The Courier

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DEARBORN, MI

SUMMER 2021

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Vestry

The Vestry begins each meeting by stating the Mission, Vision, and Vision Path (goals, how we will live into our mission and vision) for Christ Church at this time:

Mission - "Christ Episcopal Church welcomes, inspires, nurtures and replenishes through worship, fellowship and education. We seek to live a Christ-like life by embracing our broader, diverse community and serving others."

Vision - Feeding people in mind, body, and Spirit

Vision path -

1. Effective building usage that expands our mission, helps us grow our intercultural community center, and provides part of our ongoing revenue stream. A primary component of building usage includes the Partnership in Faith with Mother of the Savior.
2. Assessing and evaluating effective staffing to meet our missional needs which includes sustaining the Partnership in Faith with Mother of the Savior.
3. Creating an intercultural community center with an emphasis on education including growing awareness of cultural similarities and differences including food, music, art, worship, festivals. The Partnership in Faith is a prominent component of this goal.
4. Rebuilding a vibrant music ministry that includes worship and concerts.

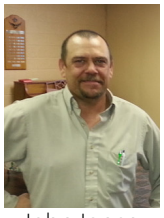
Staff, Vestry, and Officers of the Church

Rev. Terri Pilarski
Rector

Rev. Halim Shukair
Curate

Erin Biggs
Office Manager

Tess Dowgiallo
Children in Worship


John Jones
Sexton

Eric Travis
Technical Director

Kevin Green
Treasurer

Matt Sallman
Clerk

Dale Taylor
Sr. Warden

Jill Poske
Jr. Warden

Jean Angel

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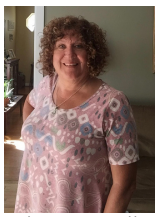

Stephanie Mulkern

Not Pictured:
Chris Burkhalter

Rector's Perspective: The Rev. Terri C. Pilarski

I've been thinking about circles. There's the circle on the Celtic cross that sits on top of the steeple at Christ Church. In Celtic spirituality the circle surrounds the brokenness on the cross and holds within it the peace of God, transforming tragedy into hope. There's the circle of on the halo of images of Jesus and other saints. The halo is not an actual physical element, it is the radiance of God's love emanating from the person. God's love expands out from people as a circle of love. I'm thinking of the circle that represents the liturgical year from Advent to Christmas, through Epiphany, Lent, Easter, the Season after the Pentecost, and then beginning again in Advent. Jesus's life and teachings flow through this circle year after year, inviting us into his way of life, into living the way of love. I return again to Eric Law's book, Holy Currencies and the cycle of blessings. These six blessings flow through us and guide us into living and sustaining missional ministries. Each blessing points us to see into the life of the congregation, to notice where there is strength and how that strength flows into other areas, building them stronger.

For a number of years Christ Church has been working on developing the currency of gracious leadership. This currency has been one of our strengths for a long while as we have shared the building with groups beyond the parish. Now it has been activated in particular ways with our Partnership in Faith with Mother of the Savior, our work with the Intercultural Development Inventory, and the adult forums on racism. The currency of gracious leadership is a transformational process of work on one's self, creating the opportunity for one to listen and learn from others. It is an intentional effort for people from the dominant culture to step back and make room for people of less dominant culture to speak, share, and be a vital presence in our community. According to John O'Donohue, this effort reveals more of the facets of God's self in creation. God as creator loves diversity.

As we develop the currency of gracious leadership other currencies are activated. Learning to listen to others invites the currencies of truth and wellness to become energized. As we hear one another's truth, as we face into the realities of pain and suffering, as we strive to become agents of healing in the world, we activate these currencies and move closer to sustainable missional living.

As I observe the circumstances of the last three years I see within the flow of God's love, moving us closer to sustainable ministries. Frederick Buechner, Presbyterian minister and author says, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Years ago a group of us reviewed some data on demographics in our neighborhood. The data covered areas like income, education, age, and religion. It did not, however, reveal to us one particularly important need in our area: a safe place for Arabic speaking Christians to worship and thrive. We reside in an area that is about 42% Arabic speaking people. About 5% of that 42% are Christians. Arabic speaking Christians are not only a minority in the world, they are also marginalized and oppressed in many areas. Even here in Dearborn, Arabic Christians feel some sense of prejudice because people assume they are Muslim. We have been blessed to have Halim here with us and now Mother of the Savior. We are blessed to have the opportunity to support and help sustain a marginalized population. And in the process we will learn and grow from their deep faith and witness to God's love in the world. God's faithfulness to Mother of the Savior, and to Christ Church, was revealed to us as we began our partnership in faith. God's hope for us is made stronger in the recent land sale which produced enough money for us to breath while we continue to work on creating sustainable missional ministries and multiple revenue streams.

As Eric Law writes: Praise God from whom all blessings flow, circling through earth so all may grow, vanquishing fear so all may give, widening grace so all may live.

Summertime Worship

Casual, Come As You Are, worship services return. This summer we will return to our three small services, particularly relevant as we emerge from the height of the pandemic restrictions. We will have an in-person 8am service in the air-conditioned chapel that will be live-streamed on Facebook; a 9am outside service that will be in-person only; and a 10am in-person service in the main church that will be live-streamed on Zoom. The services will be casual and comfortable. We will be using a liturgy from Ireland with elements from the Celtic tradition and spirituality.

The focus on Celtic Spirituality for our summer worship continues to play with and develop the concept of inter-connectedness that a circle represents.

Circles are important elements in Celtic spirituality and also the way we have been reflecting on our mission.

In a Celtic cross a circle envelops the cross symbolizing that the attempt to break God's love on the cross is held in an embrace of God's love, peace, and compassion. God's love prevails even when human beings literally attempted to kill God's love by crucifying Jesus, God's love prevails in the resurrection.

We are exploring our mission and ministries through the concept of Holy Currencies and the Cycle of Blessings, as described in Eric Law's book of the same title. The thesis of Holy Currencies is that churches create sustainable ministries when their mission focus includes an intentional focus on the flow of currencies from one expression to another around the circle of blessings.

The blessings are active expressions of missional living including Gracious Leadership, Relationships, Truth, Wellness, Time and Place, and Money. We (churches) tend to focus on only one currency, money. However, money is one of the six mission principles that need to be developed intentionally in order to create the conditions for vitality and sustainability in congregations.

Therefore, using Celtic based worship will be one way we will listen to the Holy Spirit as she helps to shape and form us for living into our mission, our purpose, as God's people in this time and place. Celtic spirituality is earthy, full of rich imagery, and sometimes provocative.

Our worship will be enhanced by special music offered from time to time by recorded pieces from Carolyn Blackmore singing and playing piano. Stephanie Mulkern and her sister will record themselves playing pieces on their dulcimer's. Dulcimers will add a lovely texture to our worship.

Then in July we will have a guest preacher, Tripp Hudgins, who will reflect on Celtic saints. Tripp is an American Baptist pastor, a candidate for the priesthood in the Episcopal Church, and PD.D candidate in liturgy and music. He's a long time friend of Pastor Terri's. He lives in Virginia with his wife and son. His sermons will be pre-recorded and may include him singing and playing one of his many instruments, depending on how the Spirit moves him.

So, join us for worship this summer in person, or live-streaming or with the pre-recorded option. Come as you are and enjoy some time with the Holy Spirit in song and prayer.

Curate's Perspective: The Rev. Halim Shukair

This month June 2021, marks my third year as Curate among you and it's my third-year anniversary to the priesthood! What three wonderful years! God opened the way to things that were beyond my imagination. Less than three months after my ordination to the priesthood, I was called to serve as Priest-in-Charge to Mother of the Savior Church. Since then we started a new journey walking together as two congregations sharing Christ's love in our community. This has led to great work together through our Partnership in Faith. I like how the dictionary defines partner, "one associated with another especially in an action." Our partnership has led to wonderful actions in these past years.

The action of welcoming Mother of the Savior, to be a worshiping community sharing the same building at Christ Episcopal Church.

The action of supporting me as your Curate and supporting my ministry with Mother of the Savior.

The action of willingness to learn about each other and appreciate what we learn.

The action of persistence through the past year in the pandemic through worship and checking on each other.

These actions have reached the wider Episcopal Church and we were able to share our Partnership in Faith in different conferences and meetings. In these past months I have been able to join different meetings through Zoom, like the Episcopal Church Planting, New Communities in the Episcopal Church, and the Asian-America Church Planting Conference.

The work we are doing together is a leading example to other Episcopal communities who are seeking to welcome new communities from different cultures and languages.

As we prepare to come back to "normal" and to expand our mission in Dearborn and the neighborhood, let us all work to share the message of justice and love. We have this potential in us and God is with us in this journey.

Maybe some of us are challenged with this idea of partnership, so my suggestion is to think about our Partnership in Faith as a piece of art. A piece of art speaks to everyone in different ways and we glean new insight each time we gaze at it. But there is a mystery in every piece of art, and this mystery will transform us in a way to realize the beauty of it.

Music Ministry Perspective

Music in Society

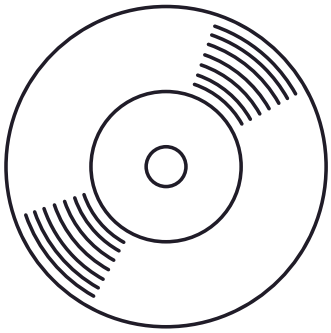
Outdoor Summer Concerts return

August 6: 6:30-8pm

Robert Jones and Matt Watroba

August 13: 6:30-8pm

Jeff Karoub and friends



Music in Worship

During the summer we will use music in the 9am outdoor service and 10am in-person and zoom services. The music will reflect, as much as possible, the influence of Celtic music. Carolyn Blackmore has recorded some lovely pieces that we will use often, with the idea that familiar music becomes a form of prayer in song. Stephanie and Pat Mulkern have recorded instrumental pieces on the dulcimer and guitar. Some of the music may be acquired from Youtube, although we will try to use less of this music. Some of it we will sing, and some of it we will listen too.

Celtic music uses different kinds of wind and string instruments than are typical in American music, but are similar to dulcimers, ukuleles, piccolos, and oboes and the words are in Gaelic and English. People in Ireland tend to be bi-lingual.

As part of our summer worship at home packet you will find a booklet titled: “Sing! Play! Summer!”. This booklet is a fun meditation book using music and scripture to provide some at home opportunities to grow in faith and deepen one’s spiritual life. Every two weeks we will send out a little meditation bbased on this six week series, along with links to the music for that it references. All of the music has been created by the band Butterflyfish and comes from their debut album, “Ladybug.” This meditation series is part of the Saltproject.org, an Emmy award winning resource for liturgy, music, art, and film.

Beginning September 12 we will return to live music in worship with Cary Dumas as our supply organist. Cary is an excellent musician who has played for us many times. He is equally adept at the organ as he is at the piano. Cary will play for us through Oct. 3. Then from October 10 through November 21, Manuela Blankenship will return for the season of American spirituals, where she will play the piano. We have not yet found a choir director, but the search for someone to begin choir rehearsals in the fall will begin soon.

A Perspective from Mother of the Savior Youth

Growth in Our Community by Savanah E. Rayyan

Recognizing the importance of youth engagement in any community is key to promote growth in the world. Although the pandemic has put a toll on being able to actively and effectively engage and communicate, that has not stopped our Youth Group from doing so. We have created a virtual setting in that it is a safe space to discuss and communicate the Word of God. I am excited to implement all that I have learned because of these discussions as we begin to have some type of normalcy again. Having an open and honest dialogue is vital in understanding detailed content. We have had deep and analytical discussions on the Path to the Lord and the obstacles we might face.

The Mother of the Savior Youth Gatherings is held monthly over Zoom. I believe these meetings have been very effective in my understanding of what it truly means to be a Christian and to love one another. However, being together in person can never really be replaced. Despite this challenge, we make it a priority to conversate on topics that are not necessarily easy to talk about because this is a way for development to happen. It is a safe opportunity to ask questions and put your thoughts out there. It is a place to be seen and heard to promote love in our society. Because of this time within our church, I believe it has made us more equipped to promote these same values on a larger scale, in a bigger and more diverse society. Christ Episcopal Church and its gracious members have shown the practice of empathy, love, and faith. This sense of togetherness within Christ Episcopal Church makes it more accessible to us to build that same sense of community to others to which we belong. I am grateful for the privilege of being a member of this church and I hope to continue to build on my personal growth and the growth within our community.

Savanah and her brother Nader at the Mother of the Savior Easter Vigil 2021

Vestry Member's Perspective: Stephanie Mulkern
The Face of God

Biggby and Kroger are two places that I visit frequently. During those visits I have come to know a woman who has asked for help several times. She is a tiny woman and usually a bit tattered and dirty. I suspect that she lives mostly on the streets. I used to see her sleeping often in one of the chairs at Biggby and have bought her coffee and bagels. I have taken her to Holiday Grill and she especially likes egg rolls from the Chinese restaurant next to Marshall's at Westborn.

Recently I saw her in the Kroger parking lot. She had her walker in a shopping cart. When I stopped to talk to her she told me that someone had run it over. It was all bent up and clearly not fixable. Besides from using her walker to aid in walking she uses it to sit and rest. Her legs have become very weak the last couple of years and without her walker she really has a hard time.

I told Jill Poske about this and she and I went to Goodwill hoping to find a used walker. No such luck!I called Terri thinking that there might be a walker that someone had donated at the church. Again, no such luck! Terri suggested ordering one and using money from her discretionary fund to pay for it. Jill and I decided to pitch in too. The walker came, bright red and brand spanking new! I picked it up and Pat, my husband, put it together. I was very excited and hoped to see my friend again soon in the parking lot.

I put the walker in my car and thought I'd just keep it there until I saw this woman again. The very next morning at Kroger I saw her at the bus stop sitting on the bench. I approached her and told her I had a new walker for her. She was so happy. She started to get up to walk with me to the car but I could see she was having a hard time so told her to sit back down and I would bring it to her. There were two people sitting next to her at the bus stop when I gave her the walker. They said that just before I came she had been talking about her need for a walker.They thanked me and so did she. I feel like God blessed us all at that moment.

There have been times when I've seen this woman and felt like trying to avoid her. Sometimes I'm in a hurry, sometimes I just don't feel like dealing with it, sometimes I feel too tired. But, I have found that in this woman who most walk by with little regard, this woman who is dirty often with a runny nose, this woman begging for a hand out, this woman with little means and no power embodies the very face of God. If I pause and give her even just my time and a good word the blessings flow. When I feel like just walking by I remind myself of this. Blessings come in many ways and the opportunity to encounter God in our everyday lives abound. Sometimes we just need eyes to see the Face of God that is with us daily.

Office Manager's Perspective: Erin Biggs

The summer before I started 5th grade my family moved from a tiny town in Wisconsin to a bigger town in the Upper Peninsula. Granted, it was only about a 5 mile drive between the 2 towns, but it felt like we moved worlds away. I went from a community where everyone was accepted and loved to one that was very divided by social and economic status. I didn't fit in at school and was bullied constantly. Thankfully when I was in 6th grade my mom and I found what became my safe place, church. Tthe majority of the members were from a sister town across the street. My Sunday school and confirmation classes became the place where I was accepted by the majority. Youth group is where I met some of my best friends and still talk to many of them today. I want my girls to have that sense of acceptance in their church community. My hope is for them to grow in their faith and build strong relationships with the other youth of Christ Church and Mother of the Savior. This desire has developed into my working with Children's Worship.

This fall I took the lead on planning a combined Christ Church and Mother of the Savoir Children's Worship. We meet on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 11am to learn about the lesson for the week, share thoughts, and learn about each other and God. Almost every week there are 4 children who participate, ranging in age from 4 to 12. It has been so interesting watching them interact and grow this year. The conversations we have about the story and ways to share our love of God are thoughtful and often times silly. The 4 of them have definitely developed a relationship with each other. They lift each other up, root for one another and celebrate their happy times; they have become each others safe place.

The past couple of months we have done a directed drawing together after we listen to or watch the story for the week. The drawings are related to the story or are a special request by one of the children. And every week at least one or two draw a picture of some one in the group. Before we end each week one of the children says a prayer, every prayer that is said is different, but it comes from their hearts.

My girls talk about the others throughout the week, wondering what they are doing, if they are having a good week, hoping they aren't sad, hurt or sick. To them it doesn't matter who the other kids are, how old or young they are, what they have or don't have. What matters is that they have a common bond, church, that keeps them connected.

As we move back to in person worship my hope is that we can continue to grow and develop this combined group of young people. They would love to have more children join them and grow with them.

Spiritual Life Perspective

Centering Prayer returns
Wednesday evenings 6:15- 7pm
Room 19
Basement level, across from Chapel Day Preschool

Centering prayer is a form of silent prayer, similar to meditation. It is in the Christian tradition, in a group setting, and often includes the Lord's Prayer as it concludes. It is a restorative prayer time.
The centering prayer group is open to everyone to participate as you like, when you like.

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OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry, Bishop
The Rev. Terri Pilarski, Rector
Dale Taylor, Sr. Warden
Jill Poske, Jr. Warden
Kevin Green, Treasurer
Matthew Sallman, Clerk

STAFF
Erin Biggs, Office Manager
Tess Dowgiallo, Children in Worship
John Jones, Sexton
The Rev. Halim Shukair, Curate
Eric Travis, Technical Director

VESTRY
Jean Angel
Chris Burkhalter
Selia Danes
Peter Kenney
Stephanie Mulkern
Jill Poske
Dale Taylor