonderful family of 7. This Mom and her 6 beautiful children currently live in Mosby Court, a very dangerous environment. We are looking to find them a safer home in the Henrico school district as soon as possible. They will have a car, but it would be helpful if they could walk to the grocery store and possibly be close to public transportation.

This need is urgent, so if you or someone you know has rental property in this area please contact Kristi Nelligan 690-8500

**Please join us as we walk to independence
with this remarkable family**

Baptisms

The next Baptism at Christ Church is scheduled for January 8-9.
If you have someone wishing to be baptized
please contact Jan in the office (364-0394)

Women's Spring Retreat

Save the date ! The 2011 Women's Retreat at Shrinemont will take place the weekend of April 8-10. More information will follow in January.

The Micah Minute

Updates and Events relating to our Partnership with George Mason Elementary School

Happy Holiday Season. Our school year has started off great at George Mason. We have almost 20 volunteers from Christ Church visiting George Mason on a weekly basis. However, we can use more. There are close to 50 additional children that need tutoring/mentoring. If you can spare a couple hours during the week, we could use your help.

Also, we have a new opportunity for volunteers starting after the first of the year. We are looking for 3 or 4 folks that can commit to 1-2 hours a week for 4 or 5 weeks. The "Chat and Chew" program needs volunteers that can spend lunch time, once a week, for 4 or 5 weeks to read and discuss a book with a small group of children. You will be partnered with another volunteer that has already done this so you don't have to lead the Chat and Chew. This is also a great opportunity to volunteer with a friend or older child and the two of you can work together and host your own "Chat and Chew".

Please consider sharing a couple hours a week with a child at George Mason. Two hours out of your life, could make the day or even week, for our children in Church Hill. Come and find out what the excitement is all about. Make an impact on a child's life, spend time with them, and your heart will fill with the joy and satisfaction you provide. Make a difference, volunteer at George Mason Elementary School.



We are collecting Box Tops and Soup Labels for Education. These will be donated to George Mason. There is a collection box in the Milling Area. Please see the attached websites for a list of participating products.

www.boxtops4education.com
www.labelsforeducation.com



the difference
I can make.

To volunteer or receive more information on Micah and our partnership at George Mason, please contact Rick Steenrod, (804.747.9636 or rodnsue@comcast.net) or Betsy Eckart (betsyeckart@freeagentsmarketing.com).



Christ Church Giving Tree

This Christmas, consider giving the gift of HOPE through EDUCATION.



Your gift to Christ Church Giving Tree will provide support to Hope and Resurrection Secondary School in Southern Sudan.

Since 2005, Christ Church has prayerfully and financially supported Hope for Humanity, the organization which built and continues to fund the operation of the school



The 2011 school year, which begins May 2, will be especially exciting because the school graduates its first class!

If you would like to give the gift of HOPE this year:

Please stop by the tree located in the back of the church

Choose your ornament and place your check in the box under the tree or mail to:

*Hope for Humanity, Inc. P.O. Box 29117
Richmond, VA 23242.*

All donations are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to Hope for Humanity

This year's tree ornaments feature the faces of the students along with a small book containing information about each student.



CHRIST CHURCH EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL
 LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE - MATTHEW 5:16

PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM Please join us for the true meaning of Christmas as our preschoolers perform their annual Christmas program on Thursday, December 16, at 10:30 AM in the church sanctuary. You're invited to join us for cookies immediately following the Christmas program. This performance is guaranteed to brighten your day and warm your hearts.

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION takes place in January, 2011. If you are interested or know of someone that might like to attend our preschool for 2011-2012, please call the preschool office at 364-5905 to schedule a tour. You can also find more information on our website at www.christchurchpreschool.com. Registration begins Wednesday, January 5 for our existing preschool families, Wednesday, January 12 for church members, and Wednesday, January 19 for the general public. All children must be potty trained. Our 2011-12 class offerings are as follows:

PreK 5 Day (Must be 4 by 9/30/11)
 PreK 4 Day (Must be 4 by 9/30/11)
 Young 4's (Must be 4 by 12/31/11)
 3 Day Older Threes (Must be 3 by 9/30/11)
 3 Day Younger Threes (Must be 3 by 12/31/11)

Have a blessed Christmas!

Let your light shine,

Cheri Erk
 Executive Director

Lydia's Purse

On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us. Acts 16:13-15

Those two short verses from Acts tell us a lot about Lydia. It is a powerful story of a woman becoming a believer and going to work for Christ. The Lord opened Lydia's heart, she believed, she became baptized and she immediately began to serve by inviting Paul into her home. Lydia was a business woman, possibly a widow or single parent, she created a Christian home and she served in her community.

This community - this incredible Christian community that we call Christ Church - is made up of men and women like Lydia. We sit down together, we listen, we worship, our hearts are opened to hear God's word and we serve. The Vestry has approved a request to establish a fund to help members of our community financially during times of great need.

Distributions from Lydia's Purse will be handled by clergy. All requests will be confidential. members of our community that have financial needs should contact Hillary West or Paul Johnson directly.

If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, you may do so by check made payable to Christ Church (with a note in the memo that is for Lydia's Purse).

Stewardship Ministry

Pledge Update: December

332 pledges have been received for a total of
\$1,047,932 (89% of our goal)

**Every pledge counts.
If you are yet to make your pledge,
you may pick up a pledge card in the
Milling Area.**

**You can also complete your pledge card
online by going to the
Christ Church Website.**

YOUTH GROUP

December Youth Groups...here's the schedule !

12/3, 12/5 Regular Middle and High School youth groups
12/10,12/12 Regular Middle and High School youth groups
12/17 **Middle School Christmas party**
6:30-8:30 at the Schultz home (see web site for more info)

12/19 **Senior High Christmas Party**
6:30-8:30 at the Nicol home (see web site for more info)

12/24, 12/26 No Youth Group...Merry Christmas

1-2-2011 Sunday Night Combined youth Group
6:30-8:30 PM with Middle and High school youth together !

Big News !

In conjunction with the youth ministry staff and youth ministry team we are moving Middle School Youth Group to Sunday afternoons beginning in January. Moving into our new building and having the option to do more out reach oriented events on Friday nights is the main reason for the move. We also want to create a more consistent Middle School youth ministry. It is just difficult for parents to get Middle school students here on Friday's and we often find different students from week to week. We also want to move in the direction that the church is moving in providing a space for the entire family to come on Sunday evenings. *The new times will be 3:30 to 5:30 on Sundays for Middle School Students and 6:30-8:30 for High School Students (No change for HS students)* beginning in January once the new youth building is complete. We will still have to separate middle school and high school times but they will meet on the same day. If you have any questions please let us know.

The Summer is coming and the spots are filling quickly get your deposits in now ...

Be sure to sign up now for the Summer Mission trips and Student Life Camp.

A \$60 deposit is required for each.

Middle School Mission Trip - June 26-July 1

High School Mission Trip- July 17-22

Student Life Camp- Aug 1-5

to get a sense of what Camp is all about. <http://vimeo.com/16068776>

as always for more info go to www.ccggarage.org

Garage sweatshirts will be on sale starting next week. (\$20)



Advent Supper Series



KEEPING
it
SIMPLE

Wednesday December 1

As we begin the season of Advent, we ponder the birth of Jesus, our Savior, who preached simplicity, generosity and frugality. Yet during this holiday period we tend to spend more money than at any other time during the year, and we all struggle to keep things simple. Although we want to draw closer to God, there are lots of forces pulling us farther away. What can we do to reclaim the true spirit of Christmas? Join Dave Wasik for an interactive session that will explore ways for us to be more present with God and with one another during this special season.

Presenter: Dave Wasik and his family have been members of Christ Church for 9 years. Dave recently served as Treasurer and was a member of the Christ Church Vestry. He is passionate about the topic of financial education, and is a board member for the Episcopal Church Foundation and Junior Achievement of Central Virginia. Dave is a trained facilitator for Nathan Dungan's Share, Save, Spend program and teaches classes for children and adults.

Wednesday December 8

All through the Holy Scriptures we find evidence that God seeks to dwell among God's people. With Adam and Eve, God was heard walking through the garden in the cool of the day. (Gen 3:8-9) To Moses God was heard to say, "Let them make me a sanctuary that I might dwell among them." (Ex. 25:8) Through the Apostle Paul the Church was taught that God desires to dwell in a spiritual house where all are a part of its creation. (Eph 2:19-22). In the birth of Jesus, we find the ultimate evidence of God's desire to dwell among us. (John 1:14) In this session, we will respond to God's desire and continuous seeking by exploring how we are building God's holy habitation and experiencing the presence and portraits of Christ in our midst.



Celebrating
the
Sacred

Presenter: The Rev. Janie M. Walker is currently serving as Program Director for Embrace Richmond, an outreach ministry to under-resourced urban communities. She previously served eight years as Associate Pastor for Individual Ministry and Spiritual Guidance at Richmond Hill. Rev. Walker has a special interest in healing and building communities.



Be Still
and
Know

Wednesday December 15

We read in the Psalms, "Be still and know that I am God." But how can we find stillness in a culture that seems to mandate overly crowded schedules and an abundance of busyness? It's difficult enough to just be still, but how to quiet the mind? "Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship." (quoted from ContemplativeOutreach.org) This experiential session will introduce you to the practice of Centering Prayer, offering a respite from the Christmas rush and an opportunity to rest in God.

Mimi Weaver, is the owner of GraceMoves with a practice of life coaching and spiritual direction for both individuals and couples. You can learn more about Mimi at www.gracemoves.com.



Advent Supper and Teaching Series

DECEMBER 1: 5:30 pm
6:30 pm

Dinner,
Program: *“Keeping it Simple”*
Presenter: Dave Wasik
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal for Children

DECEMBER 8: 5:30 PM
6:30 pm

Dinner,
Program: *“Celebrating the Sacred—Christ Among Us”*
Presenter: Rev. Janie Walker
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal for Children

DECEMBER 15: 5:30 PM
6:30 pm

Dinner,
Program: *“Be Still and Know”*
Presenter: Mimi Weaver
Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal for Children

DINNER RESERVATIONS

PLEASE PLACE YOUR RESERVATION AND PAYMENT IN AN ENVELOPE AND PUT IN
the RESERVATION BOX IN THE MILLING AREA...(or mail to the church office)

Cost is \$6.00 (adults and children age 10 and older) \$3.00 (children under age 10)
(Children 3 and under are free)
(Maximum \$20 per family/per week)

Dec. 1	Number adults & children age 10 and up _____ x \$6 = \$ _____ Number children under age 10 _____ x \$3 = \$ _____
Dec. 8	Number adults & children age 10 and up _____ x \$6 = \$ _____ Number children under age 10 _____ x \$3 = \$ _____
Dec. 15	Number adults & children age 10 and up _____ x \$6 = \$ _____ Number children under age 10 _____ x \$3 = \$ _____

(maximum per week is \$20) **TOTAL ENCLOSED** _____

Name _____



POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS

Please fill out the form below and
enclose a check with
"Christmas Dedication"
written in the memo line.

Place your dedication form and check in the box
provided near the entrance of the Worship
Space or mail to: Christ Church, 5000 Pouncey
Tract Road, Glen Allen VA 23059

Poinsettia Dedication
\$15.00 each **Deadline: Dec. 19 (firm)**

Dedication Given by: _____
Your Name

As a **M**emorial, **T**hanksgiving, or to the **G**lory of God

QTY	TYPE (M,T,G)	Name(s) the dedication is given for
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total Dedications _____ @ \$15.00 each = \$ _____

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve
Friday, December 24
(4 services)

1:30 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:30 pm, 9:30 pm
Nursery Care is available at the 1:30 service for children age 3 and under
Nursery Care is available at all other services for age 4 and under

Christmas Day
Saturday, December 25
(one service)
5:30 pm

Sunday December 26
(one service)
10:00 am Lessons and Carols

...in the December issue

Pg 1 ...from Paul
Pg 2 ...Advent Daily Prayer
Pg 3 ...Missions and Outreach
 Baptisms
 Womens Retreat
Pg 4 ...Micah Minute
Pg 5 ...The Giving Tree
Pg 6 ...Preschool
Pg 7 ...Lydia's Purse
Pg 7 ...Pledge Update
Pg 8 ...Youth Ministry

Pg 9 ...Advent Supper Series
Pg 11 ...Poinsettia Dedication Form
 Christmas Worship Schedule



*If you would prefer to receive the monthly newsletter electronically,
please send an email to Josie,
in the church office: j.sicheri@christchurchrichmond.com*



www.christchurchrichmond.com

Christ Church Episcopal
5000 Pouncey Tract Road
Glen Allen, VA 23059