February 2021 Parish News



News & Events at Christ Church



The Rev. Daniel Cenci Rector

Preparing for a Holy Lent

As we prepare to enter the season of Lent, in many ways it feels like we have been in a perpetual Lent since last March. It was the second Sunday of Lent in 2020 when nationwide lockdowns began, and in-person worship services were first suspended. At that time, no one could have imagined that now, a year later, we would still be battling the most devastating pandemic in over a century. But thankfully, it seems that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Nationwide case numbers are decreasing, and vaccinations are being widely distributed. Hopefully, the worst of this pandemic is over, and that is something to be thankful for.

It is often the custom in Christianity to give up something for the season of Lent. The purpose of giving up something is to remind us of Christ's great sacrifice on the cross and to recall the period of fasting and temptation that he endured during his 40 days in the wilderness. Self-denial also reminds us of our sin and our need for God's

mercy and grace. This can be an especially useful spiritual practice but, perhaps this year we need to consider a different type of spiritual devotion. During this year-long Lent, we have all given up a lot already. We have given up spending time with our friends and family, we have given up vacations and social outings, we have given up eating out and going to sporting events and concerts, and we have given up the traditional ways in which we worship God. The past year has been a year of sacrifice for all of us, and it is my hope that this time has encouraged us all to be thankful for the many ways that God has blessed us in the past. It is also my hope that this prolonged season of various fasts has reminded us of the importance of our faith. As over 2,000,000 people have died worldwide from COVID-19, there is no doubt that human mortality has been in the forefront of our minds. The familiar words from the Ash Wednesday liturgy "remember that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return," will doubtlessly have greater meaning this year. Human life is fragile and even the healthiest among us will one day face the reality of death. In times like these, it is our faith which grounds us and enables us to face the uncertain days ahead.

The Christians' Gospel assures us that during these trials and tribulations, God is with us. Just as God was with the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, he is with us now. The beautiful thing about Lent is that it always leads us to Easter. Human sin and death do not win, and the risen Christ has come to raise us up from the grave.

In some ways this Lent is different from other Lents in our lifetime, and in other ways it is the same, but instead of encouraging you to give up something this year, I want to encourage you to consider taking something on. Take on something that is life-giving. Try to imagine some ways that you can deepen your relationship with God as we move toward Easter. Perhaps a renewed dedication to prayer, a commitment to serve in a new (or renewed) ministry, or maybe a return to the full life of corporate worship? We all have the opportunity to renew our faith in 2021, and as things begin to return to normal, let us not take for granted the beautiful blessings of friends, family, fellowship and worship. As we return to the way things "were," may we do so with our eyes open to the gifts of God, and with our minds open to new ways that we can serve and honor Him.

Blessings, *Rev. Cenci*

Christ Church has funds to assist people with financial issues during COVID-19. If you or anyone you know is in need of assistance please contact Rev. Daniel at the church office - 252.338.1686 x4

VESTRY

January Planning Retreat Minutes:

Daniel Cenci opened the retreat in the church with Morning Prayer at 10:00am.

The group moved to the parish hall for the meeting and minutes from the December Vestry minutes from 2020 were presented for approval as read and approved by all. Committee assignments were appointed by Daniel and approved by acclamation unanimously. Daniel explained each Vestry commission in detail and all assignments were accepted as read. Each committee member was encouraged to form a committee to ensure that their work could be done with as much involvement as possible by other church members for most efficient results.

Gary Cooper gave the Treasurer's report for all accounts in detail and was able to report that Christ Episcopal Church's pledges were at the 90% rate of being paid. Christ Episcopal Church is one of few fortunate enough in our Diocese to be on target and even ahead of anticipated revenue with our pledges and rental properties. We still have space to rent both in St. Philip's and the Poindexter Street property. Budget was approved (Phil Hornthal/Grafton Beaman) and Robinson Charity Fund was approved (Joe Peel/Wes Lupo) Junior Warden Report (Wes Lupo) outlined ongoing projects and needs, which are always many! Wes is doing a fabulous job of handling daily needs!

The Vestry members were reminded to follow the guidelines for working with children and the training for sexual misconduct and anti-racism was brought up by Mickey Golden. Daniel Cenci next gave his expectations of the Vestry which included to pray for the work of Christ Episcopal Church (hereafter referred to as CEC), to fulfill the vows we have taken, to participate as fully as possible, to attend at least half the worship services offered as well as holy day celebrations, to attend specific events as they unfold within the church, to serve as witnesses through community service, to encourage others to become active and make them feel welcome and lastly to form committees to get the work done. Next Daniel asked what the Vestry expects of him and discussions followed which included giving thank you's for the pledges made and fulfilled, contacting parish members as able, to lean on the Vestry for help, to filter out drama. We were encouraged to make sure those who do come to services are welcomed and made to feel at home and those who cannot come and yet are watching live-stream to be recognized. Each Vestry member will be given a list of congregants to contact as they are able to keep in touch! Rector's report was given outlining all the services, visitations and meetings held during the month of January 2021. Daniel's Sunday School ends on 1/31/2021 and on February 21, John Morrison will begin a Sunday School on Handel's Messiah. The average attendance for our services was shared and those watching online through Facebook. We are again fortunate that we have been able to hold services following

the CDC guidelines and that no one has contracted COVID through any of our ministries. We are hopeful that in-person attendance can begin to come back to normal in the upcoming months of this year as people are comfortable and able.

The meeting broke for a 30 minute lunch with food and drink supplied by the church. A socially-distanced lunch was enjoyed by all in attendance! Thank you, Sue Scurria!

Upon return, the new Vestry declaration and commissioning was performed.

Old Business consisted of discussion on a mural to possibly be done on a banner on the wall of Todd's Pharmacy building which CEC owns. Todd gave a short report on the status of the carpet runner investigation. No plan has been made except to investigate, which is ongoing. Mission trip will be planned for 2022 as allowed by participation. Possible partnership with St. Luke's in Moyock was discussed and the possibility of help from the Diocese utilizing a graduate of the Virginia Seminary in the future. Veterans Groups are interested in restoring headstones in our Episcopal Cemetery and a possible mission to the British Virgin Islands as a supply priest (Daniel) was also discussed for the future. Discussion of amending Douglas Blackwood's contract to include one extra Sunday off for continuing education (travel) was approved (Grafton Beaman/Joe Peel) Phil Hornthal suggested we have an updated photo of Daniel in our pulpit for the newsletter. Photos of the new Vestry members were taken in the Club Room. Goals for the short term and long term were discussed and suggested. Much good discussion took place and many thoughts were expressed. Our needs and hopes for each were outlined and suggested and discussed and the meeting ended on high hopes for our future! A list of these can be shared with anyone who is interested. After a closing prayer, blessing and dismissal, the Vestry retreat for 2021 was adjourned at 1:50pm by Daniel Cenci.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES FEBRUARY 17, 2020 NOON AND 7:00PM



A Bishop's Meanderings...

The Christian faith does not fit into this world very well at all. It follows that we who identify as Christians should not fit any better. I don't know how often we experience it, but there definitely is a cost to taking that faith seriously. There will be times, probably every day, when it will cost us something to speak out. Sometimes it is

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Bane

a little thing we ignore, while at other times we know very well we should have said or done something. It is so very human to just want to turn our heads away sometimes.

I have never forgotten a story I read in a book called, "When a Nation Forgets." The author writes, "I lived in Germany during the Nazi holocaust. I considered myself to be Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to keep our distance because of what could happen to us. A railroad ran behind our small church, and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance and then the wheels roaring over the track as it passed by. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews on the way to a death camp. The screams tormented us. We knew when the train was coming, and when we heard the whistle blow, we began singing hymns. By the time the train went past our church we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams we sang even louder and soon we heard them no more. Years have passed and no one talks about it anymore, but I can still hear that train whistle in my sleep. God, forgive me, forgive all of us that our faith was not strong enough to move us to take action against something that was so clearly wrong."

You and I are not likely to encounter such an extreme situation in our day, but are there times when we sing loud enough to drown out the pain and suffering and wrongs being done all around us? Are there times when we figuratively cover our eyes and ears so as not to take notice of words and actions that we know are not acceptable to disciples of Jesus? Do we just hope and pray that someone else will do the right thing? Of course, this is a very personal question each of us must answer for ourselves. If we are brutally honest, that can be an uncomfortable experience as we hesitate at paying the cost of doing the right thing.

If we do decide to take action, how do we know what "doing the right thing" looks like? I suppose it is an overused bumper sticker, but the answer remains WWJD, "what would Jesus do?" What he did *not* do was to ever be influenced by what other people thought of his words and actions. You and I struggle with that one, regardless of how loudly we deny it. The cost of speaking out usually does involve what others might think of us. So, we think about it, and often just sing a little louder. The whole issue is about the balance between risk and safety. Do we ask, "what is the right thing for me to do as a Christian in this situation," or, "Hmmm, what will it cost me if I speak up? Friends? Reputation? Security? Money?" It all comes down to how important our faith life is, and once again, that is a very personal question and answer each of us faces just about every day of our lives. Do we speak up or sing a little louder?

In Christ's love, +David



Parish Life Male Teams

Parish Life Events are coordinated regularly by the Christ Church Episcopal Women. Parish Life serves as liaison to this incredible group who have organized themselves into six teams. Each team takes on the work of events for two months during the year. The

months are not consecutive. It is a system that works extremely well, as the women of the church are aware when they are called upon to coordinate and staff church events. The teams are large enough that should some not be available, there are still ample numbers to serve.

The men of the church are needed from time to time to transport equipment, set up furniture and carry heavy loads. It will be helpful to spread the requests across all the church men with specific times you <u>might</u> be called upon. Your availability for a specific event is not guaranteed, which is also the case for the Episcopal Women.

I asked the vestry to approve my motion to create a list of Church Men also assigning them times when they <u>might</u> be called upon to support events. The motion carried last winter and then the pandemic lessened the need because events were limited in number since then.

However, hopefully looking to events being possible soon, I am creating male teams to support events if you are needed. This is so we do not always call on the same men. Transporting equipment to picnics, setting up furniture, carrying things as able, delivering bags of ice, collecting coolers and even preparing foods are all support options. Again, just because you are on the team does not mean you are necessarily available. However, it will be wonderful to be able to ask. The list will be sent via e-mails in early February.

Do not hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have questions or concerns.

With much thanks, Susan Scurria, Parish Life (252) 330-4149 <u>sscurria@roadrunner.com</u>

OTHER CHURCH NEWS

Children's Corner The Wilderness

"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today." Exodus 14:13

Building up to Easter we will be learning the many stories of Moses. These are foundational portions of God's story with humanity. From the burning bush to the passage into the Promised Land we will study how the Israelites' story from so long ago still applies to us today.

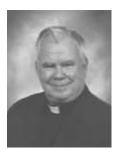
Feb. 7: Burning Bush Luminaries Feb. 14: Wooden Spoon Serpents Feb. 21: 10 Plague Games Feb. 28: Red Sea Storytelling





2021 Lenten Services Wednesday at Noon February 17 Ash Wednesday—Rev. Daniel Cenci February 24—Rev. Steven Lanclos (Coast Guard Chaplain) March 3—Rev. Jason Schubert (Harbor Presbyterian) March 10—Rev. Benny Oakes (First United Methodist) March 17—Rev. Javan Leach (Mt. Lebanon AME) March 24—Rev. Matt Harrell (Forerunner)

LETS GO FISHING!!!



As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

These fishermen were called to a very special ministry. But why would Jesus pick these men as his disciples, his inner circle? Couldn't he have picked theologians? Couldn't he have picked people well studied in the Torah? I would suggest to you that these men had been in training all their lives for the task ahead of them, and never knew it. Jesus would teach them Scriptural truths, and the Gospel message, but the biggest part of their training came from fishing. Fishermen have talents that God can use. Let us look at a few of them.

Fr. Jim McGee Rector Emeritus

If you are a fisherman, you will have patience. As a fisherman, you will have a love for the task, and a love for the increase. Do you have a love for seeing the Kingdom grow? Are you eager for a great catch? Are you overjoyed at the thought of bringing one in. We are not talking about fish now, but human souls.

Fishermen love to talk about their work. Sometimes they like to lie about their work, nonetheless; that one that got away is never far from their mind, nor is that great catch that they almost didn't bring in.

Two fishermen were once talking. One asked the other what his most amazing catch was. He said, last week I caught a 30" catfish. The other said, that is nothing, the other day I hooked a lantern that had been on the bottom of the lake since the Civil War, and I pulled it to the top, and it was still burning. One said to the other, you take 25" off your catfish and I'll turn off my lantern.

It just shows that fishing and talk of fishing is their heart's desire. From now on evangelism and talk of evangelism will be these fishermen's heart's desire. You can't learn that from a book.

Fishermen know a few will get away. Fishermen know that they will still rejoice over what they catch. Fishermen know that sometimes they need to go to different locations. They know that they need to mend their nets, or even sometimes go about things differently, perhaps tossing their net over the other side of the boat.

This is another fish story that sadly describes many people and many churches today. Follow closely.

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year, these, who called themselves fishermen, met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of a fisherman. Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. These fishermen built a large, beautiful building called "The Fishing Station." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing these people didn't do, however, they didn't fish.

After one stirring meeting in the Fishing Station on "The Necessity of Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he guit fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to other fishermen.

And imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. It did sound correct, right? Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?

My friends, real estate sales are booming, people are moving into our area. How are they going to know about Christ Church, its worship of the risen Christ and ministry to God's people if someone doesn't tell them? Even though, because of the pandemic we are holed up in our homes, we can reach out. There are telephones, mailings, screen door visits. The good Lord gave us minds with which to come up with creative ways to reach out and touch someone - creative ways to go fishing. He is calling for us to reach out to His people; they are hungry for God's Word, His love. Every Christian is called to be His voice. It's in our Christian DNA to tell people about Jesus and invite them drop their nets to come and see.

I challenge you this day to answer his call. He calls each of us. He has been preparing you for his call, be it the call to salvation, or to a new ministry. I challenge you to follow Jesus into the work of evangelism. "And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

Pax Vobiscum, Fr. Jim

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February

Friday Saturday	g Prayer at SP 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP dirs Annumous	7:00 pm Atcoholics Anonymous 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Atcoholics Anonymous	19 20 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	26 27 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Atcoholics Anonymous	
	SP 700 am Morning Prayer at SP 700 am Alrcholics Anonymous				
Thursday	 4 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7.00 nm Marcotics Anonumous 		Y 18 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	25 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 5:30pm SOULs feeding 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	
Wednesday	3 7.00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7.30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12:00pm Healing Service	10 7.00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7.30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12.00pm HE at SP	17 ASH Wednesday 7.00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7.30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12noon Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service	24 7.00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12:00 Lenten Service	
Tuesday	2 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Candlemas	7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous 9 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30pm Staff Mig 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	16 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 6:00 pm Vestry Mtg 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	23 7.00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7.00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	
Monday	7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	8 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	15 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	22 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	
Sunday		7Absalom Jones Sunday Rev. Brandt Mont- gomery Guest speaker	14 8:00 am Morning Prayer 10:30 am Morning Prayer 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	21 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Swith John Morrison 10:30 am Morning Prayer 5:00 pm Evensong 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	28 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am SS with John Morrison 10:30 am Morning Prayer 5:00 Evensong 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT



The new Vestry met on Saturday, January 30 for our Vestry Retreat. We began our meeting with Morning Prayer in the Church, which provided a nice transition from the outside world into the business of the Church we attended to that day. All Vestry members and Daniel attended, along with our new Clerk, Todd White, and Treasurer, Gary Cooper. Although Todd and Gary officially ended their Vestry terms in December, they graciously agreed to stay on in these roles, and for that the Vestry and Church should be thankful. Welcome also to newly elected members Anna Smith, Bettie Lyons, Grafton Beaman and Speight Bunn and thanks for your willingness to serve on the Vestry.

Daniel led a productive conversation about our goals set at last year's retreat, and how well we did in meeting those. Even with the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, our Church showed its resilience in 2020, attending church whether on Facebook, in the graveyard, in the Parrish Hall or in our beloved sanctuary. Pledges rolled in on time, ministries continued, and the Cenci family continued to settle in. The Vestry is excited about 2021, prayerfully hopeful that we will get together sooner and more often with the vaccine becoming available, and bursting at the seams for a return to "normalcy" whatever that is. The Vestry also discussed our goals for 2021, while we continue to cope with the remnants of COVID, but strive to fulfill our mission to be a loving family in which Christ is known and proclaimed as Lord and Savior both to existing members, lapsed members and newcomers.

We realized 2020 has been a difficult year for all of us, some more than others. With difficulties come challenges, which often breed frustration and ill feeling. Please know that each and every one of your Vestry members stands ready to listen to your concerns, work with the congregation to address these concerns, and improve where we are able. Our plea to you is to come directly to all of us with concerns and allow us to deal with those directly. Also, we pray you will communicate with each of us directly whenever needed. As your Senior Warden, my ears and heart are always open to attend to what's on your minds and hearts.

Looking forward to a great 2021.

Yours in Christ. *Phil Hornthal* Senior Warden

February Birthdays

- 1 Wesley Lupo
- 2 Andy Elliott
- 6 Portia Riddick
- 7 Natalie Peel
- 8 Larry Payne Ann-Margaret Peel
- 9 Craig Umphlett
- 10 Buddy Madrin
- Kathy Rogers
 Phil Hornthal
 - Betty Rose Jennings Washburn
- 13 Joe Peel
- 14 Heidi Prentiss Pat Harmon
- 20 Sarah Elizabeth Foreman
- 25 Stephen Clark
- 26 Logan Elliott Worth Elliott
 - Chris Rogers

- 27 Al Southworth
- 28 Hayden Ray
 - Tark Pharr
- 29 Anna Smith

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please contact the church office. Thank you!

February Anniversaries

- 6. Alice and David Bane
- 11. Sharon and Richard Bunn, Jr.
- 12. Karen and Creig Foreman
- 26. Judith and O.C. Abbott

Parishioners in Assisted Living

Brookdale of EC, 401 Hastings Lane: EC 27909 Juanita Mullen Helen Gibson

<u>Elizabeth City Health & Rehabilitation, 1075 US 17 S: EC 27909</u> Jim Hathaway

At Home

Ann Hughes, 1514 Crescent Dr., EC 27909 Betty Ingram, 2121 Rivershore Road, EC 27909 Nancy Ferebee, 337 North 343, Camden NC 27921 200 South McMorrine Street Elizabeth City, NC 27909-4831 252-338-1686 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED NON-PROFIT ORG. Standard Mail U.S. POSTAGE PAID ELIZABETH CITY, NC PERMIT NO.22

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

To be a Loving Family in Which Christ is Known and Proclaimed As Lord and Savior.

STAFF

Presiding Bishop The Most Rev. Michael Curry Bishop The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving Rector The Rev. Daniel Cenci Retired Bishop The Rt. Rev. David Bane Rector Emeritus The Rev. Jim McGee Music Director/Organist Douglas Blackwood Parish Administrator Kim Willis Co-Directors of Youth Ministry Whitney and Chris Paullet **Directors of Children's Ministry** Jessica Cenci Nursery Coordinators Reinga Hammond and Lauren Flach Librarian/Historian Anne Sanders Treasurer Gary Cooper

Chancellor Lisa Harman-Wakefield

VESTRY (2021)

Senior Warden Phil Hornthal Junior Warden Wes Lupo Communication Michelle Flach Clerk Todd White Parish Life Sue Scurria Worship Mickey Golden & Grafton Beaman Treasurer Gary Cooper Outreach Bettie Lyons Young Adults/Famililes Speight Bunn & Devon Morrison Growth/Evangelism Mary Gillam Stewardship Joe Peel Children/Youth Anna Smith

The Monthly Newsletter of

Christ Episcopal Church In Elizabeth City, North Carolina

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