



Holiday Season, 2009

A Newsletter of  
Christ Church Ithan  
Villanova, PA

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**Parish Mission Statement**

Christ Church Ithan strives to be an active, inclusive, family that embraces an ever present, loving relationship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It promotes leadership in the church and broader community through nurturing and developing each member's unique gifts from childhood throughout life.

**The Rector's Desk**

*The following sermon was preached on  
Stewardship Sunday, 2009*

Stewardship Sunday, Year B  
November 15, 2009

A man had a huge scare by barely surviving a massive heart attack. While he was recuperating in the hospital, his wife received a registered letter saying that the man's aunt had died and left him a million dollars. The wife, undoubtedly concerned that the news of inheriting a million dollars might shock him and cause another heart attack, called their priest, and asked the priest to gently, gently share the news with her husband during his next visit. So the next day the priest visited the man in the hospital, talked about this and that for a while, and then asked casually "Bill, just out of curiosity, what would you do if, all of a sudden, you were given a million dollars?" "Well Fr.," said the man "I'm so thankful to God that I survived the heart attack I think I'd just give the money to the church." The priest immediately fell over dead.

Today is Stewardship Sunday, where my role is to thank each of you for your commitment and generosity to

Christ Church, hopefully without falling over dead. But I am mindful of the fact that I spoke last week about financial giving, so I don't want to do that again.

Today's Stewardship Sermon is titled "Beyond the Money," because I want to talk about the other two legs of the 3 legged Stewardship Stool of "time, talent and treasure." Today's reflection is on Time and Talent. Last week we looked at how Jesus connected our loving and our giving with the phrase "where your heart is, there your treasure will be also." Similarly, as I began to reflect on the Stewardship of our time, I recalled something that a friend shared with me years ago, and it is this" "Love is a 4 letter word spelled T I M E.

We all know this is true in our families. I am married with 2 children, and I am pastor of this church. I love my family more than anything in this world, but if I allow my work here at Christ Church to so dominate my time so that I am in meetings every weeknight instead of at home, then we know that the strength of my family will be eroded over time and my family relationships will suffer. Why? Because love is a 4 letter word spelled T I M E.

So how does this principal apply to our spiritual lives? Well I don't know about you, but I find that so many things are pressing me for my time and attention that I often feel like the Jersey Shore in a Nor'easter, constantly being battered to give time to this and time to that, and many of us simply feel like we've lost control of our schedules.

But just as time not given to family will erode those relationships, time not given to God and our faith community will erode those relationships as well. And so my message today is for you to consider your stewardship of time in two ways: by being sure that you pray every day, perhaps when you rise and when you go to bed, and by prioritizing being here in Church on Sundays.

Why do I say this? There have been several studies on religion in America in recent years, and the findings show that while belief stays pretty steady, religious practice is plummeting. The last two studies I have seen indicate that more and more Christians are going to church less and less, sometimes due to disillusionment with the Church, but more often due to the pressures of time. While I understand those pressures, I also know that the strength of the Christian Community will be eroded if that trend continues, and I fear where we will be in another generation if more and more Christians continue to go to Church less and less. So in prioritizing your time, I encourage you to pray every day and to be in church every Lord's Day.

Second, the Stewardship of our Talents. When I was Rector of All Saints Church in Lakewood, New Jersey, we coined a mantra that applies to any parish that hopes to expand its ministries, and it is this, "Everybody needs a ministry, nobody needs 10." Why? Because of what is called the old 80/20 rule, that in Churches 20% of the people do 80% of the work.

In order to grow a congregation and expand the ministry, the work of ministry needs to be shared more evenly within a congregation than the 80/20 rule. And so, concerning the Stewardship of your talents, some of us need to consider how we can participate in this ministry, and some of us need to let some things go so you don't burn out. This is particularly difficult in a smaller parish, but if you

haven't taken on a ministry here at Christ Church, I encourage you to begin to think about how your talents can be fruitful here, and if you currently have 10 ministries and are starting to burn-out, begin to consider what can be passed on.

Time, Talent and Treasure. Our stewardship of these three areas are how we give thanks to God and build the kingdom of God here at Christ Church.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all you do, and God bless us as we as we share in Christ's ministry to this community and the world. Amen

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## Stewardship Campaign 2010

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This year's stewardship campaign was a concerted effort to talk to everyone at CCI about your hopes and aspirations, what you like or may dislike about our church and how we can improve. All twelve members of your vestry plus four past vestry members mailed or personally delivered packets (which included a letter from Fr. Kevin, a summary profile of our church, a questionnaire, and a pledge card) to 117 parish families.

As of pledge Sunday, 56 visits were made in person and 44 contacts were made by phone. Pledges made so far were 41 (out of approximately 74) totaling \$115,054 putting us at about the half way point.

Your answers to the questions will be reviewed by George Peckham, our Church Development Coordinator, who will summarize them for Fr. Kevin. This summary will be presented at the annual meeting in January.

Since some parishioners wait until the year end to pledge, my complete report will also be presented at the annual meeting.

I want to thank everyone who participated in this year's stewardship campaign especially in sharing your thoughts and for your financial support to CCI.

Sincerely

Pete Hubbard  
Chair, Stewardship Committee

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## Ministries Task Force

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As we look to the future at Christ Church, Fr. Kevin thought it was essential to reflect upon all our ongoing ministries, and so the heads of all our various ministry groups were invited to participate in this Task Force, which met for the first time in November, and will meet again in January and March. At our first meeting we enjoyed a lovely meal provided by Dodie Tague and built an agenda around those ministries which needed to discuss fairly immediate concerns. We scheduled an Acolyte Training Session for Sunday, January 17th at 9:00 am (along with breakfast!). We also scheduled a meeting to disburse out outreach funds for this year on Monday, November 30th. Fr. Kevin expressed a desire to have the children help with the upcoming Rock Vespers on Sunday, December 13th by reading lessons, ushering, etc., and several parents thought that the youth would like to help with that very much. We decided to replace the Christmas Pageant with a children's service of Lessons and Carols on Advent 4.

Fr. Kevin also raised a few issues related to the Sunday Service, and asked for the group's feedback. First, he would like to move the Adult sermon to immediately after the Children's sermon, thus making communion the climax of the service. Everyone was in agreement that this would be good, and so that change will take place on Advent 1. He also noted that we have certain 'gaps' in the service, where we are waiting for the next thing to happen, and he shared a desire to tighten those gaps. In short, Fr. Kevin would like people to get ready when they are next, rather than when it is time, and to perform their ministries promptly (although without rushing). This will affect ushers, readers and acolytes, but the particular changes still need to be determined, and Fr. Kevin will communicate those changes to the various groups.



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## The Greening of the Church

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This year the last Sunday of advent falls on the 20th of December, which means there will be no Christmas color (red!) in the church until after the 10:30 service.

On Saturday the 19th we can set up the Christmas trees at the Altar, as well as wreaths on the outside of the church.

We can also make the rings for the window candles leaving them in the kitchen.

On Sunday the 20th we can finish all the decorations following the service at 10:30.

Our rector has declared the 20th as dress down Sunday so we can get right to work.

Please come with clippers and greens on both days.

There will be a special coffee hour before we begin on Sunday.

## Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)



December is here, and we need your help! Christ Church Ithan is scheduled for IHN on Monday December 14th and Wednesday December 16th.

Please mark your calendars now and let Chris Williams know if you are available to help.

IHN dates are also posted in the Parish Hall and on the CCI website calendar.

## Choir and Music Program



The choir is preparing for a festive and melodious Advent and Christmas season. The choir and handbell choir will perform at the 8 pm Lessons and Carols service on Christmas

Eve. Upcoming in the new year will be CCI's first ever Classical Vespers on Valentine's Day, 2010. Members of the choir and friends will be featured on operatic and traditional love songs for the day. Stay tuned for further details.

On a sad note, we are sorry to have to say goodbye to longtime choir member John Frazier. John has been a part of the CCI family for 15 years. He was married at the church and his children Madeleine and John Jr. were both baptized here. As both a singer and clarinetist, John has been a very important part of our music ministry and he and his family will be greatly missed as he moves on to a soloist position at Abington Baptist Church. John says, "I will miss everyone very much as you have all been a big part of my life for the past fifteen years." Please join us in thanking John for his service to Christ Church Ithan.

## Jazz Vespers 2010



Even though I have retired, (sort of), the interest in continuing Jazz Vespers has not. The many requests to continue this ministry of Christ Church has caused the

Vestry and the Rector, Fr. Moroney to consider perpetuating the ministry that has made a name for us in the diocese and the larger community. Quite a few other churches have taken up the banner of perpetuating this only true American art form but we have been the only one who has continued for over ten years.

The wonderful tunes of the 30s and 40s would have died out if it were not for Temple's WRTI and the support of Churches like CCI.

The one big change is that it will be on the second Sunday of the month alternating with a rock vespers hoping to draw in a younger crowd. It will also be on the second Sunday of the month so that we do not place ourselves in competition with sporting events.

So, during 2010 the Jazz Vespers will be the second Sunday of January, March, and May at Seven P.M. Once again, we will feature the recording artists from WRTI and Dreambox Media in the context of a Vespers, or evening Prayer Service.

Fr. Ron Parker, Rector Emeritus.

### Remembering Peggy Gray

*Margaret (Peggy) Gray, died on October 27, 2009.*

*Peggy was a former parishioner of Christ Church, Ithan who lived at Dunnwoody. She was a very active member of Christ Church and sang in our choir.*

*In gratitude for Peggy's life, and in her memory, friends may wish to make a contribution to: Haverford Friends School, The Agnes Irwin School, or The Rector's Discretionary Fund, St. Alban's Episcopal Church.*

*\*\* When Peggy moved to Dunnwoody, she started attending St. Albans.*

My Best Christmas Ever

By Pierce Vincent Eckhart

As we approach another holiday season, I fondly recall the Christmas I celebrated with my family when I was twelve years old. I had my first job that year and earned a small amount of money each week delivering newspapers. I had saved some of that money and wanted to buy a special present for my mother. It was six years earlier that my father had passed away leaving my mother to raise my three sisters and me alone. For some reason, I had decided that I wanted to buy Mom a blender. So I set out the Saturday before Christmas with about 25 dollars in my pocket (all in ones) and walked what must have been close to two miles to John Wanamaker's in Wynnewood where I hoped to find a blender in my price range.

I found the right department and started to check the prices of the blenders on display. My heart sank as I saw the prices; \$29.99, \$39.99. I felt such disappointment as I considered the fact that I might have to settle for a less expensive present. It was then that I spotted one more blender at the end of the row with a hand-written price tag. I held my breath as I turned the tag over to check the price. \$21.95! I was thrilled, quickly estimating how much tax there would be and determining I still had enough money. I searched to find a salesperson and told her I wanted to buy this blender for my mother. She informed that this blender was at a special price because it was the last one. She could not find the original box, but found a suitable replacement and offered to gift wrap it for me. Probably a mother herself working part-time for the holidays, she seemed to be as excited as I was. I counted out 24 one dollar bills, paid for the blender and began my walk home. It was a wonderful walk. I felt like I was floating home, so excited, anticipating my mother's reaction when she opened her gift.

Christmas finally arrived, and my mother could not have been more surprised. I learned that year that it truly is better to give than to receive. I have no idea what I received that year, but I can tell that I will never forget how wonderful I felt buying that gift.

But there is one other part of that experience that I think about from time to time. It's about the blender that just happened to be at that store, on that day, at a price less than the total dollars in my pocket. I am sure that many people would call it a coincidence, but as person of faith, I would prefer to think of it as a sign of God's presence in my life. I like to call this my 'Miracle on Wynnewood Road' and in this season of giving, I encourage everyone to look for God's presence in their own lives and experience their own Christmas miracles.

CCI Delegates Attend Diocesan Convention

Fr. Kevin Moroney and Vestry Member Frank Tatnall represented Christ Church at the 226th annual convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania on Saturday, November 11. In this "Year of Mission," the convention was held for the first time at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in center city, which provided a larger meeting space, more accessible display areas and improved amenities as compared with the former site, the Cathedral in West Philadelphia. Total attendance at the all-day event was announced as 839, with most parishes represented.

Presided over by Assisting Bishop Rodney Michel, the convention generally ran on schedule and proved to be more orderly than some recent sessions, with

little controversy to delay the proceedings. Elections were held for numerous offices including the Diocesan Standing Committee, Finance & Property Committee and the Church Foundation Board. Several resolutions were approved, including the episcopate and program budgets for 2010 and a clergy compensation measure which leaves clergy salaries unchanged from the current year. The episcopate budget, which generally covers Diocesan expenses, was increased slightly, but the program budget was cut by 4.3 percent to reflect the the current national economic downturn. The Rt. Rev. Armando Guerra-Soria of Pennsylvania's companion Diocese in Guatemala also spoke to the assembly

Our delegates were greeted by two former members of CCI, Rev. Kathy Andonian and Kate Holland. The Rector Emeritus, Fr. Ron Parker, appeared as guitarist in a six-piece band which enlivened the meeting, as

did a spirited choir from St. George & St. Barnabas Church. The Dean of the Merion Deanery, Fr. Michael Pearson of St. Mary's, Wayne, also was in attendance, as were other clergy and lay members from the Deanery.



Mary Girling and Arnold Fletcher wish to announce their loving intention to become a married couple on January 2, 2010. The marriage ceremony will take place at 3:00 p.m. at Christ Church Ithan on 536 Conestoga Road, Villanova, PA. Following the service, a reception will be held in the Parish Hall across from the church. All are welcome!

At 10:00 a.m. January 3, 2010, Mary and Arnold will also present their wedding vows to the Birmingham Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends located at 1245 S. Birmingham Road, West Chester, PA.

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## Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Oberammergau

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Bishop Michel will be the Spiritual Leader of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Oberammergau for the Passion Play in May 2010. This will include first class accommodations, meals and excellent guides as well as teaching by the Bishop and good worship and fellowship. If you are interested you may find brochures at Church House or call Jaki Wallace (215-627-6434, ext. 105) and she will see that you receive the brochure with full particulars. Make a pilgrimage in 2010 and have your faith renewed and refreshed through travel to the Holy Land and Germany.

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## Hospitality

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Hospitality is responsible for Coffee Hour following the 10:30am service as well as special occasions. This does not run by itself. We need your help to take a Sunday or two and welcome all who have come to worship after the service. Instructions, postcard reminders, and coffee supplies are all furnished. All you need is a willingness to serve. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Parish Hall.

Thanks....Joan Keator & Francie Hubbard

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## Alter Guild

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Help Wanted! Volunteers are always welcome and needed to help keep our brass shining bright. Polishing supplies are provided. No experience is necessary.

If interested, please contact Nancy in the Church Office.

## Christ Church Food Pantry

Donations can be dropped off to Parish Office Monday through Friday between 9am and 1pm,  
or brought to church on Sunday.  
To make a monetary donation, please mark your check "CCI Food Pantry".

### Staples

- Rice (Uncle Bens)
- Spaghetti
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Elbow Macaroni

### Cereals

- Frosted Flakes
- Corn Pops
- Cheerios
- Raisin Bran

### Prepared Foods/Canned Meats

- Tuna Fish
- Chicken
- Dinty Moore Stew
- Ravioli
- Mashed Potato Mix

### Canned-Jarred Foods/Vegetables

- Spaghetti Sauce
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Fruit

### Soups

- Vegetable
- Beef & Vegetable
- Tomato
- Chicken Noodle

### Baby Items

- Children's Shampoo
- Children's Toothpaste
- Children's Lotion

### Paper Products

- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Kleenex
- Garbage Bags

### Drinks

- Apple Juice
- Grape Juice
- Juicy Juice

### Snack Foods

- Graham Crackers
- Saltines
- Applesauce cups
- Pudding Cups

### Misc

- Brownie/Cake Mixes
- Velveeta Cheese
- Coffee/Tea
- Laundry Detergent
- Soap
- Stain Remover
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo

## Christ Church Website

([www.christchurchithan.org](http://www.christchurchithan.org))

Would you like to read selected sermons? Want to know the latest upcoming events? How about a little church history? It is all there and more on the Christ Church Ithan website.

If there is something that needs to be added to the calendar or website, our own webmaster Ron McNamara can help. Just click on the "webmaster" link on the website and send him an e-mail.



If you have something you would like to share with your Christ Church Ithan family, please sent articles, stories, poems or pictures to Nancy in the Church office or to Porter Gould at [blpgould@verizon.net](mailto:blpgould@verizon.net).

Children's Corner Coloring Page

