



THE COURIER

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

May 2009

Moving Forward Gathering: Visualizing Our Church, Visualizing Our Rector

This evening will be a special opportunity to share your dreams for St. Christopher's in person with the Search Committee. While the Search Committee will collect the "Views from the Pews" questionnaires from the parish during May, this meeting is a chance for a deeper dialogue about our parish and its future.

- What is God calling us to do?
- Who are we as a Community?
- How are we living into our mission?
- How would you describe St. Christopher's?

The Search Committee will also present a status report and review its timeline looking forward.

**Tuesday
May 26
7 PM
Community Room
Refreshments**

**Everyone is Welcome
(even if you attended an earlier Search Committee event)**



Please RSVP to Robyn or Dorota in the office if you plan to attend! Sign-up sheets are also available on the community room bulletin board.

Interim Rector Notes

It's 2009. Do You Know Where Your Soul Is?

This is the title of an OP-Ed piece in *The New York Times*, Sunday, April 18, by Bono. Here the rock star/philanthropist of the band U2 writes about the dying and the living that is Easter. I would like to share part of it with you for it is my story in many ways. Perhaps it is your story, too.

"It's a transcendent moment for me (Bono writes) — a rebirth I always seem to need. Never more so than a few years ago, when my father died. I recall the embarrassment and relief of hot tears as I knelt in a chapel in a village in France and repented my prodigal nature — repented for fighting my father for so many years and wasting so many opportunities to know him better. I remember the feeling of "a peace that passes understanding" as a load lifted. Of all the Christian festivals, it is the Easter parade that demands the most faith — pushing you past reverence for creation, through bewilderment at the idea of a virgin birth, and into the far-fetched and far-reaching idea that death is not the end. The cross as crossroads. Whatever your religious or nonreligious views, the chance to begin again is a compelling idea...."

"I come to lowly church halls and lofty cathedrals for what purpose? I search the Scriptures to what end? To check my head? My heart? No, my soul. For me these meditations are like a plumb line dropped by a master builder — to see if the walls are straight or crooked. I check my emotional life with music, my intellectual life with writing, but religion is where I soul-search."



Bono © Laura Fowler 2006

In these difficult times, St. Christopher's is here to provide space and time for "soul searching." Whether it is working on an outreach project like the Gathering, or the Thursday Eucharist with a discussion of the upcoming readings over breakfast, the Men's Group, The Ark, ROOTS, REACT, choir, altar guild, or serving in many other ways, we are in the business of soul searching. As my physicist/theologian friend John Polkinghorne says, it is the questions that are important. In his recent book, *Questions of Truth*, he and his co-author Nicolas Beale do not give answers, only responses. As we stretch our souls we begin to see through a glass darkly, as Paul would say, but it is truly a blessing when we can respond with our hearts as our eyes of faith.

As spring comes north, I hope that you will take the time to walk the labyrinth and our wonderful shores, play with your children, spouses, and friends, and join us for our Easter celebrations each Sunday during these 50 days of Easter that conclude with our bishop's visit on Pentecost, May 31st. It is the custom to wear red the symbol of the Holy Spirit setting our hearts on fire.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! Charlie

Warden's Words

A Tale of A Dog

Thank you all for your contributions to St. Christopher's. For the past three months the Warden's Words have been about finances. The Vestry is thankful for everyone's support. We know that pledging may be difficult during these current financial times, so we appreciate your support. We feel that you are indeed trying to put your whole selves in.

In the past few weeks we've been holding conversations about the recent decisions around the budget. At one of these meetings the Search Committee held there was a story shared that I thought I would share with you.

There is a family in our congregation that is looking for a dog. In order to find the right dog they discussed together what criteria they thought was best for their new pet. Sporting dog? Lap dog? Should it shed? Pure breed/Mixed? Breeder/Rescued? So our St. Christopher's family went out searching for their new dog.

“... in the end we all have hope. Deep hope, beyond reason, beyond understanding that there is great good outside what we see right in front of us everyday.”

For months they look for this dog. It is a hard choice and they knew exactly what it was they wanted. They look and they look. I can't remember the exact number of dogs they look at but I am astounded by their commitment to find the right pooch. One day they found the perfect dog. Their hard work pays off. A strong list had clarified and directs their search. Trouble is...the dog matches none of their criteria.

Funny how that works, right? We think we know how things will work out. We manage by lists. We decide 'this is the way it should be' and ignore the way things are. Because sometimes that isn't the way we think they should be.

Sometimes, cruel as it is, a crisis is an opportunity. The Vestry is committed to leading this congregation in a realistic manner, but don't want to give up our vision of great worship, generous service to others and our insanely powerful way of welcoming everyone no matter the point in their spiritual journey. Is it possible that we might find ways to keep our mission large — or even larger — even as we spend less? I don't know but it is worth trying.

We all are asking “why” about so many things that are happening. We will take the lumps and bumps because in the end we all have hope. Deep hope, beyond reason, beyond understanding that there is great good outside what see right in front of us everyday. It is this hope that resides in our hearts that, I feel, makes us spiritual people. It is this hope that allows us, without question or hesitation, to put our whole selves in.

Tom Napper
Senior Warden



St. Christopher's Search Committee

Why Is It Taking So Long?!?

An Update from Your Search Committee - Laura Gogh, Co-chair

At this point in the process, we are sure that you are asking yourself and others, "Why in the world is it taking so long to find a replacement for Scott?" Or you may be thinking, "Scott left last May. Why haven't we moved forward with a new Rector? It's been a year for goodness sake!" As a result, we are sure there are many people who are frustrated by the seemingly lack of activity and progress.

Let us assure you, your Search Committee is busy and hard at work, and we have made progress. We are in the process of listening to the needs and desires of the parish. On March 21st, we participated in the "Experience St. Christopher's" history project. We hosted a Pizza Party on April 24th to hear from young families. During the month of May, keep an eye out for "Views from the Pews" in the weekly bulletins and e-mails. Your responses are critical to the process of moving forward. On May 26th, to wrap up the listening process, Chris Goodale is hosting a gathering to help us look forward. We invite everyone to participate. All of this information will provide the foundation of our parish mission and profile and will enable us to clarify what we are really looking for in a Rector.

During this time, the Search Committee is also researching parish profiles to determine the most effective way to position St. Christopher's to successfully call our new Rector. We are pulling together the necessary information to compile the parish profile. We are updating our web-site to make it more welcoming and to ensure that it sends a message consistent with our mission and vision, which will both be a focus of our profile. We are working with the Vestry to understand our budget and to develop the job description for our Rector. Could we do all of these things more quickly? The answer is: Physically? "Yes," but Psychologically? "No."

The Vestry and Search Committee are consciously taking this time in the process of calling a new Rector because we understand that change is a difficult thing. Change in a very personal relationship, such as a relationship with your spouse or a significant other, is even more difficult. In order to move forward, we need to understand and be comfortable with who we are as an individual apart from the other person. It takes time to heal the wound. If we try to rush the process and enter into what's commonly known as a "rebound" relationship, we doom the new relationship to failure. It's like we're trying to build the house of our new relationship on shifting sands. We haven't taken the time to build a solid foundation for ourselves.

Losing our Rector is very similar. Our Rector is our pastor, our confidant, our spiritual guide. That's a very personal relationship. In order to move forward with a successful call for a new Rector, we need to discern who we are as a parish and a community apart from our Rector. We need to determine what God is calling us to do at this time, in this particular place. We need to understand our vision, not Scott's vision, not Jan's vision, not Charlie's vision – our vision.

Endings are hard, but they also bring forward new beginnings. It's the transition to the new beginning that is tough. Just like the old saying, "It's not the fall that will kill you; it's the landing!" the same principle applies to the differences between change and transition and their impact on people's lives. Managing transition is the key to successfully dealing with change. While change happens quickly, transitions take time.

Why is it taking so long? During this time of transition, we need to say good-bye. We need to heal and develop the community of St. Christopher's apart from any given Rector. We need to prepare for our search and

Easter at St. Christopher's



Easter Week continued to be a wonderful and spiritual experience for the people of St. Christopher's. We included all of the services and special traditions of our parish community.

Maundy Thursday began with the traditional fare of the Last Supper, the washing of each other's feet and the profound silence of the Watch. Good Friday services were solemn, somber and reflective. We began the Saturday Easter Vigil in the Memorial Garden and as always the fire did not cooperate. We followed with lessons and music which were both beautiful and moving. Then we broke out the bells in celebration of the Resurrection and concluded with a marvelous feast of desserts which we shared together in the community room.

And finally, the services on Easter Sunday were packed with old and new friends and the joys and renewal of our spirits and faith. The week was, again, St. Christopher's at its best. Thanks to all who did so much to make this such a special time for us.

- Ran Hamner

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller
Bishop of Milwaukee
will visit St. Christophers
on Pentecost Sunday
May 31, 2009
at
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Services



Finding Our Way Back

A Parish Family Profile

Our family's journey to St. Christopher's and to making religion a priority in our lives has taken some time. Jim and I attended church sporadically and never found a parish that fit our spiritual needs or that combined the elements of worship that we both found appealing. After having children, we unfortunately made religion even less of a priority. Always knowing that we wanted our boys to be raised as Christians, to know God in their lives and to be part of a larger church community we struggled with our lack of involvement.

St. Christopher's has helped us find our way back. From our first visit we were welcomed whole-heartedly. Sally and all the youth volunteers took Hunter and Brandon and made them part of the group. After being at the church for a little over a month, they participated in the Christmas pageant and perhaps experienced the true meaning of Christmas for the first time. Even their cousins who were visiting donned angel costumes and fit right in. Each week the boys are anxious to tell us the stories they learn and the activities they do. It is wonderful to have such an engaging and active youth ministry.

"From the very first time we visited St. Christopher's church we were made to feel welcome."



Perhaps even more exciting is that St. Christopher's has so much to offer us as a family. Jim and I have time to worship together and have thoroughly enjoyed the services. The atmosphere is open, casual, inviting, introspective and meaningful in today's world, a combination which is hard to find. The people at St. Christopher's are truly its strength. We have been welcomed by absolutely everyone and feel comfortable exploring, asking, and becoming involved in the many wonderful growth opportunities available. Thank you for a truly amazing gift!

Stephanie, Jim, Brandon, and Hunter Klas

St. Christopher's at The Gathering

Starting with its very foundation over 27 years ago, St. Christopher's parishioners have been working to help The Gathering fulfill its mission of feeding Milwaukee's hungry. For nearly 25 of those years Bill and Ginger Browne have been dedicated volunteers in that effort.

On Thursday April 16, 2009, at their annual **Loaves & Fishes Volunteer and Awards Presentation**, among the individuals and groups of volunteers cited by The Gathering for their contributions, the Brownes were presented with a **Friends of the Gathering** award in recognition of their remarkable long-time and ongoing commitment.



George Neureuther (left), The Gathering Volunteer Manager, presents **Friend of The Gathering** award to Ginger Browne as Bill Browne and The Gathering Board Member Cindy Berndt look on.

Other volunteers from St. Christopher's in attendance included MaryBeth and Harry Ansley, Chris Goodale, Rick Thickens and John Wolf.

CHILDREN'S *and* YOUTH Ministries

ROOTS

Stepping Stones and Attitude Flags

Spring arrived at St. Christopher's around about Easter Sunday and our children are benefitting from the attitude adjustment that comes with it. No more doom and gloom like we learned about with Lazarus' death and then Jesus'. We have been resurrected into the lightness of spring and are now enjoying those New Testament stories that bring us to our new life in Jesus' teachings. To signify the new life, Ann Dueser provided us with dozens of ceramic eggs to decorate. The finished products were unveiled on Easter Sunday to the delight of parents and children alike. Faberge couldn't have done a better job than our ROOTS and Ark kids!

And now, we are closing the year with some practical advice from Our Savior. He spoke to a crowd about some ways to "be". Nicholas W. called them out to us as he broke down the word and explained the "Be-Attitudes". In the next couple of weeks, we will be playing "Be-Attitude Bingo", doing some skits about "how to be" with friends and family, and making flags for our homes with our favorite "attitude" on it.

The big finish for the year comes on May 17th with our Annual Church Picnic. Harry Ansley has generously volunteered to be our grillmeister. Someone with soda jerk experience, possibly an eight-o'clocker, will man the ice cream Sunday station. We will feast on the usual picnic fare. The children will join us with clay in their hair and smiles on their faces after fashioning for our church property the very stepping stones to the future that will show the next generations that we were here. We laughed, and we played, and we learned. We learned that God loves us no matter what. That Jesus shows us the way. That we were here at St. Christopher's and so were our friends and our families. What could be better than that?

Sally Walters
Director of Children's Ministries

The Power of Forgiveness - Movie Night

On Wednesday, April 29 parishoners and guests gathered to view and discuss the movie [The Power of Forgiveness](#). This movie explores recent research into the psychological and physical effects of forgiveness on individuals and within relationships under a wide variety of conditions and translates it into a popular, accessible documentary film for national public television. This includes feature stories on the Amish, the 9/11 tragedy and peace-building in Northern Ireland.

By the time refreshments were served and the lights turned down, 22 people attending from St. Christopher's, Christ Presbyterian Church (the Joy Center), and St. Paul's viewed "The Power of Forgiveness" - followed by a discussion.



LITTLE LAMBS SUNDAY

Sunday, April 26



Remember Mass On the Grass from the Past?

A handful of years ago we used to gather on the lawn at St. Christophers for a Wednesday night service in the summer. It was always a nice addition to a Sunday service or more than likely a fun alternative! We would gather at church and have the service on the lawn then enjoy a little cook out together afterwards. The kids always had a great time because they could slip into the playground during the service if they wished!

This summer we would like to join again at Mass on the Grass. Please gather with us for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of June at 5:30pm for the service. Don't forget to bring your meat for your family to grill and bring a dish to pass. We will have sodas to share. If you wish to have other beverages don't hesitate to bring them. We (the Etheridge family) have always enjoyed having this alternative for the summer Sunday morning when sports, trips to the cabin or lake house or just plain yard work get in the way. Please come and experience Mass on the Grass in the Present! - Nikki Etheridge





From the Associate Rector

EASTER ALWAYS HAPPENS!

You know how we put things on our refrigerators—magnets, schedules, pictures, school drawings. I do, too. When my family and I were dealing with the chaos of 4 teenage sons, manufacturing plants shutting down/job loss, the severe mental health diagnosis of an immediate family member, grad school, seminary, etc., I had 2 signs on our refrigerator. The first said: “Motherhood is not for wimps.” The second said: “When you are going thru hell, keep going.” My family and I became adept and agile at adjusting to constant dramatic, life-altering changes in the months, weeks, days and often, literally, the hours of our family life. It became apparent instantly that we survived and thrived together through a combination of guts, brutal honesty, and love or our family would explode. By all rights, our family should have exploded or been blown apart so many times, it would now be hard to count.

While, hardly everyone in my ever-growing family would name it this way, what I came to know in every fiber of my being is that **EASTER ALWAYS HAPPENS**. The life, death and resurrection cycle we proclaim in the Gospel is not just a nice, comfy, cleaned up story that makes us feel better in the end...a sort of cosmic good guy always wins. This is the story of our individual and collective lives. We can choose to live into all parts of that story or try to skip to the end of the story. Skipping to the end never works. We have to go thru Good Friday to get to Easter Sunday. It just does not happen any other way.

Good Friday, whether it is personal or communal is messy, painful, gives us choices about truth, the deep ego bending work of reconciliation, raw and brutal. Describing that in plain English, Good Friday is something anyone with any common sense would run screaming from because it just sucks. It hurts and no one wants or chooses to go through it. But that is exactly what we must do. And what we believe is that no matter what **EASTER ALWAYS HAPPENS!** God is with us and will not abandon us, even when we would rather abandon God. This is where the choice comes in.

I know you want some words from me that everything is going to be all right. But I can't give you those words because I don't know that it is. St. Christopher's is experiencing a time of Good Friday. Wounds are raw for so many. There are many layers of difficult Good Friday work ahead. But what I can say is that **EASTER ALWAYS HAPPENS** if we choose to allow it. We just don't know what Easter will look like.

The women didn't know what they would find when they went to the tomb. What they did find was not anything they could have imagined. What we do know is that Jesus' followers did not abandon each other in the times when their personal pain was so great. They went forward through what seemed like their hell and found new life. The only way they could have done that was to listen, follow, reflect, discuss, ponder and learn from what Jesus taught them.

Please turn to page 10

WEAVING OUR STORIES INTO THE FABRIC OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S



Ran Hamner, immediate past-Senior Warden weaves the maize and blue of Michigan into the fabric of St. Christopher's! We all have our story to tell, please join us at parish sponsored listening events, strategy sessions and worship services as we journey in transition over the next several months. Make sure you too weave your story into the fabric of St. Christopher's! GO SPARTANS! :)

Easter Always Happens! continued from previous page

My parting words are words of encouragement...not the pollyanna-ish "everything will turn out all right because God loves us". They may not be the words you may not want to hear. (I do have to stay true to character, don't I? :-))But my words are real and from my heart.

Ground everything you do from now on in prayer. Use the Peace Prayer of St. Francis every day and in every meeting. Continue in the apostles teaching, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. No matter what it takes speak the truth in love and then work to heal within that same love. Our God, who is Love, will never abandon us. Our God, who is Love, will send the Spirit to guide. (Remember, the Holy Spirit always gets her way). Our God, who is Love will lead us to new life. If you are willing to go through Good Friday, Easter is your promise. Easter life is your future. Easter life will teach you how you are called to minister in the city and this world. My encouragement and prayer for you is that you will live into the promise of God: EASTER ALWAYS HAPPENS.

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be upon you, this day and always.

Jan

Sticky Notes

Sometimes, you just gotta laugh.

Robyn and I have found this to an informal motto in the office. For example, when the copier broke down on Maundy Thursday and we had 500 bulletins to print...

Or when the internet stopped working for the day...

Or when a vital program would not open on my computer (despite my best attempts at sweet-talking!)...

Sometimes, you just gotta laugh. I am so grateful to work in an environment that is joyful in the face of obstacles. There are certainly challenges and legitimate reasons to be frustrated when things don't go according to plan, but anger does little to improve the situation. There will always be deadlines to meet, projects to complete, and problems to solve. But we know that this is a loving community and that you will forgive when something is imperfect. And for that, I thank you.

Most recently, a box of assorted items mysteriously appeared on Robyn's desk after church. Not knowing who it was from or why it was there, we examined its contents, only to discover a fantastic treasure: MASKS! The office quickly turned into an animal kingdom, and Charlie and Ran joined in the fun. Why? Because sometimes, you just gotta laugh.

Dorota



MAY MILESTONES	
BIRTHDAYS	
1	Matthew Belcher Connor Deuser
3	Michael Gough Elliot Weigel
5	Karlie Allen Julie Coburn Melita Lane Harkness
6	Darlene Chase
8	Omolara Arole Betty Brown Bill Darling
10	Gholi Darien Tom Gebhardt Pat Lipscomb
11	Patti Brose Emily Roesner Will Vincent
12	Pam Thickens
13	Bethany Lopez
14	Joan Seeger Kathryn Sklenar Dick Wythes
15	Erik Andersen Anne Davis
16	Benjamin Bedore Bill Browne
17	Ann Deuser
18	Will Brunner
19	Judy Jones
20	Clement Gelly Lake Schmidt
22	Grace Fischer William Smith
23	Ella McCabe Mary Scott
24	Jack Stein
26	Libby Aik Janet Bate
27	Ronald Hart Alexander Koroscik
28	Stephanie Hoener Mary Kasten
29	Laura Gough Kaitlyn Kennedy
30	Ean Jamel Chris Letterell
31	Jay Miller
ANNIVERSARIES	
4	Bob & Lyn Slater
6	Randy & Liza Perry
8	Robert & Sarah Schmidt
10	Tom & Laura Gough
13	Allen & Michelle Gotz Byron & Susie Foster
14	Nancy & James Barton
16	Barry & Linda Allen Bruce & Gila Holmes
21	Bob & Trish Juranich
27	Will & Jeni Piper
28	Burt & Carla Bartlett Eric & Jeanne Christiansen

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Youth Group: youth@stchristopherswi.org

Caring Ministry: caring@stchristopherswi.org

Website: www.stchristopherswi.org

Parish Office

Open Monday - Thursday, 8:00 am - 3:00 p.m.

Staff

The Rev. Charles C. Caskey, *Interim Rector*

The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski, *Associate Rector*

Dorota Pruski, *Director of Administration*

Robyn Slater, *Director of Communications*

Sally Walters, *Director of Children's Ministries*

John Beardsley, *Music Director*

Anne Davis, *Youth Choir Director*

Gloria Bond, *Housekeeper*

Michael Schneider, *Building & Grounds Supervisor*

Vestry - Meets 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Tom Napper and Jayne Heffron, *Wardens*

Hannah Pillsbury, *Treasurer* Robyn Slater, *Clerk*

(2010) - Florence Parnegg, Helen Sheen,

Kathleen Stokes, John Wolf

(2011) - MaryBeth Ansley, Kip Jacobs,

Rick Taylor

(2012) - Nick Geimer, Jeni Piper, Deb Roesner,

John (Chip) Slater, MaryBeth Ansley

Committee and Ministry Contacts

Altar Guild: Roz Krause, Mary Jane Perry

Acolytes: Dee Hodnett

Building & Grounds: Kip Jacobs

Building Use: Susan Martin

Caring Ministry: Lauralee Uihlein

Coffee Hour: Cordelia Gelly, Lyn Slater

Endowment: Bonnie Thomson

Finance: Hannah Pillsbury

Flower Guild: Helen Sheen & Hattie Purtell

Gifts Committee: Edith Braeger

Labyrinth: Catherine Davidson

Memorial Garden: Jeanne Tanner

Mexico Service Trip: Tom Napper

Newcomers: Deb Roesner

Outreach: Mark Heffron, Steve Petrie

Personnel: Kathleen Stokes

Prayer Chain: Chilly Braun, Kathy Housiaux

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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THE COURIER

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. Charles C. Caskey, *Interim Rector*
The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski, *Associate Rector*



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