



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

"THE LITTLE STONE CHURCH"

JANUARY / FEBRUARY, 2017 NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRIEST:

**"IT'S ALL
GOD'S PLAN!"**

Thirty years ago, I was involved in a theology debate in the University of London. The opposition was arguing that God does not exist. In reply to my argument that 'nothing comes from nothing,' and that the Universe needs a 'prime mover' or creator, my opponent argued as follows:

"The Universe is the result of a Big Bang, caused by the concentration of matter in a Black Hole. The Universe is now shrinking and in time it will return to its Black Hole state and explode all over again. Consequently, the Universe is permanent and eternal, and has no beginning or end. It therefore has no need of a creator or a God."

Fast forward twenty years, when two independent American Science research groups working in Hawaii and the High Andes of Peru, came out with an amazing finding. Studying Quasars, the oldest bodies

in space, they amazed the whole of the scientific world. (Quasars are the oldest Galaxies in the Universe. They are so far away in light years, that they appear as intermittent flashing lights.) By measuring the light, scientists hoped to calculate the rate at which the Universe was slowing down. To their amazement, their results showed that the Universe is not slowing down, but speeding up. "What does this mean?" 60 Minutes' reporters asked of America's top scientists.

"It means that in terms of the origins of the Universe, God just re-entered the equation!" they replied. When asked to explain, this is what they said:

"When we thought the Universe was slowing down, we concluded that that slow down was just one more step in a cycle of the Universe renewing itself. Now we know that the Universe is accelerating. It means that there can only be one Big Bang. That means the Universe is finite. It has a beginning and an end. It will expand like a giant donut until there is nothing left in the middle and eventually nothing in its circumference.

In other words, the Universe will disappear into nothing and never re-appear. Consequently, the Universe now needs a creator. No scientist will ever admit that nothing can come from nothing. It is not possible or logical. God is not only possible, but he is essential."

It was hard for me not to say: "I told you so!" Why? Because the argument that "nothing comes from nothing" and the Universe needs a Prime Mover was originally an argument of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th Century. Thomas knew nothing about Quasars or the accelerating Universe. But as a philosopher, he deduced the existence of God as a metaphysical certainty.

When the year gets to 2017, I too know with some certainty that life is not going to be forever! Not only does it tell me that I am another year older, but this year has a particular significance. My mother, Peggy, was born in 1917. She was a premature twin. In truth, both Peggy and her twin, Ellen, should have been dead at birth. If that had happened, I would not be here today. Peggy survived, while little Ellen died at age one. My younger sister is named after her. Peggy grew up in a family of seven children, losing her father at age ten.

When she was 12, the entire family of aunts, uncles, and cousins immigrated to the USA and arrived at Ellis Island. All passed the medical at Ellis Island. All except Peggy, who was sent by ship back to Ireland. So small, petite and frail was she, that her mother bought her

(at only 16 years) a candy/newspaper store in the city center, so she did not have to go work in a factory. There she met my father, a soldier returning from World War II, she had me and died six years later. She was only 37.

Peggy's grave lies on a hillside overlooking 'The Town She Loved so Well' ... Derry City, in the North of Ireland. This year she would have turned 100 years old. Last year, we replaced the old stone on her grave. Today she has 16 grandchildren and two great-grand children. Her life reminds me of the precarious nature of our existence and how life often relies on a hair. We are all truly in God's hands. He gives each of us the gift of life, and we live and exist in accordance with His eternal plan.

At times, I think of that plan, God's plan, as a great wall tapestry across the Cosmos. Each of our lives is the tiniest colored thread in that great plan. We just have to remember that perhaps the most important part of our serving God in his plan may be what he asks of us tomorrow.

There are no co-incidences. There is God's plan for you. There is your response to God. There are the people who God sends to us to help us see what he is asking of us.

One thing we do know ... God uses the odd, the stupid, the old, the broken, the imperfect to achieve his aims and his plan!

Abraham was a very old man with no children. Jacob married the wrong woman! Joseph was a

dreamer! Moses was found in a basket! David was a shepherd boy! Mary was a young pregnant virgin! Matthew a Tax collector! Paul a persecutor! Peter a fisherman! Patrick was a kidnapped slave! Francis gave his wealth away to the poor! Martin Luther King was a man with a dream! Teresa lived among the gutter poor of Calcutta!

You and I are each here for a reason. 2017 belongs to us and we belong to God. Our God has a plan. We -- you and I -- right here in Forest City, are a big part of that plan!

Happy New Year,
Fr. Bill



THE CHOIR SINGS OUT!

In spite of the wintry weather at our doorstep, our Choir Director greets the New Year with song and singers! And, as always, she leads with hymns of spiritual wonder and beauty. Choir practice is held every Friday at 3:30pm (weather permitting). And if available, new voices are always welcome to join the CC Choir.

– Dawn Pentecost



God is Love ... Among the many interesting articles that Bill Lewellis selected to feature in his December 22nd issue of **newSpin, the Newsletter** was one entitled ‘What People Talk About Before They Die,’ by Kerry Egan. Kerry is a hospice chaplain who knows that people who are sick and dying talk about the love they felt and the love they gave. Often, they talk about love they did not receive, or the love they did not know how to offer, the love they withheld, or maybe never felt for the ones they should have loved unconditionally.

During the last 13 years, Kerry has realized that people talk to the chaplain about their families because that is how we talk about God, the meaning of our lives and the big spiritual questions of human existence. Kerry says we learn about God when we learn about love and that the first, and usually the last, classroom of love is the family.

Kerry ends her article with this; “We don't have to use words of theology to talk about God; people who are close to death almost never do. We should learn from those who are dying that the best way to teach our children about God is by loving one other wholly and forgiving each other fully -- just as each of us longs to be loved and forgiven by our mothers and fathers, sons and daughters.”

There is an interesting story within this article, too lengthy for our newsletter. To read more, go to www.diobeth.org, click on New and Events, then click on Diobeth newSpin Blog and click on wewSpin 161222; look for 'What People Talk About Before They Die.'



NEWS **FROM** **THE PEWS**

OUR PANTRY **CLOSES** -- We

were in our sixth year of distributing food to our neighbors. Our goal in the food distribution was to provide food as a supplement to those households that are struggling through low wages, part-time employment and unemployment.

When we began in 2011, no food safety net existed locally for families or individuals who suddenly found themselves out of work, and or who were only able to find two or three low-paying jobs to sustain themselves. Much has changed since then.

Today in Forest City we have an active Salvation Army Center that raises funds locally to help struggling families. The Salvation Army distributes food on the last Wednesday of every month to families in need. The Forest City High School in partnership with Weinberg Regional Food Bank distributes food once per month at



Forest City High School. Students can take home grocery bags full of food for their families. In the last few years, county transportation, known as the Shared Ride Program, has become available to those without vehicles to travel to grocery stores or the local pantry to obtain food. And so, we at Christ Church have looked for and found other areas of unaddressed need in our community to direct our efforts. These will be the subject of future news articles.

The commonly heard question among our volunteers upon their decision to close the pantry was: "What are we going to do on the second Thursday of every month from now on?" Our devoted volunteers generously gave that one day per month for the past five-plus years to our friends and neighbors who found themselves in need. Through the years, Pantry volunteers came from other towns, other faith traditions, other organizations and included community leaders, the clergy, cub scouts and students ... further proof to us that the Holy Spirit resides in everyone.

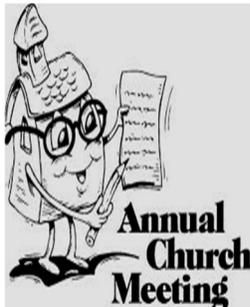
The Weinberg Regional Food Bank and the Commission on Economic Opportunity provided the food and the delivery of the food for us to distribute. These organizations went the extra step to send their talented employees to our distribution site to assist clients with other needs, such as application for food or heating assistance, suggestions on cooking the food received at the Pantry and

nutrition counseling. Weinberg Food Bank and the Commission on Economic Opportunity are non-profit organizations that are vital assets to Northeastern Pennsylvania. Please support them with your generous contributions of money.

So thank you to all who made the Pantry the success that it was. This is not good-bye ... but stand-by for the next Christ Church adventure!

- Jack DeMark

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Christ Church's Annual Parish Meeting will be held on January 29th, immediately following our 9:00am worship service.

Included on the agenda will be the reading of minutes from our previous annual meeting, the 2016 annual financial reports, presentation and approval of Christ Church's 2017 budget, reports from ministries, election of three Vestry members, and the election of a delegate and alternate to the Diocesan Convention in 2017.

Anyone who would like to become part of our Christ Church Vestry, and/or attend the Diocesan Convention as a delegate, is asked to contact Jack DeMark or a Vestry member to have their name put up for nomination at the annual meeting.

Each position is vital in our church's life and a wonderful way

for YOU to take an active part in sharing our continuing growth ... Consider it an act of tithing your talents.



Please make plans to attend as we continue sharing our church's journey together.

- Jack DeMark

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NEW ALTAR CARPET

With heartfelt thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Jr.

Warden, Rick Kulasinsky, we now have new carpeting on our beautiful altar!

While Rick oversaw this project and engaged Yeselavage Rug in Eynon to complete the project, financing of this was made possible through a grant Christ Church received from 'The Society of the Episcopal Church for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania.'

Additional funds for the expansion of the original carpet project were made by a loving donation from Peg and Bob Wirts in memory of their son, Bobbie Wirts, Jr.

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COMMUNITY
SEWING
PROJECT

A new project is underway that ANYONE can share. We're looking for folks who would like to usefully fill some of their quiet winter times by creating and sewing a variety of useful items for our community friends, the armed forces, and even pets.

If you can fold and stitch pre-cut upholstery fabrics together – by machine and/or with yarn and an overcast hand stitch – please join us. The plan is to make simple carry-bags for folks to hang over their wheelchairs or walkers, reusable grocery totes, cell phone or snack pouches for military friends to keep in their backpacks, and even colorful lap quilts or bed-mats for area pet shelters. All fabrics are pre-cut samples or remnants and are provided free of charge. We need only people who can share some of their time and talents – think of it as another way to share your church Stewardship throughout the winter months too!! A neighbor or two and some friends from St. James-St. Georges in Jermyn have also volunteered to share this project. Come, join the fun!

For additional information about this simple community project, please contact Karen Toolan; kbtwrite@nep.net, 570-679-2203.

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The Stone Soup
Kitchen
at Christ Church

Due to the nasty weather during the weekend of December 17th, our planned Christmas Luncheon was postponed.

While everything was put on ice (no pun intended!), our next luncheon will be held on Saturday, January 21st, when our slightly delayed holiday feast will be served with extra flourish and New Year cheer. If you did not have a chance to drop off your grocery donations, please leave them in the church kitchen no later than Thursday, January 19th.

And ... please also mark your calendar for our February luncheon, which is scheduled for Saturday, February 18th.

Check the poster board in the Narthex with each month's menu and luncheon needs, please take a card and lend a hand by picking up a noted grocery item or two. Your donations of groceries and/or funds help to continue this growing and enjoyable program we are all building together.

Please come ... join us with the menu preparations and the cooking too. We share some great kitchen that cook up the best-ever camaraderie! Join everyone afterwards in the dining hall to share lunch with our community friends, those who seek sustenance from the prepared meal and the love of Christ given through each of us.

not each occasion, is considered an offense.

Pennsylvania's Child Passenger Safety Law. The driver is responsible for making sure all passengers under age 18 are correctly restrained, regardless of where they are seated in the vehicle. Anyone under age 18 must be buckled and children under age 8 must be in the correct child restraint.

Learn about Pennsylvania driving laws, sharpen your driving skills AND save money on your car insurance. Take a Driver Refresher Course. Contact your local AAA office or visit www.aaa.com.

- Donna Gasper, AAA



CHURCH **VESTRY:**

Two New Members Needed – It's 2017, another new year, and our Christ

Church Vestry needs two new members. Two current Vestry members will be stepping down, leaving these spots vacant. Two additional Vestry members are needed to fill these vacancies. Will YOU step up to help our Church?

No special requirements are needed ... Just look into your hearts to give a bit of your time and personal talents to share with Christ Church as a Vestry member.

The Vestry is responsible for the "oversight of the well-being of the church," the administration of the "household of faith," modeling of the

Christian community, all these are ministry.

One should expect and experience Vestry not as a "business meeting," but as a faith-girded leadership group. Being invited to be on the Vestry is a rewarding and spirit-filled ministry.

Generally, the Vestry meets on the third Wednesday of each month for about 90 minutes, beginning at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall (the second Wednesday in December; July or August meetings are not held). The meetings begin with "Formation," a group Bible study/prayer, then a sharing of news – the good, the bad and the ugly and praying for them. Next is "Information," with the Wardens' reports and other reports and information by other members. Following a brief time for discussion and decision items, the meeting is adjourned with prayer.

The Vestry encourages all members of the church to be alert to who will make good Vestry leaders. **YOU** can make a difference in our church!

Current Vestry Members & Contacts:

Jack DeMark	(term ends 1/31/18)
Sr. Warden / Joint Ministry Treasurer	
Juliann Doyle	(term ends 1/31/17)
Rick Kulasinsky	(term ends 1/31/18)
Jr. Warden / Treasurer	
Bob Schreiber	term ends 1/31/19)
Susie Schreiber	(term ends 1/31/19)
Karen Toolan	(term ends 1/31/17)
Peg Wirts	(term ends 1/31/17)



**HERE'S
WHAT'S
COOKIN' in
our CHURCH
KITCHEN**

Our current sharing is from Flo Bernhardt, Karen's 98-yr. old Mom. This tasty and easy-to-make recipe originated from a Delta flight attendant in Asheville NC who bakes it for her hungry co-workers ... continuing to share it along just as we do. Hope you enjoy it too!

**DELTA APPLE CAKE
(aka Warm Apple Cake)**

Preheat oven to 325F
Yields one large bundt cake or 18 muffins
Grease/flour pan or use paper muffin cups

Ingredients:

- 1-1/4 c. oil
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs
- 3 c. flour (can mix white and wheat flours)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1-1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 3 c. diced apples
- 1 c. walnuts
- Opt.: butterscotch chips are great with apples

Directions:

Blend first three ingredients together, mixing well. Sift dry ingredients into oil mixture and add eggs one at a time. Thoroughly mix well, then add apples and nuts (chips) to batter.

Pour into prepared pan. Bake bundt cake for 1hr.20 mins, or muffins for about 18-20 mins.



**OUR CHURCH'S
ADMIN CORNER**

Stay in touch with the Christ Church office. Via the parish phone, 570-785-3425 (please leave a message, the line is regularly checked). Or by email: www.christchurchparishforestcity@gmail.com.

We also have two web sites: www.christchurchforestcity.com is the official church web site.

The second is: www.christchurchforestcity.shutterfly.com. This site contains photos of some of our recent activities. You can also sign up to become a member and receive email notices of events that are on the web site calendar.

Mail should be directed to Christ Church, PO Box 118, Forest City, PA 18421. For church emergencies or situations requiring immediate attention, please call Sr. Warden, Jack DeMark, at 570-540-5936 or 570-785-5792.

– Bob Schreiber, Church Administrator



January

- 2 Brian Gasper
- 6 Cody Seaman
- 11 Tom Seana
- 12 Taylor Ferrari
- 13 Jack DeMark
- 22 Karen Toolan
- 23 Allan Hornbeck
- 24 Doris Poterjoy
- 25 Madison Gasper

February

- 7 William Woodward
- 15 Beth Ann Atcavage
- 17 Darrell Seaman
Zack Quinn
- 18 Shirley Wallace

BIRTHDAY PRAYER: *O God, our times are in your hands. Look with favor, we pray, on your servants listed on our birthday list as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives. And so, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

January

- 9 Karen & William Woodward
- 18 The Rev. Stephen &
Maureen Matylewicz
- 31 Faith & James Collum

February - None

MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY

PRAYER:

Grant, O God, in your compassion, that the couples on our anniversary list, having taken each other in marriage, may live out the covenant they have made, may they grow in forgiveness, loyalty and love; and come at last to the eternal joys which you have promised through Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with them, this day and forever. Amen

BIRTHDAY/ANNIVERSARY

RECOGNITION AT MASS: If you would like your birthday and/or anniversary recognized during mass, please personally contact Bob, our Parish Administrator, 570-785-3425.



CHURCH CHUCKLES

New Year's Day:

Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good-intentioned resolutions. Next week, you can begin paving hell with them as usual!

* * * *

People are funny ... they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church!

* * * *

Mike was selling his snow blower on Craig's List. A minister bought the snowblower but contacted Mike to return it a few days later, complaining it wouldn't run.

"It'll run," said Mike. "But you have to curse at it to get it started."

The minister was shocked. "I have not uttered a curse in 30 years!"

Mike responded, "Just keep pulling on the starter rope ... the words will come back to you."

* * * *

A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk.

"Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Well, give me 30 Catholic, 10 Baptist ones, 20 Luteran, and 40 Presbyterian."

CLOSING THOUGHTS

*In this New Year, think about
the Meaning of Life:*

*"To be what we are,
and to become what we are
capable of becoming.."*

- Robert Louis Stevenson

*"To spread more smiles
than tears."*

- 2Pac



The Next Parish News will be for March/April 2017; article submissions are due by February 19th. Please email your newsletter sharings and photos to Karen Toolan, kbtwrite@nep.net; or post them to 993 State Route 2029, Clifford Twp PA 18470.

Also, if anyone from Christ Church would like to become one of our fun-loving, news-gathering, and photo-snapping fellow Church Mice, please contact the church office. More mice and more photos are always welcomed!

HAPPY NEW YEAR, from

The Roving Church Mice.

