

# THE COURIER

The Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, River Hills, WI

September 2008

## ***Rockin' our way back to our ROOTS!***

Kick off Sunday is just a few days away on September 14 and we have lots to be excited about. We have made great strides in our transition and will be soon welcoming our new Interim Rector. School is back in session and

**KICKOFF SUNDAY  
is  
SEPTEMBER 14**

it's time to get back to our roots in our children's ministries as well. What better way to celebrate than to get into some high energy rock and roll!



A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Jan explained the story of Jesus and Peter in the Scriptures. She talked about the Gospel story of Peter as the "rock" with its strength and indestructibility, and at the same time the scientific explanation of matter as elements that are constantly in motion. It is pretty easy to draw a picture of our church and our children here; at once, strong and at the same time constantly moving.

Jan concluded her sermon with some terms we have all come to know – rock on, like a rock, steady as a rock, rock around the clock, rock your world. Let's see how our school age children come back together and rock this place!

The sign up boards for parent and adult volunteers will be available on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> in the community space. We will have pre-registration available at that time and also on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:15 AM.

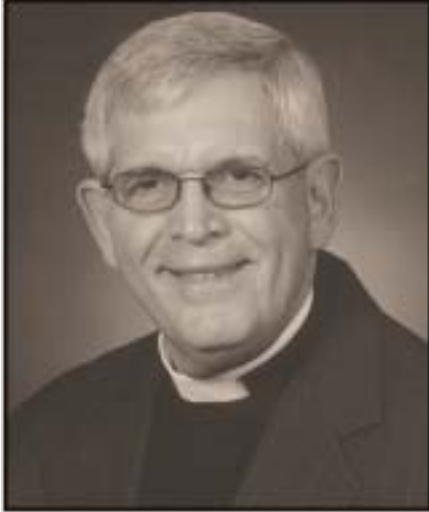
So. . .don't rock the boat! Come and be prepared for some fun and adventure as we start our children's ministries for the year. And as Pastor Jan tells us "rock on St. Christopher's"!

***Sally Walters***

Director of Children's Ministries



# *TRANSITION POSITION*



*COMING NOVEMBER 1 ....*

## *INTERIM RECTOR*

*The Rev. CHARLES CASKEY*

Charlie Caskey has taken 20 years of parish ministry, interim training, and interim network support systems and developed an interim ministry to facilitate and support congregations through transition. Over the last 10 years Caskey has served as Interim Rector with St. John the Divine, Burlington, WI; the Parish Church of St. Luke, Evanston, IL; St. Elisabeth, Glencoe, IL; Christ Church, Waukegan, IL; and St. Thomas, Battle Creek, MI.

In addition to interim ministry and prep school, university and hospital chaplaincy, Charlie has served parishes in Indiana, Illinois, Rhode Island, Michigan and Wisconsin as assistant, associate, rector and priest in charge. He received a BA from Wake Forest University, MDiv from Virginia Theological Seminary, masters work at the University of Virginia, the George Washington University and is ABD at Indiana University. Prior to seminary Caskey worked as an intelligence research specialist for the Defense Intelligence Agency.

A native of Mooresville, North Carolina, Charlie is married to the former Thayer Lee of Rochester, NY and they make their home in Bonita Springs, FL. Thayer and Charlie have two daughters who live and work in Chicago, IL.

*Many thanks to the members of the Vestry Task Force  
for their outstanding work during our Interim Rector search process:*

*Edith Braeger, Jo Donovan, Helen Sheen and John Wolf joined Tom and me  
in this adventure. They were just over the moon!*

*Ran Hamner*

# From the Wardens

I LOVE KICK-OFFS AND NOT JUST THOSE IN ANN ARBOR (ALTHOUGH THEY ARE MY FAVES!). Kick-offs at St. Christopher's are always very cool. And we have such an important one coming up on September 14<sup>th</sup>. We will kick off our new church year which will mark the beginning of our transition year.

We will kick off this year with our banners snapping in the breeze. So much has been done by so many to move us forward. Our Children's Programs will again be the best ever! Olympic Gold! Our Outreach Programs carry us to new neighborhoods and new understandings. St. Francis continues to drive the bus. Our ministries continue to thrive with the wonderful lay leadership and parish participation which define this place. Our new committees gain traction in several important areas.

These efforts, so important in providing structure for a program size parish, involve parishioners from every point on our St. Christopher's spectrum. We welcome Charlie Caskey as our interim priest. He is absolutely delightful in person.



Charlie is a seasoned, experienced interim priest with several years of specific interim experience. He is well known and well respected in the Diocese. We will have a marvelous journey together through our transition.

What lies ahead?! God does not reveal these answers to us in advance. We will continue to focus on the next right step, trusting that the Holy Spirit journeys with us and trusting in each other. Your vestry and wardens are committed to an open, honest, transparent, objective process. We have received so much interest in serving on the Search Committee. This is a sure sign of a very healthy parish. Meanwhile, our new Finance Committee has begun work on the 2009 budget. We intend to be very good stewards of your contributions to the Every Member Canvas this Fall. In addition, we are actively engaged in managing our budget for the balance of this year. The single biggest factor in our success will be a function of each of us paying our pledges in full for 2007 and 2008. Simply stated, we control our own destiny in this regard.

And so, the pageantry of Fall unfolds before us. We will face each challenge together. We will trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us. We will be open to all of the potential and possibilities that God holds for this place as His Christian Community. We will celebrate our victories along our way. And, if I were to continue with my football analogy (which I will), let me say that I wouldn't want to play us!

One last thought! You will have questions, concerns, ideas and input throughout our transition journey. Please seek out a warden or a vestry person. If something is on your mind, it needs to be on ours.

Thanks and God Bless,

**Ran Hamner**  
Sr. Warden

## July Financial Recap

(as of July 31, 2008)

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
July Income:	\$ 33,617	\$ 32,981
July Expense:	\$ 43,073	\$ 40,605
YTD Income:	\$ 336,753	\$ 397,377
YTD Expense:	\$ 369,579	\$ 349,390
2008 Net Income /(Expense)	(\$ 32,826)	\$ 47,987
Outstanding Building Loan	\$ 347,489	

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact any vestry member, Ran Hamner, Senior Warden, Tom Napper, Junior Warden, or Hannah Pillsbury, Treasurer.



## From the Associate Rector

This past June, I attended CREDO. CREDO is an 8-day intensive conference that provides space for clergy to examine every aspect of their life and ministry. A key learning I took home from CREDO came from one of the most experienced deployment officers in the Episcopal Church. He told us to “Put ourselves in the place with the most potentials.”

The “place with the most potentials” describes exactly how I see St. Christopher’s. Parishioners I’ve met all convey this sense of potential...seeking to honor that which has been, while discerning that which the Spirit will have us do. I am convinced the Spirit is urgently calling St. Christopher’s towards named and as yet un-named “potential”.

These are words I wrote one year ago, in my first column as the Associate Rector of your parish. The “place with the most potentials” is a phrase I still stand by as St. C’s actively moves into transition. The reality of the word “transition”, the anticipation and angst that word brings, are here, locally, front and center in every part of the life of the parish. The other reality is that no matter who we are and what we do, like it or not, we are part of a national and global transition full of anticipation and angst. Whatever view we might have of it locally and globally, we can all feel it. It is palpable!

When I refer to St. Christopher’s as a place with the most potentials, I am talking about the potential spiritual growth and transformation that the people of God in this particular time and place that is now opening to us in another new way. It has nothing to do with things physical like our building and other resources. It has everything to do with each of us and all of us collectively and what the parish will come to understand (or not) about its potential and role as Christian community in the city of

Milwaukee and beyond, in this first part of the 21st century.

We have hopes, ideas, thoughts, strong preferences, wants, needs, agendas, goals, concerns and fears. None of knows with any certainty how this will all “turn out”. And that is a VERY GOOD THING because that is exactly the place we can choose to allow God, our creator to enter and infuse new life. It is the place we can choose to allow, Jesus our brother, to show us the way. It is the place we can choose to allow the Spirit, who is the most persistent wisdom and guide to lead us. The reality of choosing to do this is that we will experience the Gospel cycle of birth, death and resurrection over and over again...personally and as a parish. The potential of what God will work in that is at once terrifying and astonishingly life-giving.



My prayer as this year begins, is that each of us intentionally seeks and chooses the path of setting ourselves in the place with the most potentials; that each will be ready to risk something; that scripture and prayer will be a center piece of this transition. As always, the Gospel says it best....Seek first the Kingdom of God and it’s righteousness and all the rest will be given to you.

*Jan*

## TRANSITION POSITION

*A monthly update on the  
Transition process,  
written by members  
of the Vestry*

Our new 'interim' priest, Charlie Caskey, will be starting in his new position very soon and as Emilie O'Connor wrote in last month's Transition Position article, the interim period is a time for us to step back, with the interim priest, and look at ourselves as a parish.

I've been thinking about that phrase 'take a look at ourselves'.

We, the congregation of St. Christopher's, all have our own priorities, wants and needs. I only see life through my own eyes, and as much as I try to look at it from 'all' sides, I am biased in my perspective...I believe we all are, which is why the vestry and interim priest need everyone's input concerning their own hopes and dreams for St. Christopher's.

With that in mind, let's take a look at me and my family.

My wife Amy and I have been attending St. Chris' since early 2002. We were looking for a church home and had been checking out various churches under the 'Christian' umbrella when we walked through the doors. We heard Scott's message that morning and decided to come back. We got to know some of the congregation along with Scott and Jan, and felt that it was a good fit for us to continue to grow in our relationship w/ God and walk further down our spiritual path.

Back in those days, we were involved in many activities that St.

Christopher's had to offer including adult formation classes and outreach activities such as Habitat for Humanity, The Gathering and Our Next Generation. Those were the things that were important to us at that time and St. Christopher's fit our needs very well.

Our lives have changed quite a bit since then. We're now blessed with a 2 year old and a 4 year old and our priorities along with the things that are important to us in our church community have changed. A good children's ministry is much more important to us, along with an inspirational sermon every Sunday to keep us fired up.

But that's just us... What about you? As the vestry and interim priest start the 'let's look at ourselves' process, please be sure to share your priorities, wants and needs.

Let's all do the footwork in identifying ourselves and searching for the next right rector, but let's also try not to control it too much and leave the results up to God.

I happened upon the following piece a couple of days ago and thought it appropriate.

*One of the toughest tasks a church faces is choosing a good minister. A member of an official board undergoing this painful process finally lost patience. He'd just witnessed the Pastoral Relations Committee reject applicant after applicant for some minor fault - real or imagined. It was time for a bit of soul-searching on the part of the committee. So he stood up and read this letter purporting to be from another applicant.*

*Gentlemen: Understanding your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for the position. I have many*

*qualifications. I've been a preacher with much success and also had some success as a writer. Some say I'm a good organizer. I've been a leader most places I've been.*

*I'm over 50 years of age and have never preached in one place for more than three years. In some places, I have left town after my work caused riots and disturbances. I must admit I have been in jail three or four times, but not because of any real wrong doing.*

*My health is not too good, though I still accomplish a great deal. The churches I have preached in have been small, though located in several large cities.*

*I've not gotten along well with religious leaders in the towns where I have preached. In fact, some have threatened me, and even attacked me physically. I am not too good at keeping records. I have been known to forget whom I have baptized.*

*However, if you can use me, I promise to do my best for you.*

*The board member turned to the committee and said, "Well, what do you think? Shall we call him?"*

*The good church folks were appalled! Consider a sickly, trouble-making, absent-minded ex-jailbird? Was the board member crazy? Who signed the application? Who had such colossal nerve?*

*The board member eyed them all keenly before he replied, "It's signed, 'The Apostle Paul.'"*

God's will, not ours, be done.

**Mike Ruf**

*Vestry Class of 2008*

# Our Amazing Youth

"If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a life time." It's a struggle for the two of us to capture the entire NDVision experience in words. We started the week with low expectations and uncertainty; however, by the end, leaving was unimaginable.

As we approached the Notre Dame campus on Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, our eyes were immediately drawn to the Golden Dome. After settling in our dorm room, we managed to find our way to the cafeteria where some 400 kids anxiously awaited to meet their counselors. In our small groups, we shared our first meal and got to know each other through various ice breaker games. Each day was similar with a speaker or two, a mass, and a few small group gatherings. At the end of the week it was a very familiar routine. BUT it is not the physical things we did that mattered, it was about what we mentally grasped. The first few speakers taught us that God made us with a purpose in mind to serve. And this means that eventually we must realize our flaws and accept them as God made us. As the week went on however, the messages got deeper and more personal. Every action we make touches the life of another, especially those close to us. We made a lot of friends at Notre Dame; it was apparent that some friendships would last only the week while others would last a lifetime.

We know what happens at NDVision *doesn't* stay at NDVision. Our experience there moved us beyond the words recited of the prayer of St. Francis and inspired us to actively live those words.

Thank you so much St. Christopher's for giving us the experience of a lifetime!

***Maddy Fischer and Meredith Petrie***



***Maddy and Meredith,  
with their new friend,  
Paul from Arlington, Texas***

**Maddy and Meredith's  
attendance at the NDVision  
program was underwritten  
by a grant from  
St. Christopher's  
Endowment.**

# YOUTH Stuff

## St. Christopher's Youth Choir

If you witnessed the St. Christopher's Youth Choir on Farewell Sunday, you know this talented group took a big leap forward. As back-up singers and soloists with gospel singer Gervis Myles, the choir wowed the standing room only crowd.

This year, the choir will continue performing for the St. Christopher's congregation once again, bringing new energy to their performances.

The choir is open to all youth who have an interest in singing and a commitment to rehearsing and performing.



*St. Christopher's Youth Choir, during their Farewell Sunday "gig" with Gervis Myles*

We look forward to another year of growth from this enthusiastic group!

For more information, contact Anne Davis at [adaviswfb@wi.rr.com](mailto:adaviswfb@wi.rr.com).

## **REACT!**

St. Christopher's REACT program (*Real Experiences Activate Christian Teens*) is trying on a new idea this year. The youth from 6th grade through high school have expressed strong desire to take more ownership of their REACT program and activities. As most creative ventures, it will not look like what we've always done or what worked for us before and will be part of fodder in the parish transition.

Adults and youth on the Mexico service trip, as well as 15 youth who met with Hannah Pillsbury and Jan in August have come up with the first right steps in a create, learn and adjust as we go year. The youth decided on three broad areas they would like to learn about....poverty, children and education. Six youth are currently researching what opportunities for outreach and education around these areas there are for them to participate in.

On Kickoff Sunday, September 14th, after the 10 a.m. service the youth will meet with Jan (and any curious/interested others) to choose what and how we will begin a partnering relationship with the entity chosen, as well as how the youth might partner with the Outreach Committee. One area of specific interest was the JOY House.

A second area the youth want to learn about are the various Christian and Inter-faith traditions. Two youth are investigating possibilities there.

Youth want to worship with the adults on Sunday, and in their collective voice are watching and following the example of how the adults in the parish choose (or not) to attend Sunday worship.

One of the next steps is looking for willing adults to help provide framework (rides, organization for events, consultation, honest conversation) with the youth at the organization they choose. Whether this will be monthly, quarterly, etc. is still to be determined. Supporting our youth, will take some faith, courage and encouragement for adults and youth.

This is a great group of youth. And they are looking to the adults to give them space to grow, as well as a framework to grow in...not easy, but such good potential for all.

# Outreach Corner

Would you like to make a difference in the lives of youth? The St. Christopher's Outreach Committee has partnered with the J.O.Y. House during the last few months and a wonderful opportunity has come to us to support the purchase and installation of a computer lab in the J.O.Y. House.

The J.O.Y. (Just Outstanding Youth) House was formed by Herman Orr and Jerry Johnson with the purpose of giving youth a safe place to go for mentoring, after school homework help and other youth programming. Their Vision is: The J.O.Y. Center is a faith-based community resource center assisting young people to successfully navigate through adolescents to adulthood.

The connection between St. Christopher's and the J.O.Y. House occurred when Lois Degener's dog met Herman Orr's dog at the dog park. Conversation started between Lois and Herman, resulting in the fabulous Christ Presbyterian Choir singing at St. Christopher's, as well as Gervis Myles and Miss Baldwin performing, too. The Outreach Committee has been participating in a monthly Bible Study with the J.O.Y. House adults with lively conversation between us.

We will be giving you more details at the September 7<sup>th</sup> services but we are so excited we couldn't wait until then. Our goal is to provide a 4-Computer

Lab along with installation and network services. Already, a donation of consultation and installation services valued at more than \$1,500. has been received. We are looking for your donations of any size to purchase the equipment. The cost is anticipated to be approximately \$6,700.

Please join us in helping the youth of the J.O.Y. House have a way to do homework, increasing their chances for success at school and beyond. Checks can be made out to St. Christopher's with J.O.Y. House in the memo line. We will be collecting your generous donations at the Sunday services or we will happily come to pick up a check if you contact the Outreach Committee. Thanks ahead of time.



## ***Have a College Freshman in the Family?***

The Caring Ministry is looking for names and addresses of all College Freshmen who are living away from home. We would like to send them a mid-term care package in October.

Please respond to Lauralee Uihlein or the Parish Office.



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR *COURIER* by EMAIL?**

***Did you know that we send out over 400 Couriers every month?***

To save paper and postage costs, we would like to begin sending the *Courier* by Email to those who request it. Besides saving trees, an added benefit is that your version will be in COLOR!

If you are interested, please Email the parish office at [office@stchristopherswi.org](mailto:office@stchristopherswi.org).

# Items to Note

## **THE PRAYER CHAIN**

Within our church community, there is a quiet and vital ministry which supports St. Christopher's. This ministry of prayer - the Prayer Chain - has been on-going for many years. Prayer Chain volunteers and clergy receive requests to pray for individuals, families, friends and relatives, as well as for the ministries, clergy, mission and health of St. Christopher's. Sometimes the prayers are for the concerns of others, for those who are sick, or for those who are dying. Other times the prayers are in thanksgiving for the many blessings in our lives.

If you would like the Prayer Chain to pray in thanksgiving, intercession, or in any way for you, a loved one, a situation, or a concern, please contact the clergy, Kathy Housiaux, or Chilly Braun. Your request will then be sent to the Prayer Chain volunteers via telephone tree or email and the prayer will begin. The Prayer Chain will hold your request in prayer for two weeks unless otherwise directed by you. This process is confidential and no one needs to give a name or any other identifying information, unless so desired.

Prayer is a powerful means of intentionally calling all of our needs, praise and thanksgiving together before God. In our prayers we lift ourselves and others to God. We offer our prayers on behalf of others that God may use these prayers and our intentions as God seems best. We hope our prayers may enable another person to be open to receive from God that which is in that person's best interest. We do not tell God what to do or how to do it. Our faith means we trust God to act in our best interest and for those for whom we have been asked to pray.

Please also consider serving in this ministry and volunteering your spiritual energy through and with the Prayer Chain of St. Christopher's. This is a way to become involved, and answers an important need in our community. To receive additional information, please feel free to contact Kathy, Chilly or Jan. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Chilly Braun and Kathy Housiaux**  
Prayer Chain co-chairs

## **Book Group News**

*The Book Group will meet on Monday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Williamsburg Room. We are reading "The Witch of Portobello" by Paul Coelho.*

*Encourage a pew mate to come with you, or bring a friend from elsewhere! This is a varying group, welcome to all!*

## **Ministry Volunteers Needed**

Now that the fall routine is beginning, it's a great time to think about serving your community as an usher, reader, or altar server.

The time commitment is small, the satisfaction great.

Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to be involved in the liturgical ministries of your parish.



# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Dated material

This issue was mailed on September 4, 2008

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The Monthly Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

### **The Holy Eucharist**

Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Thursday 7:00 a.m.

**Outdoor Labyrinth** - open to the public, weather permitting

The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski, *Associate Rector*



*Christianity is not just a religion...it's a way of life.*