THE MESSENGER

A COMMUNICATION MINISTRY OF
CHRIST CHURCH, DUANESBURG, NEW YORK

✠ FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 ✠

Photo by Nancy Palluti

THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is odd how you can plan on writing something one way and you end up going in a whole different direction. And this is one of those times, but what has been consistent is the word "light". Maybe it is because as I write this, we are in the season of Epiphany, which celebrates the coming of the three Wise Men who followed the light of a star to worship the infant Jesus. Then I started humming "This Little Light of Mine" which led to a little research regarding its history.

The Christian Post states, "The real history of "This Little Light of Mine," … began in the 1960s. It was first repurposed in the 1950s by Zilphia Horton, a musician and folklorist who was known for turning hymns into "freedom songs" (most famously, "We Shall Overcome"). She taught her version to folk singer Pete Seeger, and by the late 1960s, "This Little Light of Mine" had become a protest anthem for the Civil Rights Movement.

The simplicity of the song made it easily accessible. It could be sung by anyone in any situation. One Freedom Singer from the time, Rutha Mae Harris, described "This Little Light of Mine" and songs like it as a kind of nonviolent weapon. "It kept us from being afraid," she told WLRN. "We'd start singing a song, and somehow those billy clubs would not hit you. It played a very important role during the movement."'

This song kept them from being afraid as they faced the darkness, the darkness of what was wrong in the world…what needed to be turned into good and right. I do not know about you but right now the world feels really broken in so many ways. First and foremost, here we are over two years later still dealing with COVID but there is so much more; racial inequality, homelessness, hunger, and I could go on and on. But in John 8:12 it says: "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the

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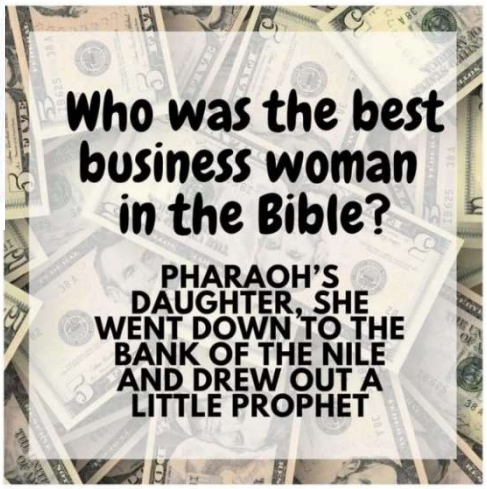
world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."" The pillar of fire in Exodus represented God's presence, protection, and guidance. When we look to the light of Jesus, he brings us the same. His light helps us navigate the ups and downs of life and is to keep us on the straight and narrow.

And when He is our light, we can reflect that light to others. As humans we tend to think everything we do or have has to be something large and visible. But often it is the little things that can make a difference, for example, a kind word. I recently saw a video on Facebook called "Shoulder Taps" by Bill Hart. In short, he was in a restaurant with his wife and there was an elderly woman, who was very nicely dressed at another table, who was soon joined by family members. Bill said a voice in his head said you need to go tell how pretty she looks, and he did as he and his wife were leaving. The woman told him her husband had died a year ago and that was something he would have said. Bill says he believes God taps us on the shoulder just at the right moment and uses us at just the right moment.

The third verse of "This Litte Light of Mine" starts with "Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine." So, let your light shine!

Deacon Debbie ✠

BRIGHT SPOT



View from the Pew

Red Hearts, Green Beer

BY JOHN WEILER

Of the 332 holidays and observances in the United States, I found five Christian Feasts that are broadly observed by the secular public by eating, drinking, lavish gifts or holiday sales. Seven holidays if we count the All Saints Day-adjacent Halloween and the Puritan origins of Thanksgiving Day.

Of those seven, three fall in the months of February and March. St. Valentine's Day, Fat Tuesday, and St. Patrick's Day.

Fat Tuesday – that's Shrove Tuesday to any Episcopalian you might ask – is a relative newcomer nationally. It serves secular America as an excuse to party down New Orleans style. And most folks eat, drink and exchange purple, green and gold beads with no clear idea, if any, of what the purpose of Mardi Gras is: The last celebration before the reflective privations of Lent.

Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day are the only saint's days most people – unwittingly or not – observe. While some might be able to tell you that St. Valentine provided doweries so that poor girls might marry, or more apocryphally, carried letters for young long-distance lovers, and that St. Patrick Christianized Ireland – and parishioners of Christ Church may remember the story of Patrick on the Hill of Slane where he lit a Paschal fire in defiance of the pagan king; Fr. Bill Heinrichs left us a small white stone from that hill beside the tabernacle – most Americans might not even be aware that these are Saint's Days observed in the Christian Calendar.

So, who are the saints to congregants of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the greater Anglican Communion worldwide? While there are High Church congregations that cleave more closely to Rome in liturgical practice and rite, you would be hard pressed to find an Episcopalian or Anglican who believes the saints intercede for us with God. The Bible tells us we have one Mediator and Advocate in Christ Jesus. Very few reading this will tie a rosary to a clothesline for fair weather or pray to St. Anthony to find a lost object.

Paul referred to all the congregations he addressed as saints, and he called upon us to take courage in our faith from the great cloud of witnesses that had gone before. This is who the saints are; this great cloud of witnesses are the saints we honor on All Saints Day.

Unsurprisingly, then, the Episcopal Church observes a dizzying number of Lesser Feasts; the Roman Catholic Church even more because they're still making saints. And saints and saint's days were a big deal for centuries all throughout Christendom.

Even a recently as the last century – and in some communities, through today – Italian American enclaves celebrate a Festa on the Feast Day of the Patron of their local church. The icon of that saint is paraded through the street and congregants pin money to ribbons affixed to the statue as it passes. My wife Sandra's older sisters remember the Festa in West Albany that wound through the streets from the St. Francis' Church and ended at the Italian Benevolent Society where the party would linger all day.

Similar celebrations are common throughout the Southwest. At the San Xavier del Bac Mission outside of Tucson there is a mummy-like recumbent statue of Saint Francis Xavier beneath a purple blanket. Supplicants approach the icon on their hands and knees and pin family photos and little tin cutouts of arms, legs, hearts – whatever member is afflicted – to his robe to ask Saint Xavier to intercede in healing for themselves or a loved one.

The average Protestant might squirm a bit at this intensity of devotion; might even find such public displays of piety unseemly. But I believe we can all agree that it is a far more fitting way to honor the living memory of those who gave themselves to the service of our Lord than paper hearts or green beer.✠

The Poetry Corner

Winter Sentiment

By Camille Crandall

Once upon a frosty morn
When snow concealed each bush and thorn,
And trees extended in the air
Glistened with an icy flair.

Footprints gently etched the snow
Which led to where my heart would go.
Clenching Mother Nature's dream;
Dancing in a wintry theme.

Oh, how I wish the beauty would stay;
It warms my heart on a cold, cold day.
But before you know it, spring will arrive.
Further wonderment then comes alive.

For God blesses us up here in the North
With change of seasons inspiring us to go forth.
To start anew and be on our way
To enjoy our seasons, both night and day.✠

New Year's resolution to organize? Spring cleaning?

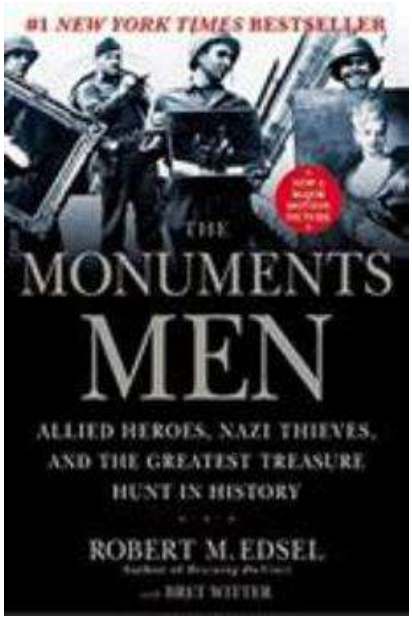
Please save your items for the spring Rummage Sale

Friday & Saturday, April 29 & 30

BOOK CORNER

BY DEACON DEBBIE

THE MONUMENTS MEN BY ROBERT M. EDSEL



If you enjoy historical novels, like I do, this book, a New York Times Bestseller by Robert Edsel, is for you. I do not remember learning about this group in history class so for me it was absolutely fascinating to learn about.

Here is an excerpt of the book overview from Amazon: "At the same time Adolf Hitler was attempting to take over the western world, his armies were methodically seeking and hoarding the finest art treasures in Europe. The Fuehrer had begun cataloguing the art he planned to collect as well as the art he would destroy…..In a race against time, behind enemy lines, often unarmed, a special force of American and British museum directors, curators, art historians, and others, called the Monuments Men, risked their lives scouring Europe to prevent the destruction of thousands of years of culture……this fascinating account follows six Monuments Men and their impossible mission to save the world's great art from the Nazis."

2022 ANNUAL MEETING RECTOR'S REPORT

2021 brought with it the hope of getting back to some sort of normality and we were able to gather without wearing masks. It was good to see more people returning to in-person worship and we even launched our own radio broadcast for those joining us in the car park. But, as the year ended, due to the omicron variant, we found ourselves once more mandated to wearing masks in church. It feels like it has been two steps forward and one step back. Yet despite all the safety concerns and restrictions, and the difficulties we continue to remain a strong, generous and thankful congregation.

Parish Life

It has been a difficult year for many families in the parish due to either illness or the passing of loved ones. Sadly, in 2021 we lost Joyce Mason in May, and in July we were all shocked and saddened at the sudden death of Chris and Denny Wolff's son, Scott. Other congregants who lost loved ones during the past year included: Jodi Molner (Jim, father), Carm Fusco (brother), Phil Sayles (Marilyn, mother), Linda MacDougall (David, Brother-in-Law).

Organizations

Sunday School and the work among the young people was revamped in the Fall of 2021. On the first Sunday of each month the Sunday School now meets in the Parish Hall for lessons. Then on the third Sunday of each month an activity is held following the service. This has given families to go on hikes and visit apple orchards together or make crafts in the Parish Hall. Continued thanks go to Heather MacDougall and Nora Barker working with the Pre-K children. Deacon Debbie and Amy Walsh for Joyful Journey, and to John and Sandra for their work with the group of young people who are preparing for Confirmation. A regional Confirmation has been set for May 14 at the Cathedral.

After being absent for the past 18 months, in October, the Ladies Auxiliary finally got to hold the 'Rummage Sale' of Rummage Sales! Thank you to the Ladies Auxiliary who continue to sponsor Beaver Cross participants and give generously to the outreach of the church.

Vestry

I want to thank the members of the vestry for their work over the past year. I am thankful for the dedication and enthusiasm shown by each member to either attend in-person or online via Zoom. Thank you also to those who served on various committees, in particular the Buildings and Grounds Committee as it continued to maintain and care for the property. During the year Tim Fisher stepped down from the Vestry for personal reasons.

Over the past year I have appreciated the support and advice of both the Senior and Junior Wardens, John Weiler and Phil Sayles. It wasn't until a few weeks ago that I realized that John and Phil are both sons of Episcopal Priests, giving them an inherent knowledge of all things ecclesiastical.

Thanks also go to our Church Treasurer, Laura Lucia who along with the Finance Committee have served the parish with financial oversite of the church accounts.

After 10 years, Deacon Debbie, is stepping down as Secretary to the Vestry. She has faithfully carried out the job of taking minutes of the meetings each month which has been no easy task. Thank you, Deacon Debbie for your service in this important aspect of the business of the church.

Organist

In 2021 we said good-bye to Margaret Bernstein who had been our organist/musician for the past two years. We wish Margaret well as she focuses on her teaching career in Brooklyn. At end of the year, we appointed Colleen Rischel as our new church organist, and we look forward to her leading our praise each week.

Reading the Bible in One Year Challenge

Some of you took part in Mtr. Laurie's 2021 challenge to Read the Bible in One Year. It was quite a job keeping up with the readings for each day, but a few you have mentioned how much you benefitted from the discipline, and that reading the Bible has become a vital part of your daily routine. A word of thanks also goes to Deacon Debbie and John and Sandra Weiler who helped Mtr. Laure by writing some of the blogs for the daily readings over the past year.

Church Restoration Project

Two new committees were set up during the year to manage the Church Restoration Project, these were: A Building Committee responsible for coordinating with the architect (co-chaired by Steve Schrade and myself), and a Fundraising Committee charged with raising the funds (co-chaired by Carl Breitenstein and Cindy Creasy). Progress has been made on both the building and fundraising fronts. Preliminary survey work has started to be carried out by the architects and probes have been installed in different areas of the church to determine the levels of moisture present in the building. In the new year we hope to appoint a fundraising consultancy firm to help us with organizing a capital campaign.

Thanks

Each year I thank Deacon Debbie for all her help and encouragement. She has a true deacon's heart and carries out her service without fuss or complaint (well nearly always!). I will continue to say we are very blessed to have her at Christ Church. Along with Deacon Debbie, I would also thank John and Bart for covering preaching duties.

Finally, thank you to all who have contributed to the life of our Parish during the past year. The Altar Guild, the Ladies Auxiliary, Jane Weyers for preparing the Weekly Bulletins, Marge Cummings for tirelessly writing and sending cards, Amy Walsh for editing and publishing The Messenger and to the new contributors, especially John, Camille and Deacon Debbie; Steve Schrade for choosing the hymns we sing each week, the tellers and all of you, unnamed helpers, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make Christ Church "a worshipping community of friends joyfully serving, encouraging, and healing others in Jesus' Name."

Fr. Alistair ✠

✠ FEBRUARY 2022 ✠

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	**2** Bob Skala, Ethan MacDougall	**3**	**4**	**5**
6 EPIPHANY 5 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am** Jessica Lucia	**7** David & Brenda Haberland	**8**	**9** Ella Moses	**10**	**11** Bob MacDougall	**12**
13 EPIPHANY 6 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am**	**14**	**15** Lisa McHugh, Brenda Haberland	**16** Vestry Mtg – 7pm	**17**	**18**	**19**
20 EPIPHANY 7 **Holy Eucharist & Children's Service – 10am**	**21**	**22** Thomas Featherstonhaugh	**23** Kate Connor, Jayden Sayles	**24**	**25**	**26**
27 EPIPHANY 8 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am**	**28**					

✠ MARCH 2022 ✠

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Hector Eliott	**2 ASH WEDNESDAY**	**3**	**4**	**5** Jennifer Wolfe
6 LENT 1 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10** Nancy Palluti, Shawn Palluti	**11** Bart MacDougall, Denny Wolfe	**12**
13 LENT 2 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am** Marilyn Schroeder	**14**	**15**	**16** Vestry Mtg – 7pm	**17** Britt Eliott, Lydia Rudolphsen	**18**	**19** Sandra Weiler, Jacob Barker
20 LENT 3 **Holy Eucharist & Children's Service – 10am**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
27 LENT 4 **Holy Eucharist – 10am** **Joyful Journey – 10am** Joshua Langston	**28** Ben Lennox	**29** Carm Fusco	**30**	**31** Nolan McHugh, Sherry Schrade		

FAMILY SUNDAYS

We have been celebrating Family Sundays once a month and have been incorporating an activity on those particular Sundays. In February we made snowmen pictured here. Deacon Debbie has a fun event planned for March. And in April, we are planning to make bunnies, similar to those in the photo on the far right. If you are interested in participating in any of these events, please reach out to Deacon Debbie for more information. All are welcome! ✠

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

The parish is located at:
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Vestry members:
John Weiler – Sr. Warden
Phil Sayles – Jr. Warden
Judy Breitenstein
Cindy Creasy
Tim Fischer
Laura Lucia
Nancy Palluti
Andrea Salisbury
Steven Schrade

Treasurer:
Laura Lucia

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