

Christ Episcopal Church

Keeping our Faith Alive

After our ZOOM Sunday services we have a ZOOM Coffee Hour. The last two weeks after we have our normal checking on how we are all doing, we started discussing issues about starting in-person services. The following are comments and ideas that were proposed.

- There are parishioners that are at extreme risk and they will not be able to attend in-person services until after the virus is gone or there is a vaccine.
- The ZOOM services allow the sick, disabled and those living far away to attend the service. After this crisis is over we will want to keep the ability to integrate ZOOM into our in-person services.
- There were concerns on how we can bring ZOOM participation into the in-person service once we start up again. It was suggested that the readings and singing could be done remotely. This would require the computer to be connected to our sound system and possibly a large screen TV.
- Another thought was to start small for our in-person service, ten people or less maybe at 7:30am on Sunday before our main 9:00am ZOOM service. This would keep our ZOOM service intact at 9:00am and give us time to work on the sound system and video. Whatever we do we want to be sure there is an option for those who have not been on the ZOOM service.
- Having a small service in the church is safer than having it in the chapel because there is more space between people and better ventilation. We could hold the service outdoors which is even safer.
- Not everyone likes watching the on-line services on ZOOM. We have between 10 to 15 people that have not been attending the Zoom service but had been attending Church regularly before the crisis. We have been running 30 to 37 screens watching the ZOOM service each Sunday which translates into 40 to 55 people.
- Bishop Lee has been holding weekly ZOOM meetings with all the Churches on how and when to start in-person services again. The main way the virus is being spread is for an infected person to be in an enclosed area with others. Ways to reduce exposure is for non infected people to not attend the services but some people do not know they are infected. Being outside is best or in a large well ventilated room is also good. Keeping our social distancing, wearing masks and not singing help. Keep the exposure time to a minimum by keeping the service short. A minor way people are infected but not the main way is by touching contaminated surfaces then touching your face. Ways to reduce this are frequent hand washing, removal of books that are touched from one service to the next and cleaning surfaces that are touched between services. The Bishop will require a checklist to be submitted by each church before in-person services are resumed. As of this date no decisions have been made for Christ Church on in-person worship.



Dear brothers and sisters,

We cannot go to Church for Sunday Eucharistic anymore and we miss it! Nothing is the same! In a breath our lives have been turned upside down and we are tired of it. We are tired of waiting. We wonder when we can get back to some sense of normalcy. You email me and call me on the phone which I love. I am glad you share with me your frustrations and concerns. You shared with me the memory of worshipping at Christ Church and the emptiness you feel at not being able to see your friends face to face. In all of this. I feel the

importance community life has for you.

It was the same for the disciples in the absence of Jesus. They had to stay inside. They were scared and frustrated maybe even angry. For fifty days they waited and wondered not knowing when or how it would end. What were they supposed to do without Jesus? The apostles were locked in their fears when suddenly they realized the action of the Spirit of their mission is for the world.

It is the same for us. The Holy Spirit comes to transform and empower us to speak and act in a way that shows the world God's infinite love is for ALL. We have an opportunity to do this right now with the new, yet very old, virus of violence plaguing our cities after the horrific death of George Floyd. It is no small thing that in our baptismal vows we pledge to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 305). May we be so filled with the Holy Spirit that we are inspired to work for justice and peace in ways we never before imagined. For instance, with Trinity Sunday coming up on June 7 I have been thinking that blacks, whites, and Hispanics make up a trinity, a whole. Each part is held up by the others. Far more can be achieved together than separately. How might this image change our relations with each other? If we are made in the image of God, then we are the Trinity. St. Paul tells us this is true: "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another" (Ro 12:5 and I Cor 12:12-14,20). I don't know of anyone who has reflected on this in terms of race relations, but let us do so together on Sunday. When we come together to celebrate the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, let us also celebrate the great variety of peoples God has placed on this great earth.

In the meantime let us pray for the people who are being oppressed, who are seeking justice, and who want to do so without violence. And I encourage you to continue to be safe, to stay home as much as possible, and to wear your mask when you're out in public. Also continue to call and send cards to those who are home alone or who are caring for a sick loved one. And know that I hold all of you in my prayer. Thank you so much for your patience and your creativity as we move forward.

Fr. Jean+

Peace Be With You

There's a small team of people who proofread The Newsletter, the Sunday bulletins, and other communications that go out to the parish. I am part of this team and ever since we started the ZOOM meetings, I have struggled with the formatting of The Peace. The font seems smaller than the rest of the program. There's not much to it so it appears insignificant which it is not. It's almost hidden between the expansive Prayers of the People and the very prominent Offertory Hymn. Then I remembered that Jesus describes the kingdom of God as something tiny and hidden: a seed, a pearl, a little bit of leaven, treasure hidden in a field and a tiny morsel of bread and sip of wine. During this time when we cannot receive Holy Communion perhaps we can view the Peace as our moment of communion. During this brief time in the service we step away from all the formulated prayers and extend our own prayers of friendship with a wave or smile or familiar sign of peace. By pausing this way we show our deep gratitude and immense desire to be one with God and each other. May the peace of the Lord be always with us. Pam Moore

Christ Church Vestry Meeting minutes 5/17/2020

Matt called the meeting to order at 11:07 am, Father Beniste opened the meeting with prayer.

A discussion was held on a 7 minute video done by St. Albans Church. The discussion centered on what a great public relations piece it was, it really showed who they are. The video was welcoming, showed a great deal of diversity, was heartfelt and showed St. Albans as a place for everyone no matter what their journey.

We will revisit the video at our next meeting and what it could mean/do for Christ Church.

Attendance was taken by Cindy: Fr. Jean Beniste, Rector, Matt Norigian, Warden, Walter Smith, Al Nelson, Sandy Dalgaard, Greg Thompson, John Moore, Building Manager, and Don Craig, Treasurer were in attendance. We had a quorum. Hendris Grenier, Jeff Tippet and Ben Hale were not in attendance.

Sandy Dalgaard was presented to the Vestry for nomination as a vestry member. A motion was made and approved to elect her to the vestry.

Sandy introduced herself for those who were not familiar with her. Sandy is a cradle member of Christ Church, her parents and grandparents were active members. Sandy and her husband, Mark, attend and serve at the 7:30 service. Sandy was a Sunday School teacher, a member of the choir, and still serves on the Altar Guild. Sandy recently retired from teaching 34 years in the Waukegan School district.

The minutes and the resolution to apply for the SBA Paycheck Protection Program were discussed. A motion was made to accept the minutes and the motion passed.

Matt presented a treasurer's report was submitted and approved subject to audit. It was reported the funds for the Payroll Protection Program have been received and are in our account. The balances of the bank accounts were reported as Reserves \$57,443, Money Market \$108,147 and Northern Trust at approximately 1.7 million. Covid-19 has affected our interest from Northern Trust this year, we budgeted for \$51k this year but it may be more like \$49k. The financial committees will monitor the situation.

Being able to return to in person services was discussed. We need to make changes and follow the Diocese's and state/city's mandates. Father will need a few volunteers to help decide how we are to proceed. We do know according to Bishop Lee we may not use prayer books, hymnals, bulletins, and we may not sing. Alternatives will be explored. We must meet in small numbers. Sanitation is a major concern. We will move forward as we are comfortable and as the Diocese allows.

John submitted a building and grounds report. John gave an inventory of our properties:

Church built in 1888, 31,742 square feet

Parish House built in 1903 13,564 square feet

Rectory built in 1922, 3781 square feet (3 levels)

319 West Street built in 1910, 1933 square feet, 1 renter

323 West Street built in 1920, 2670 square feet (2 renters)

2021 Hickory built in 1950?, 1600 square feet (1 renter)

323A West St, the renter of the smaller unit gave notice that they were not renewing their lease but wanted to go month by month. The woman and her daughter do not feel safe living next to the other renters in the larger unit. The renters had a large party the was broken up by the police. They will be allowed to rent month to month and see if the problems improve.

A tentative date for the church yard clean-up has been set for June 6th from 9 am to 1pm.

Church yard mowing was discussed, we have used a community service worker in the past but the courts are not open due to Covid-19. This saved the church \$2,500. John has been mowing the yard but will not be available to do so after June 1st. John suggested if we cannot get another community service worker that we either hire a landscaping firm at \$110/week or a handyman at \$50/wk. using our equipment.

Our church phone system uses Comcast and we have 5 phone sets and pay \$44.95 per phone plus \$9.95 for a modem or \$234.70 per month. John eliminated 3 phones (kitchen, business office and Church) for a savings of \$134.85 per month. Our new phone bill for 2 phones will be \$99.85 per month.

Last year we spent \$3,893 for copier maintenance. We should be able to save \$2,000 per year by changing vendors. Don Craig will look into two additional quotes.

The church sound system was installed in 1993 and needs to be upgraded so we can use it. The system has 2 fixed mics and 3 portable mics. A problem occurs when the volume is turned up we get feedback. John has talked to Lisa, Cindy, Tim Phillips and Don Craig looking for another sound system company to get quotes.

Rector & Warden Reports:

Father thanked Mary Neely for her help getting the computers operational again and all the help she has been. Monica Beniste has been doing the bulletins and Chi-Rho Gazette, the name of our weekly blasts. Father will begin to interview new candidates for the parish assistant position. Hiring 2 part-time people was discussed as an option, one candidate would have office skills and help with rentals and the other would have youth ministry skills and music background to help Lisa.

Father and family will finish moving from Indiana this coming week.

Father asked vestry members for a quick evaluation of his first 3 months at the next meeting. He also asked permission for staff to come and share at a future vestry meeting. Father thanked the vestry for their support and help.

A vestry retreat was discussed and Greg discussed the need for Strategic planning, which was last done in 2008-2009. Congregations are typically not well versed in the process but it is very helpful in setting our goals and missions for the coming years. Greg suggests at a vestry retreat we come up with 2 or 3 critical issues that we can set goals and take action to accomplish the goals. This process is difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Goals are normally set for a year and Father Jean asked what we can accomplish in the next 6 months. A retreat would consist of one evening and one day. We will look into dates as soon as we are able to gather together again. A package with issues and prioritized actions was sent out although several members did not receive the package or the agenda for today's meeting. Emails will be checked. Sandy said the Search Committee may have some information that may help as some of the work has already been done by them, she will ask Mary Neely if the report is available.

Father also asked about our graduates and we will contact them so they can be recognized.

Our next vestry meeting is set for Sunday June 14th and Sunday June 28th at 11:00. Matt will try to keep the meetings shorter.

Father ended with prayer and we adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Tippet
Clerk of the Vestry

A message from Anne Smith, Deacon Postulant.

We live in a time of crises, the pandemic of Covid 19 and the pandemic of racial violence. Worldwide the total number of people who have died from the virus is approaching 400,000, and in the United States, it has recently exceeded 100,000. Not represented in these numbers are people who suffered alone and are still recovering, people who died alone of other causes, and families who could not be with dying loved ones or properly mourn them. Not represented in these numbers is the race disparities in this country: people of color represent more than twice the proportion of Covid 19 death than their portion of the population. In the month of May, we learned of two deaths of two unarmed black men. Ahmoud Arbery, 25 years old, was jogging near his home in Georgia on February 23 when he was shot by a white man. We did not hear about this, and no arrests were made, until a video of the incident went viral in May. On May 25, George Floyd, 46 years old, was killed by policemen in Minneapolis. We are now in the midst of days of protest and violence. Both the disparities, by race, in Covid 19 deaths, and the deaths of Ahmoud Arbery and George Floyd, lay bare the sin of systemic racism, based in white supremacy, that has infected our country for 400 years.

How are we called to respond? Let us look to our baptismal covenant (BCP 305). We are asked “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” And we respond “I will with God’s help.” This promise calls us to see everyone as a child of God, and we cannot help but be heart broken by the suffering from our two pandemics, Covid 19 and the effects of racism that we cannot ignore. Let’s feed our hearts with lamentation, and let’s act, as we are able, to fight for justice.

Lamentation intimately connects us with God as we cry out in our pain. Lamentation intimately connects us to Christ, who cried out on the cross. In the passion account in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, just before he took his last breath, Jesus cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” Thus begins Psalm 22. I have read this Psalm many times during the past few weeks. I have also found music as a way to allow me to process emotions of deep sadness and anger. I have listened often to this beautiful and moving symphony by Joel Thompson, “The Last Seven Words of the Unarmed.” Here the [link](#) to the performance I have been meditating and crying with.

How can we act. Here is a suggestion: connect with the Episcopal Policy Network. Here is the [link](#). Explore the website and register for updates. Use it to educate yourself and advocate for justice. If you don’t know what to write about or call for to legislators, this will help you get started. We can do this from home. We can tell friends what we are doing for justice. We can share what we are learning.

In a recent message from Bishop Lee, he mentioned a tee shirt he had seen. It said “the Church is not closed; it has been deployed.” We can take care of our hearts and our souls as we practice lamentation. We are deployed as we do what we can to help bring justice and peace

Church Yard Spring Cleanup



Saturday June 6th from 9am to 1pm is set for the Church Yard spring cleanup. We hoped to be joined by 15 to 20 Waukegan to College students and parents. We will be following social distancing guidelines and wearing masks. We have plenty of room to spread out and there is a lot of work to be done. We will have water bottles for water to drink but will be skipping the lunch we normally provide. There is 12 cubic yards of mulch that will be dropped off on Friday that will need to be spread.



For those wishing to help before or after that date we have plastic yard waste cans next to the shed that can be filled with yard waste and taken out to the curb in front of the Rectory on Tuesday evening. The City will pick up to 10 yard waste containers per week. Please contact me for guidance on what needs to be done.

This year I hope to improve the area along Grand Avenue from our main entrance to West Street. We will be trimming up the trees, removing weeds and adding mulch to the planting beds.



Weeds need to be pulled and mulch added to the beds in Resurrection Garden. The dead shrubs were removed next to the Chapel steps. New shrubs need to be purchased and planted. This is a great opportunity for volunteers to see and work at the Church.



Music

I hope everyone is staying well and safe as we get into the Pentecost season. I have a new email address for the church. Musicdir@christchurchwaukegan.org. If you have some free time, email me some of your favorite hymns or your favorite music settings. Did you like the bagpipes setting for the Celtic Alleluia at Easter? Was the organ or string setting for keyboard your favorite? Did Veni Sancte Spiritus at Pentecost help create a spiritual experience? How do you like the drums? I always welcome your input. Next month, we will publish some of your feedback.

Lisa Graves

CHRIST CHURCH CLERGY AND STAFF

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, *Bishop*

The Rev. Jean C. Beniste, *Rector*

Lisa Graves, *Music Director*

John Moore, *Building Manager*



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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