

The Courier

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DEARBORN, MI

FALL 2022



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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
Assistant Priest



Erin Biggs
Office Manager



Manuela Blankinship
Musician



Tess Dowgiallo
Children in Worship



John Jones
Sexton



Dale Taylor
Sr. Warden



Jill Poske
Jr. Warden



Chris Burkhalter



Selia Danes



Peter Kenney



Daniel Pawa



Kevin Green
Treasurer



Matt Sallman
Clerk

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

Missional Ministry Creating the Potential for Sustainability

Although the news and surveys project a dismal future for faith communities there is hope. People have cycled in and out of institutional faith communities for centuries. Just listen to any of the prophets in our Bible stories and you will hear a desperate plea for people to return to the faith community. Yet, faith communities have endured for thousands of years. Not all of them, but many. What enables some to survive, even thrive, while others do not?

Research data tells us that faith communities that live lives of meaning and purpose, those that are relevant in their neighborhoods and are making a difference, are sustainable over time. The reason for this is that the people in these faith communities are in relationship with the people who live nearby, even if those people do not attend church.

For several years we have been practicing intentional mission building based on the principles of Holy Currencies. These six blessings raise up for us the practices that help create the conditions for sustainability. These blessings are: Relationship, Gracious Leadership, Truth, Wellness, Time and Place, and Money. The blessings are practices that people develop intentionally. With awareness and intentionality, these practices flow into one another, each enriching the other and creating a rejuvenating sense of wholeness.

Christ Church began to learn the practice of Gracious Leadership in the winter of 2019, as we prepared to welcome Mother of the Savior into the building. In the winter of 2020 we put into practice what we had learned about ourselves through the Intercultural Development Inventory and our capacity to adapt to different people and cultures. The capacity to adapt to differences is a learned skill, its developmental. It happens primarily by paying attention, learning to listen to others, and learning to notice one's own implicit biases. As we learned to practice gracious leadership by listening to others and learning about ourselves, we began to form deeper relationships. The Baptized for Life dinners offered us an opportunity to practice gracious leadership, relationship formation, and the art of truth telling regarding food and justice (think poverty, obesity, pollution, climate change). Unfortunately COVID restrictions stopped the dinners and have limited our opportunities to practice these skills.

Now, the Baptized for Life program is winding down. However before it comes to an official end with a gathering of leaders in Alabama in October, we will host another series of dinners. The meals are always fresh, healthy, and delicious. The conversations are lively, engaging, and informative. This year there will be six dinners with people from Christ Church, Mother of the Savior, and St. Paul Lutheran. We will meet twice in September, twice in October, and twice in November: September 15 and 29; October 6 and 20; November 3 and 17 from 6pm until 8:30pm. Please plan to join us for these meals. Please make sure to sign up so we can prepare enough food.

Our first gathering on September 15 will include our Baptized for Life catechist, Maureen Hagen and our Intercultural Community Center consult, Jim Gettel. We will have roasted chicken and rice, with vegan and vegetarian offerings. The evening will be lively and enjoyable. Please come!

The Baptized for Life (BfL) team, Stephanie Mulkern, Pete Kenney, Felicity Thompson, Terri Pilarski, and Halim Shukair, will present a summary of our project at the BfL leadership gathering in Alabama October 12-16th. To help with our presentation we need everyone to take the Intercultural Development Inventory again. The inventory will give us data on our growth as a faith community, and as individuals, over the last two and half years. Perhaps we'll see a small degree of change, perhaps none, or maybe more. We'll also talk about the ways we have worked to build sustainable ministries grounded in Holy Currencies.

Curate's Perspective: The Rev. Halim Shukair

Relationships help us achieve what we couldn't achieve by ourselves and influence the networks we build in our lives. They challenge us positively and negatively. Relationships nourish us, inspire us, and feed us, but some relationships break our dreams.

As a community of faith, our interconnection and outside connections are a natural part of our lives and also a force of good for ourselves and our community. At Christ Episcopal Church we live these relationships in our worship and in our mission. Worship is an activity that takes place inside the church, and mission is an activity that takes place outside the church.

The goal of worship is to nourish us to build a relationship with Jesus "I am the vine you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." Jesus is inviting us to abide in him and his love so that we may bear the fruits of this relationship and in return spread the love that comes from this relationship into our community, through this radical relationship with Jesus and one another we can realize that we are living in a divine-human network that will help us to see that we are all children of God.

As children in the same family, some of us are really close to each other, and some of us don't get along well with each other and even some of us don't like each other, but we are family challenged with our uniqueness and diversity. At Christ Episcopal Church Dearborn:

We aim to live this out in all of our relationships, but especially through the Partnership in Faith with Christ Church and Mother of the Savior, between English-speaking and Arabic-speaking Christian congregations and our investment in building bridges with our Muslim sisters and brothers.

These are our internal and external relationships like the vine and branches containing the same essence, the same life. There is one plant, not a two-fold distinction. The function of the vine is to pump life to the branches and the function of the branch is to produce the fruits of the vine. Our fruits, as an intercultural church community, are nourished in accepting each other and each other's cultural expressions. In nourishing our learning about each other, we are able to adapt and change so that we can live an intercultural experience as two congregations where we interact and influence each other and our communities.

In these challenging times as we start to go back to "normal" life after the pandemic. We as a church need to start restoring our relationships with each other, our building, and our community. Let us start building our relationships by listening to each other stories, and we have a lot of shared events coming back, joint services, music and BfL dinners add to these the coming events of our Inter-Cultural Community Center.

Relationships in the church will be transformed when each one of us recognizes that we need each other and are willing to offer our gifts and services to the other.



Office Manager's Perspective: Erin Biggs

After a busy summer of cheerleading competitions, both at the State and National level, tumbling classes, lots of time with friends and family, and so many s'mores, I am looking forward to returning to our normal fall routines of school, early bedtimes, evening practices and weekend fun. My girls are both back to school, Carissa started 4th grade and Melody started 1st. They are both so happy to see their school friends and all of their favorite teachers. I am back to my normal office hours and have started planning and scheduling all the different fall activities.

On September 18th Children's Worship starts back up. I know I am looking forward to spending some time on Sunday mornings talking to the children of Christ Church about their lives and celebrating God's creation. We will be using a new curriculum this fall, "An Illustrated Earth". This new curriculum provides opportunities for our group to connect with each other, spend time with Bible stories, and reflect on the diversity and beauty of God's creation.

These relationships that are being built with each other during Children's Worship grow every year. I remember attending Sunday school as a child and teen and all the friends I made. Those were always the friends who stood beside each other no matter what, many of whom I still keep in touch with. Having something like Children's Worship that brings together children and youth of all ages and from different neighborhoods, schools and cities can build relationships that last a lifetime. I hope that more of the youth at Christ Church will join us!



Sexton's Perspective: John Jones

Hello, Marhaban Christ Church family. I hope that life finds you well.

Again this month we are talking about relationship as a holy currency. This is a very complex and mindful subject, so I am going to quote some excerpts from a book that changed my attitude and outlook on life, and that has helped me tremendously in dealing with relationships: human relationships, natural relationships, and spiritual relationships so that I may better maintain a personal connection to God as I understand God.

"Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation - some fact of my life - unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing. Absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Unless I accept life on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs changed in the world, as on what needs to be changed in me and my attitudes. Shakespeare said 'All the world's a stage, all the men and women merely players.' He forgot to mention that I was the chief critic. I was always able to see the flaws in every person, every situation. And I was always glad to point it out, because I knew you wanted perfection, just like I did. Acceptance has taught me that there is a little good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us, that we are all children of God, and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or you, I am complaining about God's handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God." (alcoholics anonymous page 147)

When I look at people I must look at their soul. I must see them as one of God's creations, no less than the stars and the trees. When I see every person as coming from the one source, all with a purpose, it becomes harder to play the plus one/minus one game. I need not make judgements, expectations, or comparisons to others, and it gives me enough ego deflating humility to maintain my relationship with God. The fitness of that relationship determines all other relationships in my life.

So, my relationship with my God is a holy currency. The currency of peace, contentment, and love can be shared, and develop greater value for myself, my family, and my fellow earthlings.

As-Salaam 'alykum (that may be a little formal, but my sentiment of peace be with you is intended)

Music Ministry Perspective

Introducing Our New Musician



Manuela Blankinship was born in Germany and came to the U.S. in the late 90s. She started playing the Baroque recorders at age 6 and the piano at age 9. Over the years, she successfully participated in youth music competitions (Jugend Musiziert) as a soloist as well as an accompanist, belonged to several music ensembles, and was offered a spot at the Musikhochschule Köln at age 13. While, at the time, she was advised against dual enrollment in high school and music college, she continued her private music lessons throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

After moving to the U.S., she continued her studies through private lessons and regularly performed at Littlefield Presbyterian Church and other venues.

Her many ties to Christ Episcopal Church originated with her son's playgroup and his attendance at Chapel Day Preschool, her membership in the community garden, performances as a soloist, and her years with Cherry Hill Consort, whose members Diana Brehob, Carolyn Blackmore, and Tess Dowgiallo are/were congregants at CEC. She enjoys playing the piano during Sunday services, memorial services, and weddings at Christ Episcopal Church.

Manuela also performed as part of the Caruela Duo with Carolyn Blackmore raising funds for CECD's Blessings in a Backpack program. She and Diana Brehob are currently building a new recorder ensemble (Littlefield Recorders) and Manuela just added the cello as her newest musical endeavor.

Manuela is looking forward to continuing her musical and spiritual journey with Christ Episcopal Church.

Cooking Connections: An Inter-Generational Cooking and Fitness Series

This fall LAHC will be partnering with Christ Church to run Cooking Connections: an Intergenerational Cooking and Fitness series. This program will be run at Christ church one day a week for 10 weeks. Each class will offer nutrition education on a variety of topics such as shopping on a budget, healthy snacking, meal prep and reading food labels, as well as fun physical activity and hands on cooking and sampling. Cooking Connections will be open to seniors 60+ years old and youth ages 14-18. Please be on the lookout for our registration posted in October. For questions please contact LAHC Healthy Living Program Manager Kelly Citron at kcitron@lahc.org or (313) 254-2663.



The Intercultural Community Center

LAHC, Leaders Advancing and Helping Communities, will offer an adult forum at 11:30am on Oct. 30 inviting us to participate in an intergenerational cooking class with youth from the LAHC program;

On Nov. 5 a panel discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and initiatives for peace, 1pm, followed by viewing the award winning film about Combatants for Peace, called 'Disturbing the Peace,' which was released in 2016. A discussion follows. Zoom options will be available.

We're working on developing a singer-songwriter series that includes musicians from different cultures and genres of music.

And, in the winter of 2023, we are developing a fundraiser to help Salina elementary and middle schools install environmentally educational playscapes



Intercultural Community Center
in Dearborn
ICCD



Gifts of the Intercultural Community

Jim Gettell, ICCD Task Force Vision Developer

Christ Church and Mother of the Savior are more broadly and deeply engaging Dearborn and surrounding communities through helping to create, support and develop Intercultural Community Center in Dearborn (ICCD). We have much to celebrate from our first year in this new adventure, including new relationships and working partnerships in Dearborn and receiving financial support from Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies to largely fund growth and development of ICCD during the next three years.

A quotation from theologian, educator, civil rights leader and author Howard Thurman describes gifts we share and receive through participating in an intercultural community:

[We] knew that all our accumulated experiences of the past had given us two crucial gifts for this undertaking: a profound conviction that meaningful and creative experiences between peoples can be more compelling than all the ideas, concepts, faiths, fears, ideologies, and prejudices that divide them; and absolute faith that if such experiences can be multiplied and sustained over a time interval of sufficient duration any barrier that separates one person from another can be undermined and eliminated. We were sure that the ground of such meaningful experiences could be provided by the widest possible associations around common interest and common concerns. . . . One basic discovery was constantly surfacing—meaningful experiences of unity among peoples were more compelling than all that divided and separated. The sense of Presence was being manifest which in time would bring one to his or her own altar stairs leading each in his [or her] own way like Jacob's ladder from earth to heaven.

-- Howard Thurman (1900–1981), *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), 148.

"Our accumulated experiences of the past" prepare us for this work. Through the years, Christ Church has provided volunteers and financial support to local programs, participated in civil rights activities, collected donations and funds for projects, partnered with Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Monrovia, Liberia in a mission to build a much-needed school, and housed activities and organizations in its building as a community center. During the last three years, Mother of the Savior brought its own experiences in serving its diverse community of ethnic Arabs from throughout the Middle East and various Christian traditions to an intercultural Partnership in Faith with Christ Church. During the last year, other diverse agencies and individuals are joining Christ Church and Mother of the Savior in an even broader partnership, also bringing their own experiences of community, caring and service to ICCD. Our diverse context in Dearborn, our shared desire for community relationships, and our experiences in reaching out to help others are important parts of who we are and who we are becoming.

Our "basic discovery" and belief is that "meaningful and creative experiences" of "unity among peoples" can be more compelling than anything that divides and separates us, including "ideas, concepts, faiths, fears, ideologies, and prejudices." With ICCD, we reach out to accept and engage ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, racial, and other cultural diversity among people in the Dearborn area and to build and strengthen community relationships and serve local needs. In and through our relationships and work, ICCD helps create intercultural awareness, appreciation, humility, respect, hospitality and compassion that is rare today.

We are experiencing that "the ground of such meaningful experiences" is "provided by the widest possible associations around common interest and common concerns." We create and support partnerships to serve others together in areas of community education and social justice, including environmental care and food security. In welcoming all, we find that each relationship is an opportunity to listen and learn more about diverse gifts, community needs, and ways to serve our community. Together we discover and share unexpected gifts and resources, including diversity, ideas, experiences, leaders, volunteers, facilities and funding, all well beyond those which any of us bring on our own.

Our trust, hope and love grow, and "if such experiences can be multiplied and sustained over" time, "any barrier that separates one person from another can be undermined and eliminated." This is a powerful vision for living together in love. Our experiences become "like Jacob's ladder," leading each person in his or her own way from earth to heaven. As we believe in our religious tradition, "For if we love one another, God abides in us, and God's love will be perfected in us" (1 John 4:11 from *Canticle N, Enriching Our Worship I*, pages 37-38).

Baptized for Life 2022 Dinner conversation series

Christ Church, Mother of the Savior, St. Paul Lutheran, & friends

September 15 & 29; October 6 & 20; November 3 & 17

6:00pm - 8:30pm

attendance at all six dinners is encouraged - register early to reserve a place at the table

office@christchurchdearborn.org or 313-565-8450



A series of six dinners designed to deepen intercultural relationships and growing our faith as Christians. Each dinner conversation will include delicious, healthy, locally resourced meals, a time to reflect on scripture, and opportunities to engage in conversation about cultural differences, challenges, and similarities, particularly around food.

Baptized for Life is an initiative of Virginia Theological Seminary that encourages the Christian value of living lives of meaning and purpose.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

In 2019, as part of our preparations for the Baptized for Life dinner series, the entire congregation was invited to participate in an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). This 50 question survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. It provides individuals and the congregation as a whole, a snapshot into where we are, developmentally, in our capacity to adapt to people who are different from us. It is not a tool that determines values or beliefs. It does not determine if one is racist nor does it determine implicit bias. It only measures one's capacity to adapt to culture differences. However, the IDI affords us insight into how well our desire to be in relationship with people who are different from us is in correlation to our capacity to be effective in those relationships.

Many of us took the IDI in January and February of 2020. Now, as the BfL program is ending, and the team is preparing to offer a report on our work, I would like you to take the IDI again (or for the first time). Please confirm that you will take the IDI and I will sign you up. You will receive a link directly from IDI, Intercultural Development Inventory. Your results will be pooled into a group profile for the parish. You can also receive your results in a brief meeting with me. Email Terri at terri@christchurchdearborn.org.

As you sew... so shall you reap!

Conversations from the quilt room

The quilt room has received many blessings since the basement flooded in the summer of 2021 thanks to your prayers. The Community Service Projects from the quilt room have greatly expanded thanks to the addition of two new helpers:

Nancy Jones (John's wife) who is becoming quite the seamstress and Samar who also teaches the Arabic class on Saturdays and stays after class to assist us in completing projects,

Requested items were sent to the following organizations:

- 150 hats and scarves have been donated to the Flint Rescue Mission
- Linus Quilts - children's quilts to hospitals
- Veteran Quilts - quilts to veterans hospitals and homeless shelters
- Habitat for Humanity - quilts for families
- Humane Society - cat beds and blankets
- WAG - every adopted cat receives a quilted cat pad to go home with
- Feral Cat Kitty Trappers - cat cage covers

The church rummage sale was another blessing, providing the quilt room with extra storage racks and fabric as well as many other needed and useful items. I hope you all enjoyed your shopping experience as much as I did!

A really special thank you to John Jones for all the extra work he did to restore the quilt room to a workable space. He did everything from bailing out all the water from the flood, replacing flooring, painting the walls, and fixing the electrical wiring, making the room ready for production.

And an exceptionally grateful thank you to Pastor Terri, Erin, and the Vestry for providing space for our work to continue. I thank God everyday for the wonderful blessings and help I receive from Christ Episcopal Church and its members.

Sewing up a storm,
Sincerely,
Saundra



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OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

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The Rev. Terri Pilarski, Rector

Dale Taylor, Sr. Warden

Jill Poske, Jr. Warden

Kevin Green, Treasurer

Matthew Sallman, Clerk

STAFF

Erin Biggs, Office Manager

Manuela Blankinship, Musician

Tess Dowgiallo, Children in Worship

John Jones, Sexton

The Rev. Halim Shukair, Assistant Priest

VESTRY

Chris Burkhalter

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Peter Kenney

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