

The Messenger

A COMMUNICATION MINISTRY
OF CHRIST CHURCH,
DUANESBURG, NEW YORK

◆
Winter 2025



Rector's Reflections

Restoration

Early next month (March), the long awaited restoration of the exterior of the church will start on site. Getting to this point has been a monumental effort by the Fundraising Committee and Vestry to raise the \$1.1M needed to restore the building! As I write, we are just \$100,000 short of the final total and we have been given a matching challenge of \$50,000 by a generous donor to get us over the line. This means that each dollar you give will double in value. We plan to launch the challenge on Ash Wednesday, March 5, and complete our fundraising target by Easter Sunday, April 20.

VMJR Companies, Glens Falls have been appointed carrying out the restoration work. I have experience working with VMJR as they were the contractor who refurbished the One Church Street building at St. John's in Johnstown, and I know they will do a good job.

During the construction work, March-November, we will be holding the 10 am Sunday morning services in the Parish Hall. This will be an opportunity for us to share worship and fellowship in a different space, no boxed pews and no high pulpit.

I have been amazed at the way God has blessed and is blessing us at Christ Church. When we set out on this journey and realized that we needed to raise \$1M, we looked at each other and said this is a big ask. But God has been faithful and shown us many times that we needed only to trust him to provide the ways and means to raise the money. We are thankful to everyone who contributed to the fundraising campaign, but we give God all the Glory!

Blessings,

Alistair

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Winter Anniversaries

- 2/7 David & Brenda Haberland
- 4/3 Alistair Morrison & Laurie Garramone
- Bob & Heather MacDougall
- 4/5 Bart & Linda MacDougall
- 4/14 Bryan & Andrea Salisbury
- 4/24 Shawn & Nancy Palluti



Winter Birthdays

- 2/2 Bob Skala, Ethan MacDougall
- 2/6 Jessica Lucia
- 2/9 Ella Moses
- 2/11 Bob MacDougall
- 2/15 Lisa McHugh, Brenda Haberland
- 2/22 Thomas Featherstonhaugh, Art Peters
- 2/23 Kate Connor, Jayden Sayles, Cathy White
- 2/27 Mary Kate Mitch
- 3/1 Hector Elliott
- 3/5 Jennifer Wolfe
- 3/9 Franklyn Aurelio Acevedo
- 3/10 Nancy Palluti, Shawn Palluti
- 3/11 Bart MacDougall, Denny Wolfe
- 3/13 Marilyn Schroeder
- 3/16 Steve Ash
- 3/17 Britt Elliott, Lydia Rudolphsen
- 3/19 Sandra Weiler, Jacob Barker
- 3/27 Joshua Langston
- 3/28 Ben Lennox
- 3/29 Carm Fusco
- 3/31 Nolan McHugh, Sherry Schrade
- 4/1 Johnny Bard
- 4/3 Maggie O'Brien
- 4/4 Gabriel Denny
- 4/5 Clayton Iseman
- 4/11 Tommy Walsh, Alexis Weyers
- 4/16 Morgan McKinley
- 4/18 Jeremiah Lennox
- 4/19 Kathleen Sweeney, Alex Connors, Alistair Morrison
- 4/21 Alex Moses, Tonya Rudolphsen
- 4/26 Dianne Acevedo, Ian MacDougall
- 4/27 April Kosier
- 4/29 Heather MacDougall



View from the Pew

by John Weiler

Third Places

Recently an article about the need for a “third life” crossed my news feed. What is a third life? That’s what piqued my interest, so I read it. The article says, “Third places...are informal spots to gather outside of home and work for socializing.” The article cites the work of a sociologist named Ray Oldenburg. He divides our lives into three zones, home, work and “third places” where family, friends and even strangers interact in “regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.”

According to the article, third places in modern America are on the decline – especially since the pandemic – “Americans were already spending significantly less time with friends before the pandemic rearranged life entirely.” In 2024, the article states, 17% of Americans claimed to have zero friends, up from 1% in 1990, when Oldenburg introduced his concepts.

There are reasons for this. We are working longer hours with less to show for it. Free time has become a luxury. And screen-time has taken the place of in-person socialization.

Now, it’s tempting to think of Facebook connections and online groups as communities. But social media feeds rather than reduces the loneliness epidemic; the silos of information and specialized interests created by social media algorithms has created an empathy deficit.

So, what does all this have to do with the Church, if this view is indeed from the pew?

According to the article, “The role of coffee shops and bars, libraries and community centers, civic clubs and houses of worship, have faded as the creep of work and domestic obligation in American life have become all but inescapable.”

Right there: Houses of worship listed among coffee shops and bars, libraries and community centers and civic clubs.

Certainly, our gatherings are happily anticipated, but the Church is not just a “regular, voluntary, informal gathering of individuals.” It is so much more than that. (And I am sure our Jewish, Muslim and Hindu neighbors would say the same of their houses of worship.)

Among the three zones of work, home and third space, the Church is singular. If we’re doing church right, it is the ground of the other three facets of our life and provides a guiding principle for our attitudes and actions as we move through them.

What is more conducive to empathy than the knowledge that our brokenness is the great equalizer? What fosters greater community than celebrating the Good News that God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him?

And yes, we need third spaces; we need “regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.” The question is, what will we do to show the Good News in all three spaces? How might we live into the knowledge that we have been forgiven even in our own brokenness and to show that same grace granted us, not only to family, friends and those within our parish, but even complete strangers, even those we disagree with?

The Church is not a third space.

It’s not even the first space.

For a Christian, it should be the earth our home is built on, the standard of integrity that informs our work, the source of joy and compassion that enlivens our social spaces as we go out into the world.

We’re told that they shall know we are Christians by our love.

Let’s live it.

The First Sunday School Established at Christ Church

This article is presented thanks to Town of Esperance Historian, Ken Jones. Ken has written a book on the Esperance Presbyterian Church but the excerpt from the book focuses on what may be one of, if not the first, Sunday School in the United States founded at our own parish of Christ Church Duaneburg.

“It was not long after the church was organized that the education of the youth took a prominent part both in Bible studies and select schools that operated as a high school preparing the student for college entrance. Robert Raikes in England has been credited with starting the Sunday School movement in the 1780s that eventually spread to other countries. Duaneburg Episcopalian, William North was an early promoter (1791) of the movement observing as Raikes did the Sunday activities of the youth; ‘I just rode a couple of miles to see my school. I saw the children here were going post haste to the devil & that they galloped nothing faster on Sundays than on any other day therefore I established a Sunday School in the beginning of the summer-it increased & I added another master, before the berries became ripe it amounted to between 50 & 60, but the devil took advantage of them as he did of their Mother eve, however he cannot keep it long, as the straw and raspberry are entirely gone, & will soon be over. I believe it is the first thing of the kind in the United States-but I shall say nothing about it.”

Letter from William North to Benjamin Walker Aug. 29th, PA Historical Society

The Sunday School program at Christ Church has endured over the two plus centuries of the existence of the Parish. There have been times when it became dormant but the current Sunday School can trace it’s roots to the mid 1950s when children were taught their lessons in the former rectory up the hill on Rt. 20 prior to the Sunday service. The students were then driven to the church for the 11:00 am worship. The original Parish Hall was erected in 1957 to house the Sunday School and to provide a meeting place for all church organizations. The Parish Hall was expanded in 1995 to create an actual “hall” with several classrooms in the basement to accommodate the large student population.



Volunteering at the Regional Food Bank

by Deacon Debbie

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

The Regional Food Bank serves 1,000 charitable organizations across 23 counties, which is represented by the color orange on the drawing of New York here. Every month 350,000 people are provided with food. Their mission is to “...is to lead a network of partners to alleviate hunger, prevent food waste, and nourish the communities we serve. Our vision is that all people have the nutritious food they need to thrive.”



They are a not-for-profit organization established in June 1982. In addition to the two distribution centers (Latham and Orange County) the Regional Food Bank maintains a farm in Voorheesville. The Regional Food Bank receives food from farmers, supermarkets, manufactures, food drives and other resources. They also collect other items such as paper products, toiletries, diapers and feminine hygiene products.

The Regional Food Bank relies on volunteers to help sort the donations of food and other items. Sadly, not all the produce can be passed on to due to spoilage or being out of date; however, it is not just thrown into the garage. It is separated from its plastic container or bag and placed in a large bin. This is picked up by farmers for their livestock. Sorting at the Latham distribution center is what volunteers from Christ Church do. We have sorted bananas, bags of spinach, personal care products, bottled juices and other drinks, and boxes of all kinds of fruits and vegetables.

I am so proud of the volunteers who give 90 minutes of their day to do what Jesus tells us to do, take care of the least, the lost and the left out. We have a reputation of bringing large groups (12-30) of all ages. The team work is absolutely awesome! And we have fun! Last night we were rocking to Neil Diamond’s “Sweet Caroline”! Then there was the night of the “Flying Spinach”! And if you need someone to sweep up, Fr. Alistair is your man!

There will be another opportunity to volunteer soon and hope you are able to join us.



The Poetry Corner

by Camille Crandall



Senior Winter

I took a walk in the village on a cold and windy day.
And as I walked my thoughts digressed to winters of yesterday.

My heart was full of joy that day.
As snow fell down, it took me away
To days when I was young and agile
And enjoyed the snow (but not like Scrabble)!

I skied, I snowshoed, and sledded down hills.
I skated on ice no matter the chills.
Winter flew by with snowy delights
For fun days with friends and starry filled nights.

But life has a way of settling us down
Of changing the scene of our daily playground
The ice is now something to caution us all
For goodness sakes now, we don't want to fall!

The snow at one time was what we would revel,
But now it is something to view and to shovel.
Yet the beauty of snow fills the air like a song
That whispers its lullaby all winter long.

More photos of volunteers at the Regional Food Bank



Colleen's Choir Corner

by Colleen Rishel

On Monday evenings I drive up in the car park and unlock the dark church and turn on the lights, gently illuminating our beautiful church, and a feeling of peace and happiness washes over me. I sit down at the keyboard and say a prayer for the choir rehearsal that will shortly ensue, praying for community building, kindness, and God's strength to create beautiful harmonies together. Time and again God has answered my prayers, and over the course of the past three years our choir has grown together in song and friendship.

Our first performance together was one simple and short piece titled "Glorify Thy Name." This piece is taken from scripture in John 12:28, where Christ called upon the Father to bring glory to his own name through Christ's fulfillment of his ministry. His justice and holiness, by his suffering and death; and close knowledge that his Father's glory was what he had in his view. Securing that would give us hope and pleasure amidst life's sorrows. The message presented in this piece exemplifies what our little choir does so beautifully. Each sacred performance brings pleasure and joy to those who listen and to those who sing, during the many trials that we face in our daily lives.

Bringing joy to those who participate in our performances was and is the goal of choir, all while glorifying God. Whether we are singing God's praises, supporting a grieving friend, or creating fancy new apparel together for our next performance, I pray we do so joyfully. Choir is such a precious gift and I am honored and humbled to work with such an amazing group of people at Christ Church. We have grown in our faith, had wonderful fellowship, and become one voice. That one voice in many parts is what blends us together, and I look forward to musical preparation for the Easter season. The door to the choir is always open to welcome in new friends, as we glorify God's name together!





Christ Church Women’s Bible Study

by Heidi Bonacquist

What is Joy??

In a world full of tragedy, chaos and violence, it can be hard to find joy. We often look for things or people to bring us happiness, but it is often short lived. Happiness is a fleeting feeling, but joy is a choice that lasts for eternity!

In early November we began a Women’s Bible Study where we had 15 women join - some on zoom and some in person. We recently completed a five-week study of Kay Warren’s book, *Choose Joy: Because Happiness Isn’t Enough*. Kay Warren defines joy as “the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things.” This was a huge shift for us! Many of us thought that we either have sorrow or joy. We learned that you can still find joy during difficult times of your life. Based on Warren’s definition, we can make a conscious choice to trust God in all circumstances and know that he has our back. That we can know joy in spite of uncertainty or grief.

Joy is a fruit of the spirit. The joy of the Lord is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God, abiding in Christ and being filled with the Spirit. According to Warren, “Joy is rooted in gratitude. A grateful heart is a joyful heart; a joyful heart is a grateful heart.”

Joy is a profound decision of faith and hope in the power of the love and life that Jesus gives to us. If you’re feeling like darkness is overwhelming and joy is no where to be found, pray Psalm 51:12 today, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

“Joy does not simply happen to us.
We have to choose joy and keep choosing it
every day!”
Henri Nouwen

The Women’s Bible Study just started up again! This time, we are reading *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World: Finding Intimacy with God in the business of life* by Joanna Weaver. We meet in the church hall on Thursday from 7-8:30 pm. It’s not too late to join us!

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| <i>Christ Church is a worshiping community of friends, joyfully serving, encouraging and healing others in Jesus’s name.</i> | |