Every Family Member Can Serve Through The Christ Child Ministry

By Caroline Carbaugh, Anne Ramsey, Stephanie Roberts, Christ Child Coordinators

The Christ Child Ministry kicks off on November 3. This ministry supports low income families in the City of Alexandria by providing an opportunity for parents to shop for Christmas presents for their children at greatly discounted prices. We have been hard at work registering children whose parents will shop at the Christ Child Ministry store. This year we have about 200 children to shop for from the Boys and Girls Club, recent church-sponsored immigrant families, and other low-income families within the City of Alexandria.

The Christ Child Ministry pop-up store, located in the Christ Church Auditorium, will be filled with donated new toys and clothes, selected to match the ages and genders of the preregistered children. On Saturday, December 7, parents shop at the store, making their own selections for their children.

The Christ Child Ministry is an activity for everyone in the family. Children get involved by recommending toys they would like. Parents and children shop.

Last year we had almost 90 shoppers plus the Youth Group, who have a mammoth shopping spree to select gifts. There were approximately 60 who volunteered in other ways. Many help year after year.

You can help make the Christ Child Ministry a success by:

- Sponsoring one or more children by purchasing gifts, ideally spending a minimum of $100 per child. Sign up to be a shopper in November.
- Making a cash donation in any amount.
- Shopping for gifts with donated funds.
- Purchasing or making a hat, scarf, and mittens to be given away free to each child.
- Helping with the Ingathering of Gifts on Sunday, December 1, from 8:30 a.m. – noon
- Pricing store items, Monday, December 2 and Thursday December 5, 9:00 a.m. – noon.
- Setting up and decorating the Christmas Store, Friday, December 6, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Assisting shoppers in the Christ Child Christmas Store on Saturday.

Fowler Update: Two Possible Developers and Using Our Current Space Wisely

By Chris McMurray, Fowler House Committee

We have made a lot of progress in the last several weeks. Two developers are ready and eager to negotiate a ground lease with us. One wants to build a senior-care facility providing assisted living and memory care. The other wants to build a boutique hotel.

Negotiations with both are almost at an end, and we believe we should be in a position to make a recommendation to the Vestry to enter into a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the one who makes the best final offer.

We have tentatively scheduled a forum for Sunday, November 10, after the 10:00 a.m. service to inform the parish about the terms of the recommended proposal. If all goes well, the parish will vote on a resolution on Sunday, November 24 to approve the negotiation and execution of a ground lease.

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Celebration of Wilkes Street and Thanksgiving for Barry Stauffer

By Nancy Carson, Vestry

At this year’s October semi-annual clean-up of the Christ Church Cemetery on Wilkes Street, two cherry trees were dedicated and two individuals were recognized.

Frances Dillon donated a tree in honor of her seven beloved grandchildren; Nathalie, Samuel, Katherine, John, Anne, Gabriel, and Hannah. Barry Stauffer’s family dedicated a tree in honor of his work leading the reclamation of the cemetery, beginning in 2007.

About 50 workers, neighbors and friends came to honor Barry. Former Mayor Alison Silberberg was present and former City Arborist John Noelle spoke about the importance of making this cemetery and the adjoining cemeteries beautiful and useful.

Rev. Seldon offered blessings, and Vestry member Anne Shine spoke about Barry as “the poster child for retirement. Barry has taken on the Christ Church Properties work and many other projects, and always steps up to help,” she said.

Nicholas Hunter, son of Alexandria Master Deputy Sheriff Jeffrey Hunter, developed the cemetery seating area as his Eagle Scout project. His brother Zachary created the path. Nick and his parents were there to thank Barry for his work.

The property was purchased by Christ Church in 1809, and ashes are still interred there. Under Barry’s leadership an average of 24 people worked twice a year, making the total hours worked over 1,560. A total of 29 large dumpsters have been filled, which is the equivalent of 348 pickup loads of debris. Workers pulled out trees, battled poison ivy, became experts at using a chainsaw, and uncovered casket pieces and hidden memorials. A special surprise was the discovery of 120 empty beer bottles hidden under a tree!

Please take time to thank Barry for his constant effort, and thank Frances Dillon for her generous donation.
Living a Life In Gratitude, Even For Our Challenges

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

At a recent Vestry meeting, we were discussing how good it feels in our parish community right now, and how our discussions about gratitude seem to be uplifting us and creating space for even more generosity and goodwill in an already generous and kind place. I LOVE IT!

As we move into November, into Thanksgiving and then Advent and Christmas and beyond, our challenge as a parish will be to remember to keep this conversation, its feelings and its outcomes, going well beyond our prescribed stewardship “season.” It is my sincere hope that we take the time to learn how to make the practice of gratitude a charism of our parish. Not just this stewardship season, but for the life of our church.

What this means is profound for our daily lives: When confronted by someone with whom we deeply disagree, we start by giving thanks for the opportunity to think through our beliefs and the ability to clearly and articulately state them. When we are beset by misfortune, we start by giving thanks for the opportunity to ask for help from a community that loves and cares for us.

When we are challenged by a new truth that shakes our foundations or our identity, we give thanks for the people we were and then give thanks for a new way to be kinder, more open, more loving.

What this means is that we are working toward a shift in culture. This shift is not just for our parish, it is for our city, for our nation and for the world. What if four of us took up this practice as a lifelong goal? What if 20 of us did? What about a thousand of us?

Gratitude, as a Gospel-based, Christian practice, changes lives, dear friends. It starts by changing the one that practices it.

Advent Gift Shop Party Features Limited Edition, Custom Needlepoint Ornaments

You’ll have to wait a little longer this year to shop at the Gift Shop’s annual Christmas Market. It will be held on the Sunday, December 1 to celebrate the first day of Advent. But it will be well worth the wait!

This is the same day as Bring Advent Home, the children’s Christmas wreath-making organized by Director of Children’s Ministries Ariel Rudy, which means you’ll be able to shop after the kiddies make wreaths with Ariel.

Even more exciting, this year you’ll be able to buy beautiful custom handmade needlepoint Christmas tree ornaments made by the extraordinarily talented, devoted team of women who are in the process of making needlepoint covers for all of the kneelers in Christ Church! Their work is exquisite! They are creating a limited edition of ornaments adorned with needlepoint scenes of Christ Church just for us.

All the traditional Gift Shop Christmas gifts will be calling out to you as well – a variety of poppers, cards, including the gorgeous new Christmas cards from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, cocktail napkins, towels and totes designed by a brand new vendor and decorated with beautiful cardinals, Christmas wreaths, animal-adorned ornaments, and yes – those adorable animated stuffed toys that most shoppers (including this writer) can’t get enough of!

Don’t forget books – one of the best choices there is for a Christmas gift. For only $17.99 each, the Gift Shop has beautifully illustrated children’s books entitled We Three Kings and The Twelve Days of Christmas.

For adults there is a book of meditations, The Twelve Days of Christmas: Unwrapping the Gifts. This popular book by Brother Curtis Almquist of the Society of St. John The Evangelist, explores the gifts of love, hope, joy, forgiveness and more during the days the 12 days between December 26 and the Feast of the Epiphany, January 12, the date on which we traditionally recall the Magi’s arrival to present gifts to the infant Jesus.

We will also be offering pop-up Christmas displays in the Gift Shop beginning in November so you can get a sneak preview/shopping opportunity ahead of time. Watch Parish Life for details.
“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me…”

By Ariel Rudy, Director of Children’s Ministries

As the littlest parishioners among us, children have unique needs during worship. For children who are preliterate, following along in the bulletin and singing unfamiliar hymns is not possible. Even kids who are able to read may not get a lot out of reading the Collect of the Day or the lectionary readings. This does not mean that children do not understand what happens in church or are any less capable of encountering God during worship, but it does mean that we have new and exciting chances to be creative with how we show children how to worship God.

Every Sunday, a children’s worship cart is available to all children and their families. Located in the portico outside the door to the sanctuary, this cart is stocked with coloring pages that illustrate the day’s assigned readings, two different bulletins for children, various books, and even children’s guides to Holy Eucharist, Rites I and II. The worship cart also has clipboards with worship notes worksheets for older children, flash cards with liturgical objects and their names, and of course a near infinite number of crayons.

In November, we will add Busy Bags for Babies to our growing list of resources for children during worship. These bags will contain soft toys for babies and toddlers to enjoy as they practice being in the church and absorbing the sights and sounds of worship. To receive a Busy Bag for your baby to use during worship, simply ask an usher for one. The nursery and infant caring room, a quiet room where the service is displayed on closed circuit television, are also available to families who choose to use them.

Children up through third grade are invited to Children’s Chapel each Sunday during the 10:00 a.m. service as well. In Children’s Chapel, we follow a child-friendly version of worship that is very similar to what occurs in the “big church.” We have a short children’s sermon, offer prayers of the people where everyone is invited to share their prayers, observe a brief confession, practice the Lord’s Prayer, and more. Children’s Chapel equips children with the language and habits they need to develop their faith and gives them room to figure out how this whole church thing works.

We are so blessed to have dozens of families join us each Sunday for Sunday School and worship. In fact, Sunday School attendance numbers have increased from last year! All children are always welcome in worship, and we are delighted to offer so many resources to kids and their families. The next time you observe a child asking questions, telling mom something that just can’t wait, or just being an energetic little kid during a service, consider offering your support to that child and their family with a smile. Adults who love church and feel at home in God’s house start as little ones who wiggle in their pews.
Dell Sanderson Retires After Two Decades of Sharing Our Church’s Story

By Carol Donlan, Vestry

About a dozen years after she started working as a Christ Church docent, Dell Sanderson remembers two couples from the U.K. arriving on a slow day. “We were in the George Washington pew, just the five of us.” Dell was just about finished talking about the legacy of George Washington, when, “suddenly one of the men stood up and then got down on one knee. And right there he proposed to his girl. All of them started yelling, screaming, laughing, and crying.

“I asked the man, ‘How did you plan this?’ He said he didn’t. He just knew they were all coming to the U.S. and he brought the ring with him. They’d been all over Washington. He said, ‘I was looking for the best place to propose. It was here, sitting in George Washington’s church.’”

Two years later, Dell looked up from the Washington pew and there was the couple. “Do you recognize us?” the husband asked. “I asked my wife to marry me right in this pew.”

“They brought along their baby,” Dell said. They wanted me to meet her – little Georgette.”

Dell Sanderson has lots of stories after more than 22 years of leading Christ Church tours for visitors by the busload or one-by-one. She retired last month.

Dell simply loves history. “When I was 12 years old,” she explained, “a History of Texas class was a school requirement. Texas history was extremely exciting. You have good guys and bad guys. There’s so much drama. Much more interesting than math or science.”

When her late husband Harold’s job took them to Williamsburg, she became a guide in Colonial Williamsburg and an instructor at Jamestown Settlement. It was while giving tours of Bruton Parish Church that she was first introduced to the Episcopal Church. “I was a Methodist my whole life, but for years I knew I wanted something else. I went to church every week, but I just sat there like a lump and went home.”

When she and Harold moved to Alexandria in 1997, she came to Christ Church – drawn by the history, of course. “[Docent leader] Barbara Kasota found out I had joined the church and learned about by work in Williamsburg and Jamestown and she pursued me until I said yes.”

And so, Dell has led church tours twice a week ever since. She’s met thousands of tourists. She also set up her own company and worked out of the Visitors Center doing public and private tours of Alexandria. But her heart and her stories are full of Christ Church.

Another favorite: One day an 80-member tour group dropped in – without warning. After Dell gave them a quick tour of the church, they asked if they could sing right there. Dell said fine. They arranged themselves up one aisle, across the front down the next and across the back. Then, in beautiful harmony, they sang four verses of Amazing Grace.

“And it was amazing,” Dell said. “So many things touch your heart. So many little valentines that have touched me and so many, many visitors.”

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Rites of Passage

Deaths:
- Leo Nestor
- Bruce & Louis Robey
- Elyse Jones
- Dominic Lowe
- Aggie Durant
- Virginia Marie Cooper
- Atatiana Jefferson
- Richard “Ad” Eichner
- Todd Cathcart

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Who Cares? God... And Your Lay Pastoral Caregivers

By Jeff Dienno, Lay Pastoral Caregivers Committee

Christ Church Lay Pastoral Caregivers come together to be enriched and provide support to one another so that we may be better representations of Christ when we go out to provide pastoral care.

We are women and men, military and civilian, robust and retired. We provide pastoral care to Christ Church parishioners by visiting, listening, praying, and delivering flowers to those unable physically to attend church.

We are also in touch with people who have suffered a loss of a loved one, are recovering from a health issue or other set-back though still able to attend church and to celebrate milestones such as the birth of a child and to express thanks for work someone has done in heading up a project at church.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers distribute the Eucharistic Feast to members of the congreation at their homes, assisted living communities, or rehabilitation centers. We organize group birthday parties for our parishioners living at the Goodwin Houses and can arrange transportation to and from church services for those who need a ride.

As our Rector, Noelle, noted in the October Rejoice, “I hope my little friends—and my big friends—will know the God that I know, a God that does not promise release from the pain that plagues this life, but companions on the journey that will sit with them and remind them that they are good and loved and holy.” That has been our call as lay pastoral caregivers, to be companions on the journey and to sit and reassure our parishioners in need that they are good and loved and holy. If you or someone you know requires pastoral care, make your desires known at pastoralcare@ccalex.org. Or, you may contact: the Reverend Richard Jones, Parish Visitor: 703-823-3186.

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follows the terms set out in the resolution.

Why are we moving so quickly? We must, because the current lease with Ross terminates on January 31, 2021—only 15 months away. In addition to the time it takes to negotiate a ground lease, the chosen developer will need about 18 months to receive the necessary approvals from the City of Alexandria. So, we are already facing the possibility of enduring some months after the Ross lease ends without receiving the rent that is a significant part of our budget. Time is of the essence.

The terms we are negotiating with the developers are in most cases quite similar to the ones the parish already approved last January in connection with the Streetscape ground lease.

One exception is that the current developers are willing to give us approximately 5,000 square feet in the new building, which is less than the 10,000 square feet that Streetscape initially agreed upon.

Fortunately, at the behest of our Campus Planning Committee, a study conducted by Alexandria architect John Cole of Cole & Denny, Inc.—the architect who designed Fowler House—has concluded that there is a substantial amount of unused and underused space in the Parish House and the Memorial Parish House that can be renovated to accommodate many of the functions currently in Fowler House.

The Campus Planning Committee has spent months going over the needs of every function in Fowler House—from Sunday School and choirs to Bible Study and meetings. “We discovered that to meet 100 percent of current requirements, we need about 4,000 to 5,000 square feet beyond what the parish houses offer right now,” explained John Grey, chairman of the Campus Planning Committee. “And beyond giving us more usable space, renovating the parish houses can make our campus more welcoming and accessible, more efficient, and more in line with current building codes.”

John Cole is working now on a range of design options.

Please make a point of attending the Fowler House Information Sessions on November 10 after the 10:00 a.m. service. If a proposal quickly moves forward, there would be an all-parish vote on November 24.

As always, keep the future of Fowler House in your prayers.
Food Rescue in Alexandria Provides
4,000 Pounds of Nourishment for the Body, and the Soul

By Anne Richardson, Gleaning Ministry Volunteer Coordinator

Collecting and distributing 4,000 pounds of more than 50 different types of produce and baked goods is all in a season’s work for our volunteer gleaning team.

Each summer, Christ Church collaborates with the City of Alexandria and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church parish to collect surplus food from the Saturday Old Town Farmers’ Market. This year, the Alexandria Community Shelter also joined our team, collecting food to cook and serve for meals at the shelter.

Over 16 weeks, Christ Church team members had an opportunity for fellowship with other volunteers, City staff, and generous farmers’ market vendors while collecting donations. Gleaning gave us an opportunity to learn about the bounty of fruits and vegetables available at our local market, with unique donations including Asian pears, Japanese eggplant, patty pan squash, and squash blossoms.

We are grateful to the 13 vendors who contributed to our gleaning ministry this year including: 1690 Farm, Ashton Farms, Bigg Riggs Farm, Bread & Water Company, Diaz Berries & Veggies, Dunham’s Farm, Golden Goose Farm, Lopez Farm, Maribeth’s Bakery, Montoya’s Farm, Papa’s Market, Shamba Farm, and Spring Valley Farm & Orchard.

When you shop at the Old Town Farmers’ Market, which is open year-round, please consider supporting the vendors who give so generously—an average of 250 pounds of food each week!

I would also like to extend my thanks to the wonderful 2019 gleaning volunteers. The time these 15 members of our parish gave this gleaning season made possible the collection and distribution of food to two food pantries, a homeless shelter, a low-income senior housing complex, and a woman’s transitional shelter. News reports tell us more than 40 percent of food in America is wasted. Christ Church and the Alexandria community are doing our part to rescue and redistribute surplus food to those in need—nourishing body and soul in the process.

Consider Ways to Give to Christ Church Before Year’s End

By Carla Rosati, Christ Church Foundation

As 2019 draws to a close, please consider the following gift options to Christ Church and the Christ Church Foundation by December 31.

Qualified Charitable Distribution from IRA
Donors aged 70 ½ and older can give up to $100,000 directly from their individual retirement accounts as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). The QCD counts toward satisfying the required minimum distribution, and excludes the distribution from the taxpayer’s income.

Gift From Your Donor Advised Fund
If you have established a Donor Advised Fund, you can request that the fund administrator direct a contribution before the end of the year.

Gift of Appreciated Stock
If you have stock that has appreciated in value and have held for longer than one year, you can contribute the stock directly, thus avoiding capital gains tax on the increase in the value of the stock. Donors who itemize can claim a deduction up to the full fair market value of the stock.

However you choose to give, the current tax laws still allow for deductions of charitable gifts for donors who itemize on their tax filing. To qualify for a charitable deduction for 2019, please ensure that your gift is received by December 31. (If mailed, the envelope will need to be postmarked by December 31.)

For more information on giving by year end, contact the Christ Church Foundation at foundation@historicchristchurch.org; or call Stephanie Woodland Kelly, Controller: 703-778-4933.

Save the Date!
Christ Church and Beth-El Hebrew will come together on Sunday, November 24 for a special shared dinner.
Christ Child Ministry
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December 7, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
• Coordinating food for the volunteers during the Ingathering of Gifts on Sunday, December 1, or on the day of the Christmas Store, December 7.
• Helping to pack up left over gift items Saturday, December 7 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Stop by the Christ Child Ministry table, outside of church each Sunday, November 3 to Sunday, November 24 to discover how you can best help the Christ Child Ministry! If you cannot make it to church, an online option will be available soon. Whether you can devote one hour, one day, or more we welcome your participation in this parish-wide outreach program. Christmas is just around the corner!

For more information, please contact Caroline Carbaugh to volunteer: cscarbaugh127@gmail.com, or Anne Ramsey or Stephanie Roberts at christchildministry@ccalex.org.

The Gathering Advent Luncheon, December 12!

Back by popular demand, the Harmony Heritage Singers will present a Christmas Music Extravaganza, Barbershop Chorus style, at The Gathering Advent Luncheon on Thursday, December 12. The popular Mount Vernon, Virginia musical group, under the direction of Bob Wachter, will rock the Auditorium with your favorite holiday songs, and you never know what special visitor might show up! Warm fellowship, fun and a delightful luncheon feast beginning at 11:30 a.m. will precede the chorus at 12:30 p.m. All are invited to enjoy The Gathering hosted by the Hospitality Committee. RSVPs are encouraged. Please contact Fran Usher, at franusher2011@gmail.com, or Betsy Hahn at hahninc@aol.com or call 703=470-8131 to RSVP.

December 2019

Sunday, December 1 Advent I
Gift Shop Christmas Market
Bringing Advent Home Workshop
Ingathering for Christ Child Ministry
Baptisms at 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 4, December Dinner Church

Saturday, December 7, Walk the Labyrinth
Christ Child Ministry Christmas Store

Sunday, December 8, Advent II
Lessons and Carols – 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10, Blue Christmas Service – 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 12, Advent Luncheon for the Gathering

Sunday, December 15, Advent III
Poinsettia Distribution
Last Day of Sunday School for 2019
December All-Parish Breakfast

Sunday, December 22, Advent IV
Christmas Pageant 5:00 p.m. and Yuletide Feast
Greening of the Church

Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve—Office Closed
Holy Eucharist 3:00 p.m.
Festal Eucharist 5:30 p.m.
Unto This Night: Family Christmas Eve Service 5:30 p.m.
Festal Eucharist 8:00 p.m.
Festal Eucharist 10:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25 Christmas Day—Office Closed
Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 26, Office Closed

Friday, December 27, Office Closed

Sunday, December 29, No Sunday School

Monday, December 30, Office Closed

Tuesday, December 31, New Year’s Eve—Office Closed
First Night Alexandria 6:30-11:15 p.m.
A Service of Prayer 10:00 p.m.