

The Spire

A Newsletter of Christ Church Ithan

Fall 2017

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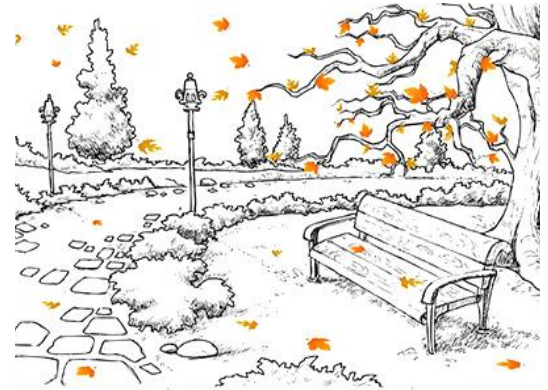
An Abundance of Opportunity

A message from Fr John

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Christ Church, Ithan,

As I write this letter for our Fall newsletter, there are so many things on my mind. I wasn't expecting to be here as our transition timeline anticipated a call to a new Rector by now. As you know, that call did not happen and

it seems that God had another plan for Christ Church, Ithan and for me! Our mutual discernment has placed us on another path, an exciting and adventurous one. Our Holy Covenant presented at the parish meeting on September 24th will guide our journey together over the next couple of years as we seek to better define our mission and purpose and thus allow Christ Church, Ithan to be more focused and clear in calling their next priest.



"This is a time to be intentional about your involvement here and to clearly communicate what you want your church to be "

Our Holy Covenant seeks to grow our relationship with God, our relationship with each other as a Christian community and our relationship with our local community and wider world. These relationships will be the focus of our efforts and your Vestry is already engaged in real work to address these three areas. Everything we do will seek to advance these goals and through a process of experimentation and collaboration, we hope to grow our church and creatively and energetically become a faith community that is alive with God's love.

I can't emphasize enough how much we need each and every one of you to engage in the work that your Vestry will be leading. This is a time to be intentional about your involvement here and to clearly communicate with your leadership what you want your church to be and what excites you about the initiatives in which we will be engaged. Above all, we need to proceed prayerfully

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An Abundance of Opportunity

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during our time together with our eyes fixed on Jesus, our Lord. Jesus is calling us to re-form ourselves and renew our church, so that we can be a vibrant witness to his presence. We exist for no other reason than to share Jesus' Good News with our world. Being clear about Jesus and his message of love is essential in a culture that challenges Jesus' Way from all sides. So, let us be attentive to Jesus' call during this Covenant Time.

On another note, Fall is harvest time, a time of Thanksgiving. I love seeing the horns of plenty that decorate our stores and even our churches. Overflowing with fruits and vegetables and flowers, they remind me about the abundance we share. We are a blessed people. Our hearts need to overflow with gratitude for the blessings of life and love, family and friends, liberty and faith. If we live our lives out of an attitude of abundance, we discover that there is always more to share and to give. An attitude of scarcity makes us stingy; we never seem to have enough; we are never satisfied. Abundance overflows with generosity. We give of our time freely. We use our talents in the service of our brothers and sisters. We are not afraid to give money to provide relief and to support the mission of our church here and elsewhere. There is always enough, often more than enough.

During my time at Christ Church, Ithaca, the abundance we share is so clearly evident - People with long histories at our church, who deeply love our faith community; people dedicated to helping in any way that they can; people who give generously to support the work of the church; people who are gracious in providing hospitality and welcome - It all attests to blessing upon blessing for which we should be ever grateful.

So, what a wonderful way to begin the next part of our journey together as we join in a holy covenant to build our future! Let's just be thankful for one another, for the faith we share. Let us build up one another in love. Let us live out of a place of abundance and with hearts full of gratitude, let us stay open to the miracles God has in store for us.

Fr John Sosnowski

Priest-in-Charge

Living Each Day as a Steward!

We will begin our annual reflection on stewardship on Sunday, October 29th for three consecutive Sundays. The theme of our worship services will be "living each day as a steward".

We will learn how the Holy Spirit, working through Word and Sacrament, transforms us to be more like our Chief Steward, Jesus, who willingly poured out his life in giving and serving, ultimately sacrificing his very life for our eternal lives. Just as Jesus faithfully served his Father by serving us, we are to use our lives and gifts in faithful service to him by serving others.

Please join us as we celebrate our abundance and hear God's call to share our lives, our gifts and our resources in service to our brothers and sisters in Jesus' name.

The three weekly themes are as follows:

Sun, Oct 29: "The Steward's Identity"

Sun, Nov 5: "The Steward's Purpose"

Sun, Nov 12: "The Steward's Lifestyle"

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"

(1 Peter 4:10)

Covenant Sealing Ceremony

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Gutierrez, Bishop of Pennsylvania, will be coming to Christ Church, Ithan on Tuesday, December 5th to seal our Holy Covenant with Fr. John Sosnowski as our Priest-in-Charge at a celebration of Holy Eucharist at 7:00PM. A reception will follow in Ithan Hall so parishioners can greet our Bishop. Please mark your calendars for this event and join us for this parish celebration.

Our Bishop has been integral to our discernment and actively involved in the formation of our Covenant document that was shared with our parish at a parish meeting on September 24th. More details about this evening and plans for transportation for those who have difficulty getting out at night will be forthcoming.



Vestry Leadership for our Holy Covenant

There are three relationships in our holy covenant on which your Vestry is committed to work. Each Vestry member has chosen a particular area of focus in which to be involved. Below is an outline of the covenant goals and the Vestry people leading them.

Please take note of this information and share your ideas and thoughts with the designated vestry people, join their working group, or contact them about one of their upcoming activities that you are excited about to find out how you can participate or help.

Relationship with God

Pat Palumbo
Fr. John Sosnowski

We seek to grow and expand our relationship with God through worship, prayer and formation. As Christ Church, we affirm our desire to grow in Jesus Christ, to deepen our understanding of his Gospel, and to learn to be better disciples.

We hope to increase participation in worship and prayer life both within and beyond Sunday worship as we seek to proclaim Jesus as our Lord.

Relationship with each other as a Christian community

Martin McNeil
Julia Gould
Rick Wheeler

We seek to build our relationships beyond our Sunday Service interactions with each other.

We hope to increase opportunities for people to connect in Church-related and outside fellowship.

Relationship with our local community and wider world

Bruce Wietlisbach
Joe Merlino
Chris Herring
Janice Martin
Dirk Soutendijk

We seek to practice the teachings of Jesus with the greater community and be more engaged with and visible in the community.

We hope to increase opportunities for parishioners and guests to live our faith, share our resources and join Jesus in the work of transforming our world.

Christmas Music Program *Jeff Fowler, Organist / Choirmaster*

Every few years Christmas falls on an awkward day of the week for those of us who work for the church. This is one of those years. Christmas is on a Monday this year, so Christmas Eve is the very same day as the Fourth Sunday of Advent. That means there is worship in the morning and worship in the evening.

We've made a few decisions in light of this knotty little circumstance. Here's the plan...

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

One morning service at 9:30 am (sorry, no choir)

CHRISTMAS EVE (later the same day)

Early Christmas Eve Service at 4:00 pm

Come early to get a good seat.

The full Choir will sing. (This is a first for the early service!)

The Choir will sing a program of Christmas Music twenty minutes prior to 4pm.

Later Christmas Eve Service at 9:00 pm

Come early to get a good seat.

The Quintet of Professional Singers will sing, accompanied by harp.

A program of Christmas Music will be sung 20 minutes before the service begins.

CHRISTMAS DAY (a Monday)

Worship at 9:30 am

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

One morning service at 9:30 am



This scenario won't haunt us again until 2023.

BTW: Did I tell you that the choir will sing a program of Christmas music twenty minutes before the Christmas Eve services begin?

Jeff Fowler

Blessing of Animals

In case you missed it – we hosted a blessing of animals to commemorate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Saturday, October 7th.

Fr. John conducted a service of blessing at Harford Dog Park at 10am and on the front lawn of the church at 12 noon. Services like this are a great way to bring our church out into the community.

You can view more pictures from the event on our website at www.christchurchithan.org



A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

We are blessed here at Christ Church, Ithan with a beautiful Memorial Garden in which the remains of beloved parishioners are interred. Every year, the Church's calendar gives us the opportunity to remember our ancestors in faith as we celebrate the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls.

On Sunday, November 5th, following our 10AM Service, we will gather in our Memorial Garden to celebrate the lives of those who have helped shape our church community through their dedication and love of Christ Church, Ithan. Families of those interred there have received a special invitation to this Service.

Please join us on Nov. 5th as we remember those who so loved our church.



Zero-Cost Donations

Opportunities to help Christ Church Ithan while you shop



**create your family photo
christmas cards and have
five percent of the cost
donated to CCI!**

Do you send family photo Christmas cards? Now you can help support Christ Church Ithan's outreach projects when you have your cards created through either Shutterfly or Snapfish!

Simply to go **www.fundphotos.com** , select Christ Church Ithan as your designated participating charitable organization on the **Shop Now > Shop by Charitable Organization** link , and then click on the photo company of your choice.

The link will take you to your own login page, where you will then use Shutterfly or Snapfish exactly as you would if you had gone to the sites directly. The only difference is that 5% of your purchase price will be donated to Christ Church Ithan. You can even use your Shutterfly or Snapfish coupons, gift cards, and discounts, and 5% of every purchase still goes to Christ Church Ithan.

Target is also an affiliated retailer with Fundphotos, so every online purchase you make from Target can result in 1% going to Christ Church Ithan when you access Target online through Fundphotos.

This is an easy way to help our local outreach projects like Radnor A Better Chance House, St. James School, the Food Bank, and the annual Fill the Bus project. So get started on those Christmas cards now and help support Christ Church Ithan being Jesus' "feet on the street" today!

Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com) is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as amazon.com.

The difference is that when you shop at smile.amazon.com, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to the charity of your choice.

When you go to smile.amazon.com, search for Christ Church Ithan and then start shopping!



Select a charity (You can change it any time.)

Choose one of our spotlight charities

Or pick your own charitable organization:

Advent Wreath Making

Advent is just around the corner. That means it's time to order the supplies to create a beautiful table Advent wreath. We will be making Advent wreaths on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3, and everyone is invited!

If you have a wreath form tucked away somewhere, dig that one out. If not, simply sign up in the back of the church or in the parish hall and we will purchase you a new one. You can also sign up for a set of Advent candles.

Anyone who has greens in their yard, small, natural decorative items (dried flower clusters, cones, shells, pods, etc.), or narrow ribbon to use to decorate the wreaths, please bring them on December 3rd. Also bring your gardening clippers if you have a pair, we will supply the wire, extra clippers, and hot glue guns and will show everyone how to make this simple and beautiful table wreath.

The cost of the wreath form is \$4.00, the set of four Advent candles is \$6.00.

If you know anyone who can't make it to church but would like a wreath, please let Cynthia know and we will make a wreath to be delivered to them.



Greening of the Church

Sunday, December 17th immediately following the 10:00am service will be our annual Greening of the Church. Please plan to join as we put up the trees and decorations. It's a lovely time full of joy and fellowship.

Friday December 22nd creating the fresh flower arrangements for our church's beautiful Christmas celebration. We will meet in the church basement at 10:00 am to make the floral arrangements for the candles that line the aisle, the brass container for the vestibule, and the candle rings for the windows (no previous experience necessary). We'll meet at 10:00 am.

Saturday December 23rd placing the flower arrangements and the poinsettias in the sanctuary as the finishing touches to once again make Christ Church Ithan the prettiest little church on the main line. We'll meet at 10:00 am.

This is also a really lovely time to be with fellow parishioners, I do hope you can join. Please mark your calendars for any or all three dates. Call or email Jacqui North (jacqui.north@verizon.net / 484-582-1212) with any questions.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is responsible for making our church beautiful not just at Christmas time but throughout the year, and is always looking to expand membership.

If you would like to learn more about Altar Guild, please contact Nancy Breitling at nanbreit@verizon.net or call 484-580-8268.

Welcome Stranger Treasure Hunt

You are invited to participate in a very special "treasure hunt" on Sunday, November 12, immediately following the 10:00 service.

Christ Church Ithan is a loving and welcoming place that opens its arms to our local community in so many different ways. To assure that we are being as welcoming as possible with our beautiful building and grounds, we are going to have a "Welcome Stranger Treasure Hunt", during which we will break into small teams and explore our entire campus, inside and out, pretending to look through the eyes of strangers (because what is a stranger but a friend you have not yet met?). We'll be sleuthing in the parking lots, the narthex and sanctuary, Ithan Hall hallways, the main hall and kitchen, even the bathrooms, and noting where we do a splendid job of welcoming and where we could use a nudge in that direction. Then we'll all sit down for a simple soup and bread lunch to share what we've found.



Our takeaways from our hour or so of time - a list of things on which our parish can work to make us even MORE welcoming, homemade soup and bread on a nice fall Sunday, and some fun with friends, some of whom you know and some you may not have yet met!

Hope you can join us, sign ups are in the back of the sanctuary and in Ithan Hall, or email Cynthia and let her know you'll be there. Cynthia.sosnowski@gmail.com

Audubon at Home

Learn how to attract birds to your neighborhood. Whether you have a yard, a balcony or just a window, you can help and view birds. Creating a healthy habitat for wildlife creates a healthy home for us too!

Join us on Thursday, November 2nd at 7:00pm in Ithan Hall where Steven Saffier of The Audubon Society will present "Audubon at Home", sponsored by the Community Garden Club at Wayne.



Helena Devereux Women in Leadership Award

Congratulations to Missy Wietlisbach, who was recently honored with the Helena Devereux Women in Leadership Award, presented by the Main Line Chamber of Commerce, the Society of Professional Women and Devereux Advanced Behavior Health.

The Helena Devereux Women in Leadership Award recognizes outstanding female professionals whose work has impacted the Greater Main Line Region in the areas of business excellence, community service, exceptional women's leadership and the advancement of all employees.