THE MESSENGER

A COMMUNICATION MINISTRY OF
CHRIST CHURCH, DUANESBURG, NEW YORK

✠ DECEMBER 2022/JANUARY 2023 ✠

Photo by Nancy Palluti

RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS

CHRISTMAS IN BELFAST

Belfast, the award-winning movie, brought back many childhood memories for me. Kenneth Branagh, the writer and producer, grew up in Belfast in the 1960s and the movie is his experience of the start of The Troubles, before he and his family left Northern Ireland to live in England.

In the movie, one Christmas Day morning, nine-year old Buddy received the same presents as I did way back then. I couldn't believe it when he got a James Bond Car and a Thunderbirds outfit. It was a won derful surprise to relive some of my own childhood memories of Christmas and to know that Kenneth Branagh had received the same presents as me!

Christmas gifts are given in celebration of Jesus' birth, and they are symbolic of the gifts presented by The Three Wise men. As I reflected on the gifts I received - way back then - I am also thankful for the love and thoughtfulness of my parents as they lived into the celebration of Christmas through the presents they gave.

I pray that we all have a blessed and peaceful Christmas, and whether we give or receive gifts this year, let us be mindful of the reason they are given.

Blessings,

Fr. Alistair ✠

✠

Rector's Reflections 1
View from the Pew 2 - 3
"Agape" 3
Row Boats & Kayaks 4
Christ Church Archives 5
What Brings You Joy 6
The Poetry Corner 7
Parish Calendar 8 - 9
Christ Church Events 10

✠

View from the Pew

Autumn

By John Weiler

The big TV event in our house this summer was *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*.

There has been much ink spilled and many YouTube videos shot extolling the successes and perceived failures of the showrunners and writers.

There was, for example, backlash against the multi-racial cast. A funny sort of position to take since a consistent theme in JRR Tolkien's work is different races and cultures setting aside their differences and banding together against a rising evil.

That said, the show *has* occasionally departed from Tolkien's lore and his established order of events. I haven't got the available word count and you, dear reader, likely don't have the patience for me to push my glasses up my nose with one finger and enumerate them here.

Tolkien wrote, in a letter concerning a proposed adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* in the 50s, "The canons of narrative art in any medium cannot be wholly different; and the failure of poor films is often precisely in exaggeration, and in the intrusion of unwarranted matter owing to not perceiving where the core of the original lies."

So, while there are many additions in *The Rings of Power*, and a few plot points that had me turning to Sandra to say, "That's not a thing," I believe the show must ultimately be judged by how well it understands the core of Tolkien's work.

And I have found the story thus far correctly perceives Tolkien's themes of laying aside deference for common cause, of hope, of redemption, of deeply flawed characters setting aside fear to answer the call to a higher purpose. This is nobility, not something inborn.

Criticisms of Prof. Tolkien's work fail to perceive this. They treat it like a moralistic fairytale.

But Tolkien didn't write his characters as paragons of virtue. That there is a supreme good to which good characters aspire is not the same as those characters amounting to flat shadow puppets cut from a cloth of pure righteousness acting out a morality play.

There is ambiguity even in virtuous characters as they face evil. How will they face it? What is justified in this fight? Where is the line?

And evil characters in Tolkien's legendarium never start that way. Not a single one. They come to it; they are corrupted sometimes in the very pursuit of fighting evil. They create marvels or seek power (or both) to their own ends, their own glory.

Tolkien, a devout Catholic, saw the world in the grip of original sin, that is, our capacity for selfishness ordered above God's will. He saw too that we are image-bearers of God because God – an all knowing, loving, creative, intelligence, created us in His image – not in physical form, but in character. Tolkien, therefore, saw the artist as a sub-creator, a creator of fictional worlds as God created our world.

Evil, in Tolkien's sub-created world, is not the equal and opposite number of good. It is a distortion of the good, of the will of the Creator. It comes into Tolkien's cosmology as a literal disharmony in the song of creation, a brassy, self-aggrandizing dissonance.

When Sauron is unmasked in the Rings of Power, he claims he wants to heal Middle Earth.

His accuser challenges him; then why does his plan to heal look like domination?

"I do not see a difference," he answers.

That right there is all Tolkien. He may not have written it, but that is his view of evil: The will of a created being set above the will of the creator. The hubris that we alone can fix ourselves.

As a Christian, Tolkien could not create a world that failed to mirror our own – flaws and all – nor could he create one that was absent of the hope that guided him through his own life – even through the horrors of the First World War when he fought, and World War II when the Blitz blacked out the streets of Oxford while his sons served across the Channel.

That hope is this: That all, even the machinations of evil, will be turned towards God's good purpose and that we ourselves are most aligned with that purpose when we, in community, set the will of God and the wellbeing of others above our own. ✠

"Agape"

By Deacon Debbie

More than once I have mentioned the word "agape" in my sermons. "Agape" is defined as giving to others, sacrificing our time, energy, and resources for someone else without expecting anything in return. Well did you ever wonder where those cards came from that you received for Christmas, your birthday, your anniversary, when you lost a loved one or just because? Or why do people leave greeting cards on the table in the parish hall? Well, the answer is we all have been blessed by the Card Ministry of Marge Cummings for 40 years! During that time Marge has singlehandedly graced us with her beautiful penmanship and sentiments. Marge's Card Ministry is truly an example of that kind of "agape".

At Marge's suggestion, the congregation has been assisting at Christmas and Easter with the Card Ministry. Recently during a phone call and talking about the date for the Christmas activity, Marge mentioned she would be retiring from the Card Ministry after Easter 2023.

When you see Marge next, although she does not expect it, please thank her for the blessing her Card Ministry has given to the congregation for the past 40 years!

Row Boats & Kayaks

By Sandra Weiler

In a row boat, we go backwards in a sense. You don't see what's ahead of you. If you have ever manned a kayak or canoe, you know what I mean. Think about that movement for a bit. In that row boat you are able to see where you have been and if you look sideways, you can see where you are.

The many prophets in the Bible are moving through life in a row boat. The prophets wrestle with the past and try to make sense of the current circumstances of their world. What our prophets did was give us a glimpse of a different world of the future to come while looking to the past to provide wisdom based on God's word.

The prophets warn of sin and wickedness leading to ruin and yet we are consoled with their vision of later days. They heard the open heart of God to so they could become the bearers of the good news to come. God shared with them the promise to be fulfilled about a savior that will come to take our sin.

In kayaks we boldly traverse the water head on moving forward with little regard to where we were. The speaker at the Cathedral this year, Rev. Dr. James Haddix, likened the ancient Greek culture to a ride in a kayak.

The Greeks didn't have scripture; they had mostly oral stories that included beliefs, rituals and myths which were useful to their culture in explaining that the world was controlled by many gods. Their stories reference behaviors towards the gods and each other but this was not the making of a religion.

The gods in Greek mythology were like mortals who could be small, jealous and cruel; people didn't want to be like the gods but to learn from their flaws. The stories became more of a philosophy than a religion.

Paul did reference Greek philosophy in his writing but he made it clear that the Lord is more real than even the most beautiful statue of Zeus or Aphrodite. The Lord lives, breathes, moves, loves, and acts, all of which the Greek gods could never hope to do because they are lifeless and false. The prophets, Paul, and the other apostles wrote about Jesus who we can turn to and who we aspire to be like.

We row into the future, while looking back at the Bible, finding guidance in the past. ✠

AA Meetings

Days: Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday
Time: 7:30 – 8:30pm
Where: Parish Hall

Thank you, Christ Church Family, for donating a total of 39 shoeboxes!

CHRIST CHURCH ARCHIVES

CHURCH SPIRE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

Transcribed from the files of Christ Church:

"On July 8, 1878, the church spire was struck by lightning and utterly destroyed. Something over a year later, the present beautiful spire was erected under the supervision of James H. Featherstonhough. Much of the ornamental iron work which was on the old spire was used again on the new, and the whole is surmounted as is proper with the sacred emblem of our faith." The spire which, as of 2022, is in place on our church was repaired and refurbished in 2005. The ironwork was also repaired by the excellent craftsman, Joseph Merli, and remounted on the spire once again.

One item that was missing from the spire in 1878 was a bell and through the next decade or so an effort was made to collect money in order to purchase and mount a new bell. This was especially important because the 100th anniversary of Christ Church was pending. Again, the church records reveal the results of this fund drive of over 125 years ago.

"The bell in Christ Church, Duanesburg, as purchased by public subscription and presented to the 100th anniversary August 25, 1893. It was purchased in Troy of the Meneely Bell Foundry and came by (rail) freight to Duane Station (formerly located near the intersection of Weaver Road and Route 7) and then by horses and wagon to the church. The amount collected was $294.01 ($9,628.83 in today's dollars). The list of subscribers follows:

George Matthews
E.C. Delevan
George Matthews Jr.
Wesley VanPelt
E.W. Flower
Frank M. Landers
John Abell
Thomas Mudge
Ralph W. MacDougall
Mrs. David Humphrey
Alexander MacDougall
Miss Helen DeLamater
Alexander VanPelt
Arthur Hoag
Ralph A. MacDougall, M.D.
Ralph Mott
William T. Waddell
Wallace Sperbeck
Mrs. Joseph Case
Samuel Waddell
Mrs. Fannie Case
F.P. Hunt
Mrs. Caroline Havens
Wallace Ostrander
Miss Mary Havens
Charles Mott
Miss Mary Osterhout
Miss M.E. Holmes
A.H. Osterhout
Mrs. William Knight
Jennie Tidball
Ray Hunt
Fred Bradt
Abram Ball
Fred Jarvis
William Matthews
Miss Eliza MacDougall
Miss Harriet Lendrum
John Mudge
James D. Featherstonhaugh
Mrs. B.M. Duane
George W. Featherstonhaugh
Mrs. J. DeLaVergne
Mrs. James Wilkins
Edward C. Clark
Miss Marietta MacDougall
Mrs. J. Sprong
John H. Ball
Charles Gilchrest
H.D. Russell
Miss Tilford
George Schrade Sr.
Walter MacMillan
Jacob Schrade
Mrs. Byron Rector
Mrs. Catharine Schrade
Miss H. Avery
Miss Abbie Schrade
Mrs. J.A. Young
Mrs. E.C. Stewart
Miss Abbie Moore
John Burtt
Edwin J. Wood
Charles Lovell
William E. Osterhout
Miss M.A. Lowell
John W. Jarvis
Henry Hartman
Laura Humphrey
George Schrade, Jr.
Raymond Humphrey
Harmon Schrade
Herbert Humphrey
Roemyn Schrade
Annie MacMillan
Blaine Scace
John Wright
Barton Scace
Clarence Osterhout
Annie Mudge
Harry Waddell
Grace Mudge
Alvia Russell ✠

What Brings You Joy?

By Deacon Debbie

Barring any weather complications, January 20-22, 2023 I will be attending the Deacon's Retreat at the Spiritual Life Center. Bishop Michael Smith will lead the retreat, and he wants us to explore what brings us joy in our ministry as a deacon. In the letter about the retreat, it stated "During a recent meeting of the Deacon's Council, we discussed Frederick Buechner's quote: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Bishop Smith will use this quote to help frame our retreat conversations." When we gathered to put up the Advent stars I found my answer, being part of Christ Church. As I watched everyone working together, adults and youth, to hang the stars my heart was full of joy! It is such a simple answer, but it is the truth!

This simple answer brought to mind the Shaker song, "Simple Gifts", which was originally intended for a quick step dance with tempo of 106 beats per minute, according to the Shaker Museum website. This song has become part of our 1982 Blue Hymnal (#554); but only with the first verse and chorus. The other verses speak to my simple answer.

'Tis the gift to be loved and that love to return, 'tis the gift to be taught and a richer gift to learn; and when we expect of others what we try to live each day, then we'll all live together and we'll all learn to say…

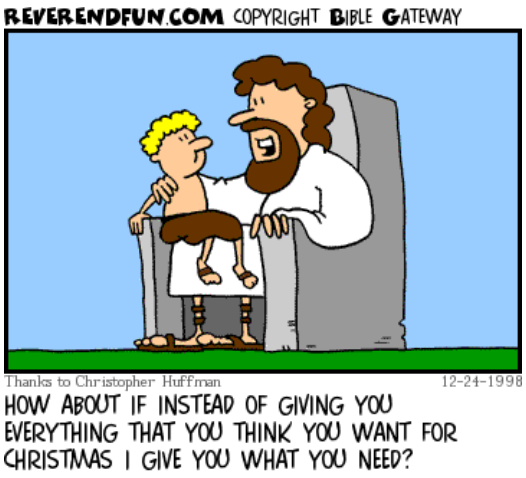
'Tis the gift to have friends and a true friend to be; 'tis the gift to think of others not to only think of me. And when we hear what others really think and feel, then we'll all live together with a love that's real.

'Tis the gift to be loving, 'tis the best gift of all. Like a quiet rain it blesses where it falls; and with it we will truly come to believe, 'tis better to give than it is to receive."

In the hustle, bustle and chaos of this Christmas season may you all find joy in the simple gifts God provides for us each day, if we just take the time to look.

Blessings,

Deacon Debbie ✠



The Poetry Corner

Happy New Year!

By Camille Crandall

Happy, happy New Year we're singing
As we look to another new year beginning.
We always look forward to a fresh new year
With new adventures and things to cheer.

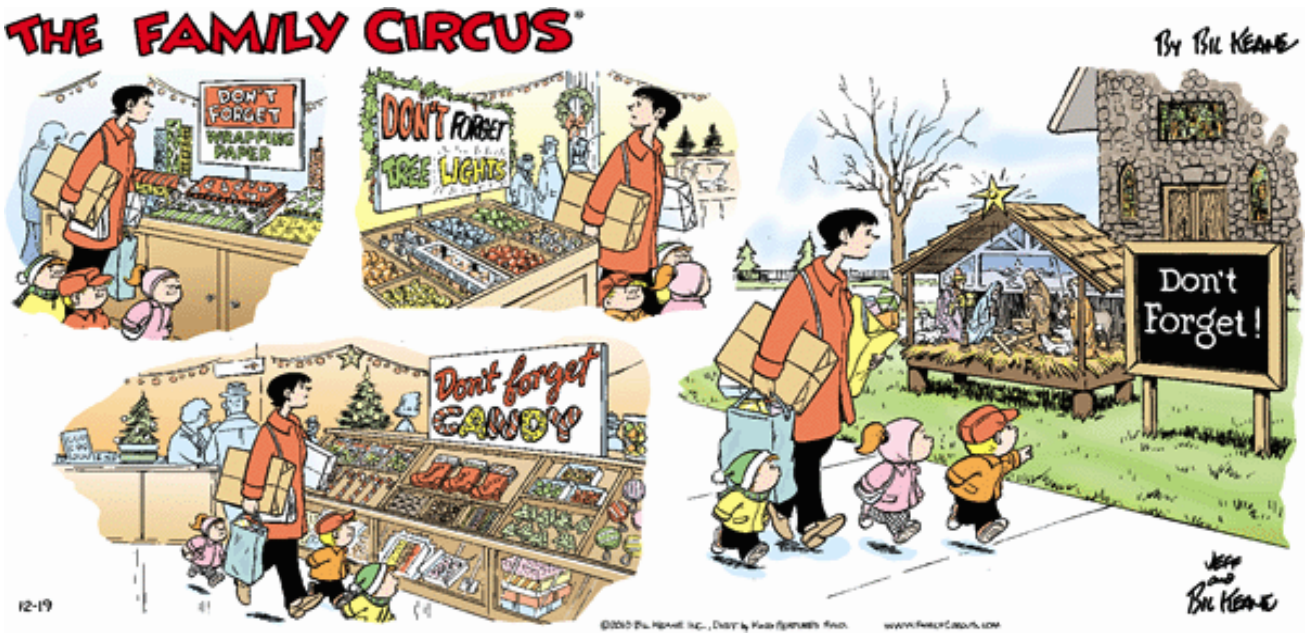
Out with the old; in with the new;
A new year's beginning for me and for you.

People will make some new resolutions
With hopes they'll result in problem solutions.
With good intentions, these words are merely spoken
For as you know, many New Year's vows are broken.

Out with the old; in with the new;
A new year's beginning for me and for you.

We sure don't know what's waiting ahead,
But with trust in the Lord, there's with nothing to dread.
We celebrated His birth this holy Christmas day,
With glory to Him we joyously pray.

For the thought of a new year with a fresh new start
Inspires the mind and warms the heart.
So pick up your glass and give a cheer;
I'm wishing you all a Happy New Year! ✠



✠ DECEMBER 2022 ✠

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Billy Chandler, Philip Sayles	**2** Linda MacDougall, Patrick McHugh	**3**
4 ADVENT 2 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am** Barbara Greer	**5** Tom White	**6** Steve Schrade	**7**	**8** **Ladies Auxiliary Party**	**9**	**10**
11 ADVENT 3 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am**	**12**	**13** Zachary Sayles	**14** Rick Lucia, Nancy Vogel	**15** Kevin & Nora Barker	**16**	**17**
18 ADVENT 4 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Lessons & Carols – 7pm**	**19**	**20**	**21** Vestry Mtg – 7pm	**22** Quinn Walsh	**23**	**24 CHRISTMAS EVE** **Service – 7pm** George Featherstonhaugh
25 CHRISTMAS 1 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** John Iseman	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29** Jill Brandoline	**30**	**31** Brendan Walsh

✠ JANUARY 2023 ✠

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 CHRISTMAS 2 **Holy Eucharist – 10am**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6 EPIPHANY** Wyatt Moller	**7**
8 EPIPHANY 1 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am** Elaina Denny	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
15 EPIPHANY 2 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am**	**16**	**17** Judith Doell, Sasha Eliott	**18** **Vestry Mtg – 7pm**	**19**	**20**	**21**
22 EPIPHANY 3 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	28
29 EPIPHANY 4 **Bible Study – 9am** **Holy Eucharist – 10am**	**30**	**31**				

CHRIST CHURCH EVENTS

December 11th
Following 10am Service:
Holiday Brunch & Write Christmas Cards

December 18th
Christmas Pageant at 10am
Greening of the Church following 10am service
Lessons & Carols at 7pm, reception to follow in the Parish Hall

December 24th
Christmas Eve Service at 7pm

December 25th
Sunday "said service" at 10am

February 11th (Saturday)
Game Night with Pizza and Cookie Decorating
4pm – 6pm

March 19th
Craft with Christina (tentative)

April 2nd
Easter Brunch
Writing Easter Cards

Christ Church is a worshiping community of friends, joyfully serving, encouraging and healing others in Jesus's name.

The parish is located at:
132 Duanesburg Churches Rd, Duanesburg, NY, on the corner of Rt. 20 and Duanesburg Churches Rd.

Rector:
Fr. Alistair Morrison
revajmorrison@gmail.com

Deacon:
Debbie Beach (518) 372-1352
dbeach21@verizon.net

Vestry members:
John Weiler – Sr. Warden
Phil Sayles – Jr. Warden
Judy Breitenstein
Cindy Creasy
Laura Lucia
Heather MacDougall
Nancy Palluti
Andrea Salisbury
Steven Schrade

Treasurer:
Laura Lucia

Parish Hall Ph.: *(518) 895-2383*

Christ Church
P.O. Box 92
Duanesburg, New York 12056-0092