



# CHRIST CHURCH

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## **The Rector's Chronicle**

**August 2015**

Dear friends in Christ,

I promised a quarterly Chronicle, but there are enough events coming up in the autumn that I think it is best to send out two different letters, one in August and one in September. This letter offers a snapshot of our Church School and Confirmation Class programs.

### **CHURCH SCHOOL 2015-2016**

I am thrilled that Church School is starting again in September. My first Sunday at Christ Church coincided with the concluding week for Church School, and I am really looking forward to our programs for youth starting up again. Included in this letter is a calendar for the Church School year and a registration form. I want to highlight a few events that are already planned so that you can get those on your calendars now.

Church School officially resumes on Sunday, September 13, at 10:00 AM. For that first class, the Church School lesson will focus on Baptism, after which the Church School will come into church to see and witness the Baptism celebrated at the 10:00 AM Eucharist. This will be a great opportunity for the kids to learn about and immediately take part in a Baptism liturgy. (It is worth noting that two advantages of all-inclusive bulletins are that everyone, even children, can follow along with the entire service, and the service flows much smoother when there is a Baptism or other extraordinary event at a Sunday service.) Baptisms can be lots of fun, and I am looking forward to celebrating my first as Rector of Christ Church!

The Blessing of Backpacks will be offered at the conclusion of the 10:00 AM service on Sunday, September 20. After the post-communion prayer, all of the children (and any adults who wish to have briefcases or bags blessed) will be invited to the altar, and then all of the backpacks will be blessed on the altar. Why on the altar? A decade ago while he was still serving as the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Frank Griswold taught me a lesson that stuck with me. "Matthew" he said, "if you ever need to bless anything, do it this way. Bring the person who wants something blessed up to the altar, then put whatever is getting blessed on the altar and bless it there." It struck me that this is exactly how rings are blessed at a wedding, and also how icons and religious jewelry are often blessed. I have been blessing backpacks like that ever

since, and it is one of my favorite things about starting Church School. After the backpacks have been blessed, all of the children will march out of the church in the exit procession to the Parish Hall where we will have a special “Welcome Back!” coffee hour! It should be a fantastic day!

Our Church School program this year will be “Living the Good News”. It is a lectionary based program which means that the kids will almost always be learning about the same lessons that are read in church that week. “Living the Good News” is a flexible program that offers a substantive lesson each week. It works equally well for families that are able to be in church every Sunday as well as for families whose schedules do not allow that. It is a curriculum that allows teachers to plan and prepare lessons for children of all ages. All of the material is available online, and teachers can tailor any lesson to be as short or long as needed.

Speaking of teachers, I want to offer a word of thanks to Marcie Wiehagen and Carol Ipsen for their hard work and dedication chairing the Church School Committee these past years. At the end of last season, Carol stepped down as co-chair but has remained involved while Marcie continues as chair of the committee. Thank you both so much for all you do for our children’s ministries!

We are looking for more teachers this year. As you read this, please take a moment to pray and ask if God is calling you to lend a hand this year. If you aren’t able to commit to teaching for the year or if you have no experience teaching Church School don’t worry; Marcie Wiehagen and the members of our dedicated Church School Committee are happy to work with you so that you are able to use the gifts that God has given you to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the children of Christ Church.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for our Christmas Pageant. This year it will be offered in Hoag Hall on Sunday afternoon, December 20<sup>th</sup>. Details are still being worked out, but we already know we will have great costumes, a ringer from the theatre as our director, a huge stage for the production, and an after-pageant reception. Please contact our director Michael Fawcett if you have any questions or if you want to get involved in the pageant production, and don’t forget to mark your calendars today!

### **CONFIRMATION CLASS 2015-2016**

Often Episcopalians explain that Confirmation is an “adult affirmation of faith”. This is a paraphrase of what the Prayer Book states about Confirmation: “In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.”

Confirmation Class this year will follow a pattern that I created several years ago. Each time I have led it, the program successfully kept our youth engaged throughout the year, and after Confirmation with the Bishop our class members joined the Youth Group and continued to meet and plan their own events and discussions.

We will meet, on average, once a month. Classes will rotate between Sunday morning round table discussions and Sunday/Saturday evening dinner parties where the kids prepare all the food (under my supervision), worship together, and then discuss a single topic over dinner. Each class/dinner will have only one other adult present (that adult will be invited by me and will obviously include people who have taught our Confirmation class in the past). Food will be provided, though we welcome any donations to help defray the expense. We will explore topics that are appropriate for and of interest to 21<sup>st</sup> century teens who attend an Episcopal Church.

This format does several things. First, it takes the feeling that the kids are forced to attend a weekly class out of the equation – I did that as a teen, and I didn't enjoy it. That said, the number of hours the youth are in Confirmation class is basically the same. Second, it accepts the reality that our kids are involved with sports or other extracurricular activities. From time to time a member of the class may be unable to attend or might arrive late, and that is fine. Part of learning how to be an adult – especially a Christian adult – is discovering that you get as much out of something as you put into it, and everyone, even a teen, has to pick his or her priorities.

Any person who is between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade is invited to join the class – even if you have already been Confirmed by the Bishop. An outline of the schedule is below. Please note that we do not yet have a date for the Bishop's visit.

**Session 1 – Sunday, October 25, 4PM – USING THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN ME**

Parent drop off is at 4:00 PM. We will meet in the Undercroft kitchen and prepare beef tenderloin, roasted potatoes, and greens. At 5:00 PM we will move to the church for the “Come As You Are” Eucharist. After church, we will finish preparing dinner, and adjourn to the Library to eat and explore the evening topic “Using the gifts that God has given me.” Parents should arrive to pick up their children around 7:15 PM.

**Session 2 – Sunday November 22, 9AM – PRACTICING OUTREACH**

Class begins at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Conference Room (next to the Parish Hall) to explore a single topic “Practicing Outreach.” Ms. Missy Palmisciano, President and Founder of County Harvest will be our guest speaker for this class. Class concludes at 9:50 AM.

**Session 3 – Sunday December 13, 9AM – BASICS OF THE BIBLE**

Class begins at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Conference Room (next to the Parish Hall) to explore a single topic “Basics of the Bible.” Class concludes at 9:50 AM.

**Session 4 – Saturday, January 31, 4PM – WHO ARE THE EPISCOPALIANS?**

Parent drop off is at 4:00 PM. We will meet in the Undercroft kitchen and prepare pizza. At 5:00 PM we will move to the church for the “Come As You Are” Eucharist. After church, we will finish preparing dinner, and adjourn to the Library to eat and explore the evening topic “Who are the Episcopalians.” Parents should arrive to pick up their children around 7:15 PM.

**Session 5 – Sunday, February 28, 9AM – CHRISTIAN ETHICS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Class begins at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Conference Room (next to the Parish Hall) to explore a single topic “Christian Ethics for High School Students.” Class concludes at 9:50 AM.

**Session 6 – Saturday, March 26, 4PM – THE EASTER VIGIL**

Parent drop off is at 4:00 PM. We will meet in the Undercroft kitchen and prepare pizza. At 6:00 PM we serve pizza to the entire congregation (or at least those who are coming to the Easter Vigil) in the Parish Hall. The Easter Vigil begins at 7:30 PM. Members of the Confirmation class will act as readers for some of the Old Testament prophecies. After the vigil a dessert reception will be offered in the Library.

**Session 7 – Sunday, April 10, 9AM – PAIN & DEATH**

Class begins at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Conference Room (next to the Parish Hall) to explore a single topic “Pain & Death.” Class concludes at 9:50 AM.

**Session 8 – Sunday, May 1, 4PM – BEING AN ADULT CHRISTIAN**

Parent drop off is at 4:00 PM. We will meet at the rectory and prepare burgers, hot dogs, fixings, and sides. At 5:00 PM we will move to the church for the “Come As You Are” Eucharist. After church, we will finish preparing dinner, and stay in the rectory to eat and explore the evening topic “Being an Adult Christian.” Parents should arrive to pick up their children around 7:15 PM.

**Session 9 – Sunday, TBD, 9AM – BREAKFAST WITH THE BISHOP**

Our final class is at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Conference Room for breakfast and a conversation with the Bishop. Class concludes at 9:50 AM.

**CONFIRMATION – Sunday, TBD, 10AM**

The Bishop will be with us this Sunday for Confirmation! After the service we will have a festive Coffee Hour.

*Note for all classes:*

*Those who cannot attend a class or need to be late should let me know in advance, please. If you are interested in registering your children for this class, please contact the Parish Office as soon as possible.*

I am very excited at how our ministries for youth are shaping up for 2015-2016! If you have any questions about Church School, please contact Marcie Wiehagen. If you have any questions about the Christmas Pageant please contact Michael Fawcett. If you have any questions about Confirmation Class please speak to me. If you are interested in registering your children for Church School or Confirmation Class, please contact the parish office. God bless you all!

Your Priest and Rector,



## CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR 2015-2016

SEPTEMBER 13	CHURCH SCHOOL STARTS
OCTOBER 11	NO CHURCH SCHOOL COLUMBUS DAY
NOVEMBER 8 NOVEMBER 22	FIRST FAMILY EUCHARIST <b>Advent Wreath Making</b>
NOVEMBER 29	NO CHURCH SCHOOL THANKSGIVING WEEKEND
DECEMBER 27 & JANUARY 3	NO CHURCH SCHOOL Christmas recess
JANUARY 10	CHURCH SCHOOL RESUMES
JANUARY 17 February 7	NO CHURCH SCHOOL Rev. Martin Luther King <b>Lenten Prayer Calendars</b>
FEBRUARY 14 & 21	NO CHURCH SCHOOL (Pelham schools closed Mid-winter break)
MARCH 13	2nd FAMILY EUCHARIST
MARCH 20(Palm Sunday)	NO CHURCH SCHOOL (Seder in the Undercroft) Start of Easter Recess
MARCH 27 (Easter)	NO CHURCH SCHOOL <b>Easter Egg Hunt</b>
MAY 8	<b>CS host Coffee Hr. in celebration of Mother's Day</b>
MAY 29	NO CHURCH SCHOOL (Memorial Day weekend)
JUNE 5	LAST DAY OF CHURCH SCHOOL