



CHRIST CHURCH

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The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead
Rector

The Rector's Chronicle

June 8, 2015

Dear friends in Christ,

This letter is my first "Rector's Chronicle." I plan to write a Chronicle to the entire Christ Church family every quarter. It will allow me to offer some of my thoughts and plans for life at Christ Church, and it will serve as a means for me to communicate directly with every member of the parish. I will limit each Chronicle to four pages, which allows for some depth (given that this will be quarterly). This Chronicle will cover five topics: Thanks, Pastoral Care, Communications, my official Institution and Installation as Rector, and the *Come As You Are* service.

THANK YOU

First and foremost, thank you! On behalf of my wife, Nicole, and our sons Liam and Nicholas, I want to offer our sincere gratitude to you all so much for the warm welcome you have shown us in the past few weeks. We are delighted to be a part of this warm, welcoming, and historic parish, and we look forward to moving into the Rectory at the end of June!

Thank you especially to our wardens Kari Black and John Lent and also every member of our Vestry. Kari and John and the Vestry members have worked tirelessly, and often behind the scenes, assisting with our transition and ensuring that Christ Church has remained a vibrant, healthy parish in the interim between rectors. Thank you also to the members of our parish staff. Deacon Katie Lawrence, Jeffrey Hoffman, Marie Main, Walter Roberts, and Ed Blue make up a great team, and I am excited to be working with them. Thank you also to Gavin Leckie and the members of the Search Committee. My family and I wouldn't be here without you, and we are grateful for the time and careful work that you put into the search process.

I look forward to learning everyone's name and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ with you all in this wonderful place for many years to come. Again, we are so happy to be here; thank you so much for your warm welcome!

PASTORAL CARE

I try to place Pastoral Care at the top of my priority list. The church teaches that each of us is part of the Body of Christ in the world, and I believe that means that a person's physical presence oftentimes means the Risen Lord is also present. As a priest who works full time for the church, one of the gifts that I can offer my own parish community is my time, availability, and presence.

If you are in the hospital, if you are sick, if you would like a visit or a phone call from me or Deacon Katie, if you have a pastoral concern, or if you just simply need to speak to the rector about anything at all, please feel free to call the parish office to schedule an appointment or to pass on your news. I am happy to visit you, meet with you, or speak to you over the phone. Also, please feel free to call me directly on my cell phone. My cell phone number is 914.471.0260. I may not be able to answer immediately, but I will get back to you as soon as I am able. Generally, I am out of the office on Fridays, but if the matter is urgent, I will call you back – even on my day off – as soon as I am able. You can also text me, but please include your name in the text.

A friend of mine is fond of saying that he is not a mind reader; neither am I. If you need me, or if you believe someone else in the congregation might want to speak with me, please let me know. If I missed something important or if you have a question about something going on around the parish, please let me know.

COMMUNICATION

It is not a big leap to move from Pastoral Care to Communication. I hope I am accessible and easy to reach, and in the parish office we try to do everything we can to ensure it is easy for all of our members and friends to remain up to date on parish events and the parish calendar. We are open to ideas for doing things better; here are some of the ways we are currently communicating news.

The easiest and most obvious way to stay up to date is to come to church each Sunday. The service bulletin contains a list of announcements of upcoming services and events. Each service also includes a very small number of spoken announcements. To be blunt, if you are in church every Sunday, you know everything that will be happening at Christ Church, and you won't miss anything important.

Obviously not everyone is physically able to be in church every week, and so the same list of announcements is also sent out by email each Friday; if you are not on our email list, please contact Marie Main in the parish office today, and she will add your email to our weekly news. Katie and I bring copies of Sunday bulletins to the people we visit – even if a person cannot attend an event, I know it is still important for everyone to feel “in the loop” and a part of the life of the parish.

Our website – www.christchurchpelham.org – is also a good source of information and news. Text versions of my sermons are posted each week to the website (they tend to be nearly identical to what was preached at 8:00 a.m. and similar to what was preached at 10:00 a.m.). Our website features an events calendar that includes all known events through the end of the year; if you are planning an event and you don't see it on the calendar, please call the parish office.

On the home page of the website you can also find a link to our new Facebook page – the link is at the bottom left corner of the Home Page. Our Facebook page offers notices of the day's events, daily prayers, and notes about observances or celebrations in the larger church. When you visit the Facebook page, be sure to "like" it, that way our news and prayers will be a part of your Facebook Newsfeed. If you want Christ Church Facebook posts to appear regularly on your Newsfeed, you will need to "like" a few of our posts as well (the Facebook algorithm gives you more and more of the things you "like").

INSTITUTION OF THE NEW RECTOR

My Institution and Installation as the 15th Rector of the Parish of Christ the Redeemer will be celebrated on Tuesday, September 29, at 6:30 p.m. The Right Reverend Andrew M.L. Dietsche, Bishop of New York, will be the celebrant. Our preacher that evening will be the Reverend Terrence Elsberry, Rector of Saint Matthew's Church, Bedford, New York. The service will be celebrated on the Feast of Saint Michael & All Angels (always September 29, and traditionally referred to as Michaelmas – pronounced like combination of "Nickel" and "Christmas").

Michaelmas is an important Holy Day in the life of the Church. From *Holy Women, Holy Men*, which is the Episcopal Church's current Holy Day resource: *Of the many angels spoken of in the Bible, only four are called by name: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael. The Archangel Michael is the powerful agent of God who wards off evil from God's people, and delivers peace to them at the end of this life's mortal struggle. "Michaelmas," as his feast is called in England, has long been one of the popular celebrations of the Christian Year in many parts of the world.*

Saint Michael is one of my patron saints. When I was younger I attended the Saint Michael's Conference, a week-long conference for high school and college age youth. The Saint Michael's Conference had a profound impact on me as a Christian, and I met some of my best friends there, including my wife. Michaelmas is one of my favorite Holy Days in the church year, and I have brought my enthusiasm for Saint Michael into my ministry as a priest. As rector of Good Shepherd, Granite Springs, I was able to celebrate Michaelmas every year with a guest preacher (including Bishop Sisk, Bishop Dietsche, and Archdeacon Parnell) and a great big dinner (an Oktoberfest) after the service. I hope that my Institution will serve in part as a foretaste of how Christ Church might celebrate some of the other Major Holy Days throughout the church year.

I hope you will be able to be at Christ Church to celebrate my Institution on the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels on Tuesday, September 29, at 6:30 p.m. If you haven't already done so, please put it in your calendars. It will be a wonderful evening. The Bishop will be there, clergy from all over will be there. Terry Elsberry is an outstanding preacher, and he will bring a joy for Jesus that is a pleasure to behold. The music that evening will be offered by our full choir (it is on their calendars too), and the angelic hymns used on Michaelmas are fantastic. After the service we will have a splendid reception with lots of food and drink.

THE *COME AS YOU ARE* SERVICE

I am thrilled that Christ Church is offering an evening service on Sunday. Both churches that I served in likewise offered an alternate worship service on the weekend. In my conversations during the discernment process with the Search Committee and Vestry, one of our mutual hopes was that the *Come as You Are* Service could continue, and if possible, be offered more regularly and more often.

I know that the service has taken on a variety of forms over the past few years, and I was able to experience one of those forms on my first Sunday as Rector at Christ Church. I have spoken in depth to Michael Fawcett and Jeffrey Hoffman who have arranged much of the music at the service and I think that we have come up with a flexible format for the service that will allow it to be offered nearly every Sunday beginning in September, usually with Holy Communion, and as often as possible with the current offerings of instrumental and accompanying music. *Come As You Are* is offered two more times before the Summer (June 14 and 28) and on those two evenings we will debut this flexible format.

You'll have to come and see for yourself, but basically it will be a contemplative candlelight Evening Prayer service with music and hymns when we have musicians, followed by a very intimate Eucharist, which can will be celebrated either by candlelight with the congregation gathered around the High Altar, or under the setting sun at the Garden of the Resurrection Altar. The readings and music for this service will be different from the morning services, and a short homily will be offered. The format allows for a lay person to lead the service up to, but not including Holy Communion, when there is no priest. This gives the church the flexibility to offer the service with a priest or without a priest, with music or without music, and indoors in an intimate way or outdoors when the weather is glorious. *Come as you are* this Sunday and again on June 28th. After the service please feel free to share you insights and suggestions for how we might offer the service every Sunday beginning in the Autumn.

God bless you all, and please know how excited we are to be a part of Christ Church!

Your Priest and Rector,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Fawcett", written in a cursive style.