

Christ Church

News and Views

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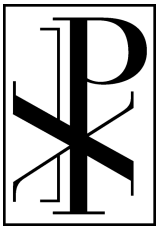
December 2011

SUNDAY SERVICES
8:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A.M. September through May
Nursery is provided at late service throughout the year.

FROM THE RECTOR

Nicholas S. Szobota

Dear Friends in Christ,



The season of Thanksgiving has sped by us, leading into the season of Advent. I find this an appropriate time to pause and name the joys of the past five months at Christ Church. I am thankful for the way in which I've been welcomed here. I'm thankful for how many people at Christ Church offer their time and energy to events like the Celebration of New Ministry, Homecoming Dinner, the Celtic Concert, and our regular times of worship and prayer on Sundays. I have experienced Christ Church as a congregation committed to serving God and making a difference in the world, committed to opening our doors so that we and others may experience the life-changing presence of God in our midst.

This life-changing presence occupies a central place in the celebrations of Advent and Christmas. The Christian celebrations for this time of year acknowledge the birth of Jesus Christ, who comes as the Son of God but arrives into this world just as any one of us: born of a human mother who carried him in her womb, exposed and vulnerable and needing the care of parents who love him as their own. The fancy term for this concept is "incarnation." This idea acknowledges that the infinite and eternal God has arrived amongst us as one of us, fully divine but also fully human, not somehow fifty percent God and fifty percent mortal. Unlike the demigods (literally, "half gods") described in some tales as having a godly parent (e.g., Zeus, Poseidon, Aphrodite) and a human parent, Jesus Christ exists in both the fullness of what divinity means and the fullness of what humanity means.

Celebrating Christmas calls us to acknowledge an event in our savior's life. We offer thanks that this birth leads to our salvation and get to say, "Happy Birthday Jesus." We also acknowledge that Jesus comes among us as a sign of what God intends humanity to be. We will probably never attain the fullness of Jesus' example in our own lifetimes, yet nevertheless God asks us to look at Jesus and strive to be like him, with God's help.

Come to church as we share the Christmas story with one another, renewing our commitment to turn to the savior who first turned to us as one of us. During 10 a.m. worship on December 18, the Sunday School will present the Christmas story in a pageant. On December 24th, come worship and sing God's praises. There will be the simpler, child-friendly "Happy Birthday Jesus" service at 4 p.m. and the joyful solemnity of the more formal service at 7 p.m. Since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, there will also be a simple 10 a.m. service on Christmas Day. I will preach at all Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, adapting my sermon to the anticipated congregation. Worship on Sunday, January 1, features the annual Christmas Lessons and

Carols service at 10 a.m. During this holy season, let us come together as the body of Christ in the world to worship, pray, receive the light of God’s presence, and heed God’s call to go out into the world to serve those in need.

The Rev. Nick Szobota



DONATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS are currently being accepted. To be included in the Christmas bulletins, names must be received no later than December 15.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS FOR THE CHURCH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF: _____

IN THANKSGIVING FOR: _____

FOR OUTREACH: _____

Given by: _____

Amount: _____

Make checks to Christ Church [memo: Christmas flowers]

UNITED THANK OFFERING (UTO)

Celebrate! Rejoice! GIVE THANKS AND A COIN!



To all of our parishioners who donated a total of \$220.00 to the Fall UTO collection, the church and UTO would like to say “Thank You.” Due to inclement weather on October 29, we were unable to attend the Ingathering at St. James’ Church in Baltimore; our donation has been mailed in.

UTO is pleased to announce that, for the third year in a row, a UTO grant was approved for a ministry in our diocese. An award of \$17, 200 was made for The Samaritan Women Faith Markets: Bringing Healthy Food to the Urban Desert, in Baltimore; to purchase (wheelbarrows, fencing and irrigation, composting, food retail permits, used box truck, lumber and supplies for produce stands). The proposal was submitted by St John’s Parish in Ellicott City.

The ministry of prayerful thanksgiving by use of the “Blue Box” is a constant reminder to collect coins throughout the year representing a prayer moment that should be practiced daily, or at least frequently. Keep your “Blue Box” handy – this is an everyday act each and every day of the year. 10 cents a day is nearly \$20 and 25 cents a day is nearly \$50. How much could you contribute if you skipped one fast-food lunch each month? We are thankful for many things – for life itself, for our parish and its work, for the work of the UTO in our country and the world.

Thanks again and always keep your “Blue Box” handy for your excess change.

Sandy McDonald

PRAYER LIST CHANGE



The monthly **prayer list form** on the tract table in the sanctuary has been updated to include an extra column with an asterisk in the column heading. Please place a checkmark in this column for individuals requiring continuing prayers. This will result in the individual remaining on the prayer list until further notification from you. Short term prayer requests will continue to drop off at month end.



BAPTISM: BRYSON MCKEEN FLANDERS, son of McKeen & Katharine Chaney Flanders, on November 6, 2011



SUNDAY SCHOOL

During Sunday school on November 27, the students gathered in the Parish Hall to decorate and fill 52 goody bags with toys and snacks for needy children. Thanks to everyone who participated in this important outreach project!

The Sunday School Christmas pageant will be held at the 10am service on December 18. Thanks to Susanne Talbott and Mandi Hopkins who have volunteered to coordinate the pageant this year ALL children are invited to participate in the pageant. We would like to get together on Sunday, the 4th, in the Parish Hall after church to go over parts and costumes. Practice will be in the Parish Hall during church on the 11th.

Melissa Robertson, Stephanie Watson

YOUTH GROUP

This month we will focus on our Holiday outreach project. We will continue to collect gently used coats of all sizes. There is a collection basket in the Sunday School building.

We are also doing the back pack project again. This year, to stretch our dollar even further, we will collect money. This collection will pay Giving Back Inc. for the items and packs, which they can purchase in bulk or receive as donations. We will pick up our goods and the youth will assemble the packs for delivery the week before Christmas. The exact date will be announced later. The cost for one pack filled with items is \$25. Our goal is to fill 10 packs. As of Nov. 28th, we have enough to fill almost 4 packs. Thank you to those of you who have contributed to this project already. There is a collection can decorated in green, on the tract table by the door as you walk into the church. Please help our youth reach their goal.

We continue to meet once a month, with 5-6 youth attending. We have an enthusiastic group and I enjoy being with them! At our next meeting, December 18, we will assemble the back packs for the homeless. Look forward to seeing you there!

Susie Stricker