In the fall of 2012, organ consultant Jonathan Ambrosino visited Christ Church to give us an assessment of the 1975 Austin Organ in our church. His detailed report analyzed the condition of our organ as well as its limitations. He noted that the instrument should likely continue for another decade before requiring any major attention, but also noted that the organ is not musically remarkable, lacking in “character, variety and loveliness of tone,” and that its appearance “gives itself away as a child of the Modern Movement. Rather than echoing the ornamental grammar of its surroundings, it gives the impression of an industrial object.”

Guest organists over the past 13 years have all made similar comments. Cap & Marilyn Bromley made a significant gift to the parish for the purpose of the organ in 2016. Shortly after receiving their gift, an organ committee formed to consider our options. The committee members were Cap & Marilyn Bromley, The Rev. Dr. Bill Roberts, Jay Bartol, Anne Shine, Barry Stauffer, Julie Wommack, Bill Usher, and Jason Abel.

The committee carefully reviewed Ambrosino’s report, and received an update on some recent problems with the organ. We also consulted organists who were familiar with our instrument. Before long, the committee came to the unanimous decision to consider a new organ for Christ Church rather than continuing to rely on the 1975 instrument. The committee narrowed the search to two builders. Jason traveled to play and listen to instruments by each firm. We would not have gone wrong with either one. Both finalists showed great respect for our historic building, the need for an instrument that visually belongs in such an iconic church, and one of great artistic beauty. After discussions with many organists and reviewing financial
elements of the companies and histories, the committee decided that the sixth organ installed in Christ Church will be built by Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders in Durham, England. The first organ installed in Christ Church was also ordered from England! In the summer of 2017, the Vestry unanimously approved our committee’s decision and we signed a contract with Harrison & Harrison.

The organ was originally slated for installation in the fall of 2020, but the project was delayed due to the pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions. Then finally, the organ, packed safely in crates, was loaded onto a ship in England where it left port on Saturday, October 30, 2021. In mid-November, the professionals at Harrison & Harrison met the organ at the church to unload it and begin the installation process.

After the 10:00 a.m. service on December 19 Andrew Scott, the head voicer for Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders, will speak about our new instrument and play different parts of it. This is a unique opportunity to hear from one of the people intimately involved in the crafting of our organ. We will premiere the organ fully at all services on Christmas Eve.

To celebrate the installation of the new Harrison & Harrison organ, Christ Church is presenting internationally acclaimed organist Nathan Laube in a solo recital on Sunday, January 30, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. The recital will be the first opportunity for the public to hear the organ outside of a worship service. The program will last approximately 90 minutes and will feature organ works from several countries and styles. Laube is currently on the organ faculty at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart, Germany. He also is an adjunct instructor at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY and International Consultant in Organ Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in the United Kingdom. In 2016, he was featured as soloist on a Grammy-award winning recording. The concert at Christ Church will be offered freely to the community.

For more pictures of the organ installation, go to page 12.
Hurry Up and Wait

By the Rev. Dr. Noelle York-Simmons, Rector

A few months ago, at the end of the summer, I was chatting with a colleague about the goings-on in our various churches. I told her about how the organ was stalled in quarantine, about how the immigration process was holding up the arrival of a new staff member, about the protracted process of deciding on the fate of Fowler House, about the neverending series of decisions around COVID and worship. She paused and said, “Wow. You and your parish are doing a lot of waiting.” That simple statement almost took my breath away. She was absolutely right. We have done a lot of waiting. On the liturgical calendar, Advent is the season of waiting. We are reminded of Mary’s wait for the birth of her blessed child, of the world’s wait for the return of the Messiah. In this season, we are reminded through our scripture, song, prayers, and practices, that we are unfinished, that the world is unfinished, and that, while we have some agency in our own making, mostly, we must wait to be fulfilled. Ironically, in the last three weeks, we have received our organ into our beautiful nave, we are finally moving forward through the immigration process on Robbie Laughton, and we’ve made an important decision to pursue a ground lease of our Fowler House. In these ways, our waiting is over. There is a little breathing room around here. And yet… In our Advent season, and in our hearts, there is still much to look forward to. There is still so much we have not yet accomplished. There is still so much that God has in store for us. We are, as a parish, still unfinished. We have work to do to best understand who and how to be in this world that changes so quickly around us. And we have waiting to do while God reveals to us our best path forward.

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

2:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II, with Christmas hymns and homily
We will sing selected verses of our favorite Christmas hymns and share the Bread of Life together. This service will have limited seating and will be shorter than our other services in order to provide a worship environment for those who are more COVID cautious. Additionally, this service will begin and end in daylight for those who prefer to walk and drive in the daytime.

4:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II, with Christmas hymns and a sermon by the Director of Children’s Ministries
Let’s raise our voices in song and prayer for the birth of the infant Messiah! Worship will be in the historic Church. Ariel Rudy will share a message of hope and joy for the year to come. This is the perfect service for anyone who loves to be a part of worship at its most joyful! Join us for cookies and fellowship in the churchyard following the service.

6:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II, with the Christ Church Choir and sermon (Livestream available)
9:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II, with the Christ Church Choir and sermon
Along with the Holy Eucharist, hymns, and a Christmas sermon, these two services will feature the Christ Church Choir, Jason Abel Director of Music. Join friends and strangers alike as we welcome the infant Christ into our hearts this most holy night.

Saturday, December 25 – Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II

Sunday, December 26

10:00 a.m. | Holy Eucharist Rite II
Fall Happenings

Out & About and Halloween
openings

Bringing Advent Home and Christ Child Ministry
Out & About Welcomes All
By the Rev. Lauren Banks, Associate Rector

Our Christian tradition is founded in breaking bread with one another. It is in community that Jesus appeared to the disciples to reassure them of his presence. Christ Church’s Out and About Group is one of fellowship, love, and support. Out and About was created as a group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) parishioners and allies. Therefore, Out and About is a safe space—a space in which all aspects of our selves, LGBTQ or not, are reminded of God’s love for us and our shared diversity and human experience. This past month, Out and About had a fall party in the Churchyard with pumpkin-painting, story time for kids, delicious barbecue, and rainbow cookies (courtesy of the York-Simmons household!).

Tom Suydam and Lauren and Amanda Brown planned this intergenerational fellowship event. The group looked a little different than it has in years past...there were at least ten children under the age of ten who belonged to LGBTQ parents. These young children are experiencing Christ Church as a place where they know God’s love. We were also a group of single people, partnered couples, and friends and family that came to have fun and share in a meal. Christ Church looks more like God’s heavenly kingdom more each day. The Out and About group is proof of that and is a ministry that will signal to the larger Alexandria community that Christ Church is a place where all are not just welcome, but celebrated.
The St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School Book Buddies Club created a wonderful new program for the children of the Christ Church Refugee Ministry this fall. High school students from the Book Buddies club hosted four Learn and Play Saturdays at the beautiful lower school campus. Refugee children had the opportunity to read with and learn from high school students in the library, play on the incredible playground, and the families were treated to a pizza lunch! This was the first opportunity many of our refugee families had to be together in-person since the Covid-19 pandemic began, and it was wonderful to see the children play and the adults visit together. The St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School students were fantastic hosts, engaging with the children in the library and on the playground. St. Stephens and St. Agnes School is also generously providing new winter coats for all of the refugee children who attended one of the Learn and Play Saturdays. This program was such a positive experience for many of our refugee families who are experiencing tremendous sadness after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan earlier this year. Learn and Play Saturdays will continue, when weather permits, in 2022.
If you happened to find yourself in the churchyard during the 9:00 hour on Sunday these past few months, you’d know that our Sunday Schoolers have been hard at work learning the stories and traditions of our faith. On October 31, however, our Sunday Schoolers were replaced by unicorns, knights, ghosts, angels, firefighters, and more! In celebration of Halloween, children were invited to don their costumes and learn more about the gravestones in our historic churchyard. Together, we talked about how each gravestone reminds us of the children of God who came before us at Christ Church, and how we have many ways to remember people we love who have died—knowing that we live forever with God in heaven when we die. With help from the Sunday School team, children made texture rubbings of gravestones to take home and left with a new appreciation of these objects that make our churchyard such a special (and spooky!) place to gather.
Did you know that Lazarus counselors completed 131 intakes in the month of November 2021? Additionally, our Lazarus food pantry made 33 deliveries of food in November, and over the course of 2021, we have been able to make 445 deliveries of groceries and toiletries/household items, serving 1158 people total in these families!

The level of caring about residents in Alexandria and the collaboration among community partners to help those in need is extraordinary. As a volunteer counselor for the Christ Church Lazarus Ministry, I can tell you that we do not just give financial assistance. It is much more from being a strong advocate when necessary, providing transportation, caring and being a listening ear. The following is just one story that extends over five months. Our client, Ms. T, was brought to the attention of the Christ Church Lazarus Ministry, ALIVE!, and City of Alexandria staff by our legal colleague at Northern Virginia Legal Services (NVLS). Ms. T had a housing voucher and wanted to move to a new property that did not require stairs due to her mobility challenges and one that allows dogs. Going forward, she could pay her rent and other expenses with the voucher. Nevertheless, her first need was to pay off her current balance of $2,500 which was accomplished by Christ Church and ALIVE! ARHA (Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority) reissued her voucher, and I helped Ms. T complete the application for a new property. Unfortunately, her application was denied, so it was back to the drawing board. The team was able to find a residential management company that manages five different properties increasing the likelihood of finding an apartment meeting her physical limitations and having availability. I was able to help complete the next application and provide various required documents over the next few days. With confirmation from the current property owner that her account was up-to-date, Ms. T received approval to move into her new home. The various funding sources again helped with her security deposit. However, time was tight to move into the apartment. An all hands-on-deck call made it happen. ALIVE! graciously provided a moving van. We rounded up other counselors and friends to load and unload the truck. Furniture and boxes were piled everywhere, but Ms. T’s closest friend was ready to help straighten it all out. The most satisfaction came in a phone call when Ms. T expressed how happy she is with her new home and she can walk straight out the door to yard with her dog Bijou. The floor plan makes it seem larger than her previous apartment; there are no stairs to climb. She also feels this apartment has more warmth to it, and she is planning how to decorate for Christmas. Since she is located on the end of the building with a little dirt patch outside her door, she already has plans to plant some flowers.

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**Rites of Passage**

**Baptisms:**
Samuel Brooks Keith
Declan Doherty Meins

**Deaths:**
Gary Hudnall
Remi Weiman
Freida Jones
Buff MacDonald
David Kirk Groome
Gary Barton Sr.
Alice Pearson Chapman
Rose Minor
Rev. Michael Hinson
Reed Albrittain
Alec Hawkins
It is beautiful to see the results of our community come together and we are so thankful for your generosity. Thank you for ensuring the success of our redesigned Thanksgiving ministry again this year. Because of you, we were able to purchase and deliver gift cards and groceries to 180 of our neighbors so they could enjoy a full holiday table.

Notes from recipients:
“This is one of the best gifts we have gotten all year, we WILL have Thanksgiving!”
“We thought we wouldn’t have Thanksgiving dinner and my kids were sad, then we heard back from our Lazarus counselor, that gift card got us a big Thanksgiving dinner”
“What a blessing Christ Church is to me and so many, especially now when it is needed most, you don’t forget us”

Note from one of our Refugee Families “I will use the gift card to buy a turkey and invite my friend and her kids! Wishing you, family and friends all the best of the season, may you enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with joy and blessings to continue all through the New Year. All the best for you and all Christ Church family”

While it is impossible to help fully with the severe heartache and stress that our Afghan families have been under since the quick fall of the country’s government in August, the church’s ministry has tried to provide ongoing comfort and support, most recently with a special Thanksgiving delivery. Not only did families receive a $100 Giant grocery card, they all received tote bags filled with fun supplies to enjoy the holiday. Washington Street United Methodist Preschool handmade and laminated decorative placemats, loads of kid’s art supplies and play dough was donated by Burgundy Farm Country Day School pre-school, salt & pepper shakers from Immanuel on the Hill and huge pumpkin pies provided by Temple Beth El. Rock Spring United Church of Christ made personal deliveries throughout Northern Virginia as our families spread out to more affordable suburbs.
Over flowing Generosity Makes Christ Child Ministry a Success for 231 Children!
Due to the generosity of Christ Church parishioners and our partner churches, we raised just over $38,000 and 239 children in 98 families from the Boys and Girls Club of Alexandria, our Lazarus Ministry and our Refugee Ministry were provided gift cards, a fleece blanket, and a filled stocking for the kids and grocery gift cards for the families. Alfred Street Baptist Church, Fairlington United Methodist Church, Immanuel Church on the Hill, Rock Spring United Church of Christ, and the Boys and Girls Club of Alexandria parents and staff bought the blankets, stocking stuffers and gift cards. We are especially proud that this has become an ecumenical ministry and the Boys and Girls Club families contributed as well.

Volunteer coordinator, Caroline Carbaugh, rounded up volunteers to stuff stockings, fill envelopes with gift cards and deliver packages to families. The Christ Child Ministry in 2021 was a huge success. Thank you to the Lazarus Counselors for delivering gifts to our Lazarus Guests and Rock Spring United Church of Christ for delivering gifts to our Refugee Families!

Special thanks are due to Anne Ramsey, Caroline Carbaugh, Jane Baird and Anne Richardson for their leadership of the Christ Child ministry this year.
New Organ Installation