

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

River Hills, Wisconsin



ANNUAL REPORT for the year 2013

Presented at the Annual Meeting, January 26, 2014



The Annual Meeting for St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
January 26, 2014
10:00 A.M.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and opening prayer
2. Approve Minutes from 2013 Annual Meeting
3. Presentation and election of Vestry Candidates

- *Carrie Bedore—to be elected to a three year term.
- *Kathy Stanford—to be elected to a three year term.
- *Dick Hackl—to be elected to a one year term.
- *Cindy Zautcke—to be elected to a one year term.

(Information: In the class of 2015, there are two openings. Tom Davies is becoming Junior Warden which opened up one of the places in the class of 2105. Dolores Mishelow is in that class currently. Cindy and Dick are not doing a second term as Wardens but both have indicated their interest in remaining on the vestry another year. Carrie Bedore was appointed to the vestry this year to replace Kathie Eilers who had to leave because of work needs. She is now eligible for her own three year term. Kathy Stanford is willing to stand for election and would become part of the class of 2017 with Carrie Bedore. Our vestry, according to our by-laws, can be from 6-9 members in size (not including the Wardens). This election will give us seven vestry members, plus two Wardens. If anyone is interested in being on the vestry, we welcome the opportunity to talk to you about vestry membership.

4. Presentation and election of Wardens:

- *Senior Warden: Darrell Fischer
- *Junior Warden: Thomas (Tom) Davies

(Information: Wardens can be re-elected for three consecutive one year terms in either office. This is both Darrell and Tom's first year in their respective offices. While we elect a Senior and a Junior Warden for canonical reasons, we function under a co-wardening model)

5. Presentation and Election of Deputies to the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee.

- *Diane Eisen
- *Judy Scharfenberger
- *Wendy Sopkovich
- *Mary Thickens

- *(Alternate): Barbara Eckblad

(Information: We need to elect four deputies and we should have at least one alternate.)

6. Introduction of the current Clerk of the Vestry, Janie Asmuth; our Treasurer, Barbara Eckblad, and our new co-Clerk, Harry Ansley.

7. Remarks by our outgoing Senior Warden, Dick Hackl.

8. Presentation of the state of the parish and the budget: the Rev. Debra Trakel, Dick Hackl

and Barbara Eckblad.

(Information: In Episcopal Churches budgets are created by and approved by the Vestry. They are then presented to the parish at the Annual Meeting but not voted upon.)

9. Recognition of outgoing vestry member, Jackie Mortenson, and Wardens, Dick Hackl and Cindy Zautcke: Debra

10. Closing Prayer and Adjournment.



Annual Meeting Recap (Minutes)

January 27, 2013

The St. Christopher's Annual Meeting on January 27, 2013, began with two of the great strengths of St. Christopher's: a joyful children's service and a fabulous potluck. Potlucks are a wonderful way to celebrate who we are as a parish – though I would need a significantly more rigorous workout schedule if they happened more often ☺

The work of the parish is done at the annual meeting, and 2013 was no exception. We began with a call to order and an opening prayer by the Reverend Debra Trakel. After approval of the minutes from the 2012 annual meeting, we elected vestry members who will serve us for the next three years. Diane Eisen and Judy Scharfenberger were re-elected – bless them for being willing to bring their experience and expertise to another term on the Vestry. Bill Warner was elected to a three year term, and brings a wealth of experience with him. Finally, Dolores Mishelow was elected to complete the unexpired term of Cindy Zautcke, who is becoming Junior Warden. Our wardens for 2013 will be Dick Hackl and Cindy Zautcke. Both bring expertise and focus to the position of warden, and we are blessed to have them serving the parish.

The deputies to the Annual Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee – Diane Eisen, Judy Scharfenberger, Wendy Sopkovich and Mary Thickens – were elected, with Barbara Eckblad and Dolores Mishelow elected as alternates. We also introduced the new clerk of the vestry, Janie Asmuth, and treasurer, Barbara Eckblad.

Debbie Roesner, outgoing Senior Warden, said that four years ago she accepted the call to serve the parish, and she has seen many changes in her time as vestry member and warden. While sometimes things have been overwhelming, the time has also been rewarding. Debbie said she has been impressed with the grace that has been part of her service to St. Christopher's. Debbie quoted the song "For Good" from the Broadway play "Wicked":

"I've heard it said
That people come into our lives for a reason...
But I know I'm who I am today
Because I knew you...
I have been changed for good.

Dick Hackl, incoming Senior Warden, said that he had good news and bad news. The good news is that Ran Hamner sold his house. The bad news is Ran Hamner sold his house. Ran has been an important part of our community, and his loss is a big one. Dick also said that Debbie would be a hard act to follow, but Dick is honored to serve St. Christopher's, a community that has been important to Dick and his wife Susan. He charged the outgoing wardens to put up their feet on the night of the next Vestry meeting, and to say "Ah."

To the rest of the parish, he asked that we remember that we are a Christian community. If any individual has an issue with what the Vestry does, he asks that that parishioner come to him, or to Cindy, or to Debra, but not to talk outside of the parish. He also asked that everyone say a daily prayer for St. Christopher's, as we continue to struggle with the issues that face us – issues that face most mainline churches in this day and age. Also, he asked that we invite folks to join us. Together, he said, we can have a great year.

Barbara Eckblad, Debbie Roesner, and the Reverend Debra Trakel presented a power point on the state of the parish, including the budget for 2013. They began with a recent history, charting where we have been. They asked that everyone find a place to take part in the work of the parish, as engagement on the part of each of us is what contributes to the growth and vitality of the parish.

Debbie Roesner served as both senior warden and treasurer – for this we owe her a profound debt of gratitude. She has worked to make the budget more understandable and more transparent. Barbara noted that we have three sources of income: offerings, restricted funds, and unrestricted funds. Our expenses are divided into personnel, buildings and grounds, diocesan assessment, administration and worship.

Barbara noted that we have made a shift in the way we account for restricted funds, including funds from the Endowment Trust. The funds that we use are accounted for both in the income that we receive and in the funds that are disbursed. All funds disbursed from the Endowment Trust are used in accordance with the requirements of the Endowment Trust document that allows expenditures for capital improvements, outreach, and special programming. We can use a given percentage of the endowment income (but not principal) each year. In 2012, we used both the 2011 allocation and the 2012 allocation for capital improvements, outreach and special programming. That is why the number looks so large.

The 2013 budget approved by the Vestry used income figures based upon actual pledges and prepaid pledges. There is no “fat” in our budget, so the only way to make up the current deficit, if we do not increase offerings, is to continue to use our unrestricted funds. This is not sustainable over a significant number of years. We will continue to monitor our expenses closely, but we cannot sustain our current level of spending without increasing revenue.

Change in Christian churches, including the Episcopal Church is often referred to as “transformation.” Almost all churches with full time clergy in the Diocese of Milwaukee, with the exception of Christ Church – Whitefish Bay, are running a deficit. We do not have the option of not maintaining our building, so congregational development is our only path to growth and future financial health.

Debra, Debbie and Barbara discussed the variety of ways that God may be calling each of us to be part of the growth and development of St. Christopher’s:

- Website development and use of social media
- Stewardship
- Outreach
- Children’s ministry
- Telling our story (evangelism)
- Hospitality
- Fellowship
- Spiritual development and adult education
- Liturgy and worship
- Legacy planning
- Building development and use

There are sign-up sheets in the community room for each of these committees – where is God calling each of us to serve? The sign-up sheets will remain through February, and I hope each of you will find a place to use your particular talents in service to St. Christopher's.

Ran Hamner said he is very impressed with the leadership of St. Christopher's over the past four years, and he has absolute confidence in the leadership going forward. He asked that folks be involved – this is our parish community and it has all the potential in the world. Wendy Sopkovich said that she and Ran have raised their children at St. Christopher's and have lived their lives through this parish community.

As we move forward, bringing new families to St. Christopher's will be a charge to each of us. Joe Dobrowits wanted to know what would happen if each of us brought one new family to church who became a member of the parish. The answer was that our deficit would be erased. We need to give people a reason to come to St. Christopher's, but we also need to give them a reason to stay. In addition, we need to nurture those who are currently a part of our community. That's why each of our committees are not just important, they are essential.

The final agenda item was to recognize outgoing members of the vestry, Ginger Browne and Diane Andersen, and outgoing wardens Debbie Roesner and yours truly. Debra thanked each for their service to the parish. Speaking for myself, it has been a privilege to serve, and I look forward to serving the current leadership as they wrestle with the challenges that face us, but also manage the tremendous potential that is St. Christopher's.

Bonnie M. Thomson
Pewsitter (and former Junior Warden)

Annual Message from the Rector

January 2014

“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They’re not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can’t do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.”

-- Apple Inc.

I love this quote from Apple Inc. It’s vibrant and colorful. It has movement and intent. It seems to me that sin is not so much about doing something wrong, but it’s about not being who we are meant to be; who God created us to be. In the process of discovering who God created us to be, if we are intent in the search, we will make mistakes. And some folks will think we’re crazy. But the search has to continue. Searching out the will of God and acting on it is what church is all about.

So, we tried some things in 2013. Some things worked. Some didn’t. People of good will came forward and made suggestions. Some things moved forward. Some things didn’t. But inch by inch, seeking the will of God in all things, we moved forward.

There is a kind of energy about St. Christopher’s these days that feels good. People are being “kindly affectioned, one to another.” I hear a fair amount of laughter and good humor. I see people remembering the poor. I look around on a Sunday morning and see folks of diverse backgrounds appreciating one another after having just shared a seat at the table of the Lord. I hear our children engaged in the study of our faith and our older children telling their parents that they don’t want to serve at the altar because that means they miss class. Wow. I’ll take that.

There remains a fair amount of work to do. Our deficit remains with us. Good stewardship is still an issue to work on. The building takes up a disproportionate part of our budget. And gossip still occasionally has its day.

But there are some really crazy people in parish leadership who are looking around and saying, “We have something really good going on here and we need to figure out how to let other people know about it.” And so we shall.

Let’s have 2014 be the year that we let the misfits, the rebels and the troublemakers loose among us. Let’s applaud them for their audacious belief that a church buried in the heart of the northshore can do more than survive. It can thrive. Let’s cheerlead their love of God and one another. They believe that if folks know about us, they will want to be part of us. I’m betting on them. They remember Whose they are.

From the Senior Warden

Experiments show how closely people at various stages of their lives come to guessing when an hour has passed. Children are very early in their guess, older people much closer to reality. Obviously, an hour in the life of children represents a much larger part of their existence, whereas the opposite applies to older people. That's a long way of saying that as your senior warden, I must be returning to my childhood because the year has flown by. However, as importantly, our junior warden and this vestry has helped because they all were united in their desire to do the best for St. Christopher's without letting their individual egos intrude.

Major accomplishments were numerous. The vestry has already put in three Saturdays working on a strategic plan identifying our core values, what we are good and not so good at, and what we see as our needs and opportunities for growth. From this we will develop a new mission statement and new web site to help St. Christopher's grow. While our parishioners have been responding well to our financial deficits, growth in membership will be what takes us into a budget balance and then to budget surplus. Our thanks go to Chris Mortenson for his skillfully leading us through this process. Early in our term we adopted the updated by laws, something that hadn't been done for close to 20 years. Likewise, at the end of the term, we adopted a revision of our badly outdated endowment documents that maintains the endowment's original intent. Times change; these functional documents need to keep up if they are to have any real meaning.

This year also saw significant improvements to our physical plant, improvements that in many instances came in below anticipated cost. The most obvious is the new sign in front of our property. The church's front door, a major source of lost heat, was saved from total replacement by adding building code-required crash bars and reinsulating. Thanks to the knowledge of Bill Wernecke, these were done at about 30% of the original estimate.

The church floor was refinished (without removing the pews resulting in another big savings), the kitchen floor redone, and painting updated in multiple areas as well as the parking lot resurfaced. All this means that our capital improvement needs for 2014 appear minimal.

But the world never stops spinning; so into 2014 we go. I have great confidence that with God's help, it will be another positive year for St. Christopher's. I look forward to being a different part of it.

Dick Hackl,
Senior Warden

Stewardship

During the latter part of each year, of necessity, stewardship seems to be all about *treasure* to the exclusion of *time* and *talent*. But that is only in the “talking” aspect. Our recap of how we are doing will be covered in the Treasurer’s report. At St. Christopher’s, “doing” in time and talent is continuous. The choir practices and sings. The various Sunday worship servers, from nursery helpers to Altar Guild, ushers, readers, acolytes show up to do their parts. Members host coffee hours and serve at The Gathering. The Prayer Chain prays. Folks go tripping, returning with sundries for the homeless. The Casa Maria Christmas collection is fulfilled, gifts delivered.

Over and over, our relatively small community proves that service to the St. Christopher’s community and to others is important with a role available for everyone. Striking was the most recent Gathering Saturday: volunteering were a parish member married at St. Christopher’s 53 years ago and a sixth grader with nine others in between. I am certain that to a person each would say they get more out of the serving than the served.

Recently, one of our newer members organized and cooked for a progressive dinner. More than 30 people, mostly St. Christopher’s parishioners attended and had an immensely enjoyable time. The free-will offering, sent to Shoreline Interfaith for the Aging was in excess of \$1400.

All three aspects, time, talent, and treasure are required to make St. Christopher’s a successful community and the more participation the greater the church’s success. Likewise, participation in all three parts makes more fulfilled parishioners. To quote from the Prayer of St. Francis; “...For it is in giving that we receive....”

Get involved. You’ll like it.

Dick Hackl,
Stewardship Committee



Treasurer's Report

January, 2014

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to believe that another year has passed and our faith community's Annual Meeting is here again. I am grateful for the privilege of being Treasurer. The work has allowed me to remember, on a weekly basis, that I am called, as are we all, to make Christ and His work my priority. The marvelous thing about the work of the Treasurer is that I am dependent on others to make the financial life of our parish work. In football anyone who carries the ball is taught the "four points of pressure" so that you don't fumble. If you watch a running back cradle the ball in his arms you will note the four points: right forearm, right hand, left forearm, left hand. At St. Christopher's, with respect to carrying the financial "ball," if you will, we actually have *five* points of pressure: Gust, our Parish Administrator; Sandy Murphy, our accountant (a CPA, by the way); Debra, our Rector; the Vestry; and me, as Treasurer. We work closely together to carry the financial ball of St. Christopher's and, needless to say, without each of us we would fumble. Actually, we have an even broader network of parishioners who carry this ball. The ushers make sure the offerings are recorded and secured in the office safe after each worship service. Thanks, ushers! A volunteer, usually Harry Ansley, takes time to record deposits *on a weekly basis*. Yep, every week, week in and week out! Thanks, Harry. Every other week checks need to be signed. Tom Davies and Dick Hackl are fabulous at stopping at the church to make sure this happens. Thanks Tom and Dick!

It takes a *team* to carry the financial ball for our parish. This reminds me of St. Paul's challenge to us in his first letter to the Corinthians, 12:12-14:

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many."

While some in our parish are called to the ministry of finance, there are many ministries in our parish. We have ministries of Welcome, Christian education for young and old, Outreach, Vestry, Fellowship, Worship, Music and Alter Guild, just to name a few. There are new ministries waiting to be discovered, too. As one of the "parts" of our Christian body, you have been called, according to Paul, to one or more of our ministries.

St. Paul promises us that St. Christopher's will become all Christ intends when each of its parts – that's you and me – answer Christ's call to participate. I ask you to prayerfully consider where you hear Christ calling you. And I ask you to answer that call. Thank you.

Barbara Eckblad,
Treasurer

The St. Christopher's Endowment

Last year the vestry took on the updating of our parish by-laws. This year the vestry took on the even harder task of updating our endowment documents. Currently, because of the good year the markets have had our Endowment stands at \$1,855,973 (as of 12/31/13). We have used it wisely and it has grown substantially. For this we give thanks to God.

Early in the year the vestry asked Bonnie Thomson if she would take on the task of updating our Endowment. Bonnie worked with Stuart Parsons, the Chancellor of the diocese, to create a document that is consistent with our Endowment's investment in the diocesan Combined Fund, and locates the authority for the use of the Endowment with the vestry, where it belongs in an Episcopal Church.

We are extremely grateful to Bonnie for the hard work she put into the revision of our Endowment documents.

The new document changes nothing about how the Endowment can be used. It may still be legitimately used only in three primary areas:

- *Capital expenses.**
- *Special projects.**
- *Outreach.**

This year we used our Endowment in all three areas. We purchased a new computer system for the Parish Administrator, and completed other building projects that were capital in nature. We had a \$12,000 request from the Outreach Committee. We funded a workshop on the Bible, Theology and Homosexuality by Canon Victoria Garvey that was open to the diocese and fifty people attended.

We will continue to be careful stewards of this precious resource we have been given alongside seeking creative uses for our endowment that will further the mission of Christ through our parish.

A new endowment committee will soon be formed whose role will be to meet at least once a year with the Executive Director of the Combined Fund, currently Mike Hagon, a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, Wauwatosa, so that we continue to have clarity about how our funds are invested. It would be very good to have a member of the parish be willing to run for a place on the Combined Fund board of directors, elected at our diocesan convention. If you are interested in this role, please see Debra.

There are copies of the new Endowment document available in the Community Room central table for those individuals who are interested in reading the whole document. Many thanks to Steve Petrie, Kathie Eilers and Bonnie Thomson for serving as the interim board when it was determined that according to the former endowment by-laws the terms of office for the previous members had expired.

Music Report

This past year, as every previous year, has been a busy one for St. Christopher's musicians. We provided musical accompaniments for hymns and service music ("Gloria," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Lamb of God," etc.), and voluntaries for 96 services in 2013. In addition the choir sang for 38 services, 34 Sunday mornings, 3 Holy Week services and Christmas Eve. The choir led the congregation in the singing of numerous hymns and the above mentioned service music as well as anthems and sung psalms.

The choir particularly shines during the Holy Week services. Many members have remarked that singing during that period of the church year is the yearly highlight for them, incredibly spiritual and meaningful. We are always looking to add new members. If anyone would like to experience singing with the choir during a shorter period of time rather than committing to the full season, Holy Week would be a perfect time to do that.

The choir is composed of 8 members, John Allen, Diane Eisen, Laura Gough, Julie Holubowicz, Dee Lee, Judy Scharfenberger, Nance Schmid and Joan Seeger. The choir was augmented during Holy Week and Christmas Eve by the addition of Bonnie Thomson and during the Christmas season by Ann Rawlinson. The choir rehearses Sunday mornings from 9 am to 9:50 am and 11:15 am until Noon. It is remarkable that they accomplish so much in so little rehearsal time.

Rehearsals were consolidated on Sundays mornings a number of years ago by eliminating Wednesday evening rehearsals. The hope was to boost choir membership by making participation easier. I'm not sure that goal has been realized. However, I do not see the choir returning to week night rehearsals.

The choir makes a significant difference in the spirit of the services for which they provide music. The change from summer Sundays to the return of the choir after Labor Days is quite noticeable. Many thanks to the choir for their hard work and dedication. Music at St. Christopher's would not be what it is without them. All of this is done to praise and glorify God.

John Beardsley,
Music Director



Administration

“Administration” covers a broad spectrum of tasks and activities. I thought I might describe a number of them under the notion of the space in which they are carried out. I have chosen four “spaces” for this report: phone, office, building and outside. The *phone* is in the office, but it is a special tool; *office* includes filing cabinets, copier/printer, and computer. *Building* represents the church proper, community room, kitchen, and space in the basement. *Outside* the building ranges from the Memorial Garden to the Office Max on Capitol, Colectivo on Humboldt and the bank and post office in Bayshore.

Phone: This is the prime space for communication. I order kitchen supplies, cleaning supplies, arrange for nannies for the nursery, order altar flowers, confirm use of the community room by outside groups, arrange for scheduled equipment maintenance, communicate with the diocesan office, deal with unexpected situations with equipment and - don't get me started -- problems with the phone itself. It is also, of course, a major way of communicating with individual parishioners and others.

Office: Most of my tasks take place, or have their origin, in the office. Here I set the schedules for Sunday ministers, parent volunteers, nursery volunteers, put together the Sunday bulletins, Weekly Updates, monthly Couriers, seasonal worship booklets, wedding & funeral booklets. We have a 3-month wall calendar that needs updating continually. The copier/printer is basic for adult education material, printing all those bulletins, newsletters, worship booklets, etc. In the office I see that the Sunday collection & other monies are registered in the appropriate databases; thank you letters get sent; bills, salaries & diocesan assessments get ready for payment; prepare birthday cards for Debra to send. All-parish and individual mailings come out of the office where I print, stuff and stamp.

Building: There is a bit less administrative activity that takes place in the building, compared to the other spaces. All those Sunday booklets and readings are brought into the church; classroom and community room thermostats are checked during hot and cold weather. I help set up for presentations on the AV equipment when outside groups use the community room. I open the building space for scheduled (and unscheduled!) equipment maintenance. Indirect administrative activity in the building is by way of liaising with Mike Schneider around the many aspects of the building that he keeps in such good repair.

Outside the building: Here I would include taking mail to the mailbox, or to the post office; delivering the Courier to the post office for mailing; depositing the Sunday collection at the bank; sometimes picking up coffee at Colectivo, paper at Office Max, cleaning supplies at Village Ace. I confirm the proper spelling and position of names to be engraved in the Memorial Garden; and take invoices and other check requests to our accountant in Whitefish Bay.

Gust Olson III,
Parish Administrator

The Website

It was the vestry's intent that the website be updated this past year. However, as we have been working all year on mission and planning, we made the decision to wait to update the website until we had greater clarity about mission. Now, however, the urgency around website redevelopment re-emerges and we will be moving forward with the redevelopment of our website using the good work that people had provided last year. Debra will be working with Loraine Garner (former St. Christopher's Parish Administrator) to develop a website that will have some good links to other pertinent sites, will allow for ease of updating, and provide the ability to make donations electronically.

Nursery Report

Every Sunday the nursery is open providing a safe nurturing environment for St. Christopher's youngest parishioners during the ten o'clock service and special occasions. This past year, we welcomed new parish families and enjoyed watching some children grow up and move into the Ark Sunday school. Thanks you for entrusting the care of your children to us.

The nursery has been thriving this year, due in no small part to the dedicated volunteers from our parish families and CCN Nannies. Many thanks to you for your consistent care and love for our little ones in the nursery.

Please direct any donated good to the office as this aids us in sorting and organizing toys for our nursery.

Diane Eisen



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Diane Eisen

Children's Ministry

The children's ministry at St. Christopher's Church has made some significant and important changes this year. We still have four classrooms; however, we changed the age requirements for each room. The youngest classroom, or the Ark, now has the three-, four-, and five-year-old children. The Knitters have our first and second grade children, and the Weavers have the third, fourth, and fifth grade children. The Journeymen still has our oldest children, which include the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

Besides changing the age ranges in each of classrooms, we have one new teacher this year. Annie Bedore, who is a senior at Homestead High School, now teaches the Ark. She has been a wonderful addition to our program. She teaches alongside our veteran teachers, Adam Kallas in the Weavers classroom, Maddy Fischer in the Knitters classroom, and MaryBeth Ansley, who teaches the children in the Journeymen.

Our final change this year involved the curriculum we use to teach the children about God and His people. The Ark, Knitters, and Weavers began using the curriculum entitled *Spark: Activate Faith*, which is a two-year cyclical program teaching key lessons from the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament stories are presented in the fall quarter, and the New Testament stories are presented in the winter and spring quarters. This fall the children learned the stories of Adam and Eve, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and David. In the winter we shifted to Christ's resurrection and the Acts of the Apostles. Currently the children are hearing the stories about Jesus' miracles, John the Baptist, and the Disciples.

The Journeymen, on the other hand, continued on in their second year using the curriculum *Rite 13*. *Rite 13* is a two-year program designed to help children build self-esteem in the context of the Christian community. This curriculum focuses on three main objectives. The first is to build a sense of community within the group; the second is to establish relationships within and among the children that value their gifts and talents; and the third is to help children develop a basic understanding of God's call to all of us to live in accordance with God's word. Over the course of this year the kids have discussed how to talk with God in prayer, what Jesus says about prayer, and how to develop positive relationships and avoid stereotyping.

This year we continued to have the Children's Liturgy services. This service, which is led by the children, teaches them about what is included in a traditional Episcopal church service. It gives the children an opportunity to participate in and understand what a "typical" church service is and how it runs. It is also a service in which the prayers, the sermons, and the readings are all geared toward the children. This bi-monthly service has been an excellent addition to the Sunday school program, and the children have done an outstanding job of taking on new jobs and roles at each service.

The children's ministry at St. Christopher's Church would not be possible without the dedication of our wonderful teachers, the support of our parents and Mother Debra, the stories of God's powerful work, and most of all the participation of our wonderful children. I am truly thankful and blessed for everyone's help in making the Sunday school program at St. Christopher's possible.

Katie Madlung,
Christian Formation Coordinator



Outreach Committee

It is the mission of the Outreach Committee of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church to work to spread the word of God through serving others. To that end, we listen to and care deeply about the needs of the people in our immediate community and work so that others, both within St. Christopher's and beyond, will be inspired to be involved in outreach ministry.

Current committee members include: Steve Petrie, Chair; Harry Ansley; Carolyn Davies; Barbara Eckblad; Diane Eisen.

In 2013, our work included: awarding of grants to local agencies; new initiatives, focused where possible upon underprivileged children; on-going outreach activities.

2013 Endowment Grant Funding

Continuing the child-centric approach to our recent Endowment Grant Funding efforts, our search for a 2013 focus led us to revisited and ultimately settled upon a critical and growing problem we had frequently discussed during the past two years: **Youth Homelessness**.

The process remained unchanged:

- Mini-grant applications were solicited, for grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 each, with six (6) agencies/programs submitting requests;
- Committee members individually reviewed and evaluated each application according to established criteria;
- The Committee, in unanimous agreement that the three (3) highest ranked programs best met the established criteria, submitted funding recommendations to, and received approval from The Vestry at the December 17, 2013 Vestry meeting.

Those funded programs for 2013 are:

Pathfinders

Amount requested and approved by the Vestry: \$3,000.

Program Description: The **Youth Outreach Drop In Center (YODIC)** provides day services to homeless youth, including food, hygiene and laundry facilities, health and risk reduction resources, computer access, job supports, and case management. Most importantly, it links Milwaukee youth who live on our streets to dependable, trustworthy and caring adults.

Walkers Point Youth and Family Center

Amount requested and approved by the Vestry: \$3,000.

Program Description: The **Runaway and Homeless Youth** programs provide 24-hour available crisis intervention and temporary emergency shelter services targeting the needs of runaway, homeless, abused, and other young people in crisis. In a safe and legal alternative to the streets, youth ages 11-17 are provided food, clothing and other basic needs, as well as being offered a neutral space in which to facilitate problem-solving between the youth and his/her family.

Casa Maria

Amount requested and approved by the Vestry: \$6,000.

Program Description: **Overcoming Small Barriers to Housing** is a new program designed to provide small stipends of up to \$300 to mothers staying at Casa Maria to aid in their executing a feasible plan to obtain safe and stable housing when necessary financial assistance is not available from other sources. Often, paying for a security deposit, a background check, a new driver's license, a pair of work shoes for a new job, or another small financial obstacle can stand between a family and stable housing. The program, administered by an all-volunteer staff, will be completely funded by grants and donations. About 40 families, only a fraction of a typical year's total, could be served by a \$6,000 grant. Given the level of need and the high potential return on investment, we are funding this program at twice the original request.

New Initiatives

Among the new initiatives were undertaken during 2013 were:

Casa Maria Christmas Project

St. Christopher's parishioners responded generously to the wish list from Casa Maria, a home providing short-term shelter for homeless families. The list of items brought to church included many non-perishable food items, pillows, blankets, household supplies, socks, toys, diapers, and much more. The donated items were placed under the tree, but soon spilled well out into the community room. Thanks to everyone who helped make this a success--with special thanks to Brownie Troop 6066 for their collection and contribution of kids' socks, and to Ada and Walt Nielsen and Diane Eisen, who loaded their vehicles and delivered the bounty to Casa Maria.

Shoreline Neighborhood Outreach Program

Contributions from the progressive dinner held in November came to \$1480. This money went to Shoreline Neighborhood Outreach Program which provides services to older adults living on the North Shore. Those services, mainly provided by volunteers, include rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, friendly visits, and other services helping seniors be independent and stay in their own homes.

On-Going Outreach Activities

St. Christopher's continues to be involved with several on-going ministries:

The Gathering

Continuing a relationship dating back 32 years to involvement in the founding of this meal service program, St. Christopher's volunteers served lunch six times during 2013 and just finished serving the first of six lunches for 2014.

Sojourner Family Peace Center

Each week a parishioner cuts the grass and did lawn work during the spring, summer and fall months. That ministry will continue in 2014.

St. James' Sundries

Baskets have been placed at various location in the church and parishioners are encouraged to contribute sundries from travel and/or other opportunities. These sundries are regularly delivered to St. James' where they are distributed to various inner-city programs which support the homeless.

Harry Ansley

For the Outreach Committee:



Altar Guild

The Altar Guild prepares the church and altar for worship service. This includes Sundays, special seasonal and weekday Eucharists, baptisms, weddings, funerals and memorial services. We are also responsible for the bread, wine, candles, and polishing silver.

In addition to our regular weekly activities, in 2013 we met the Saturday before Easter to prepare the church for the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Eucharists, and in December, the Altar Guild hosted the "Greening of the Church" the Sunday before Christmas.

Thank you to all members of the Altar Guild this year. Your continued help is appreciated in 2014. I would like to especially thank Roz Krause and MJ Perry who continue to provide invaluable support and guidance. I would also like to thank Lois Degener. Each week Lois takes home the linens used during the service to wash and iron them. I've heard that there are churches that pay a service to launder the linens, so thanks Lois, for saving us that expense!

We continue to look for new members to join us in this wonderful and important part of the worship service. The time commitment is minimal (About 15 minutes before or after Sunday services) and we are more than happy to train! If you are interested or want more information about what we do, when we do it, and how we do it, please contact me, or any member of the Altar Guild. This has been a wonderful labor of love for me, and I look forward to continuing into 2014.

Blessings for a prosperous and peaceful 2014!

Judy Scharfenberger
Altar Guild Director - 2013



Coffee Hour

Coffee hour is what I like to think of as our center of gravity for fellowship following worship on Sunday. It is a place to socialize, let the kids goof around and welcome new folks in our midst. And it is a great way to serve in a ministry where it is easy to appreciate the service provided. More people are serving in this ministry and we seek to expand that pool.

Our first charge in 2013 was to have coffee hour available after each Sunday service. We met that minimum goal. We also moved the main table serving coffee and snacks a bit to the east, at Debra's suggestion. That helped make the table more inviting.

Harry Ansley and I headed up the coffee hour effort, ably assisted more than a dozen families who rotated in to serve on Sundays. While we expanded our circle of contributors in 2013, a goal for coffee hour in the coming year is to get more people involved in this ministry, noting that people can get involved at various levels. Ada Nielsen is helping Harry and me produce a how-to form for the newcomer coffee hour contributor.

Besides our regular Sunday coffee hour, we had a special pancake breakfast quarterly this year, hosted by Darrell Fischer, who was assisted by several able flippers. There were pancakes to feed all and leftovers for home.

And on the fellowship front, Judy Scharfenberger and Raquel Diedrich pioneered a ladies night out for the women of St. Christopher's. There were other events including, Cookies and Carols. And last but far from least, Ada Nielsen hatched the idea of a progressive dinner and then worked tirelessly to make it a reality.

Through all these forms of fellowship, we grew closer as a church family. We found a way to serve God through each other.

John Diedrich



Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee was formed in 2013 to serve members, visitors and newcomers to St. Christopher's. The committee identified two areas for improvement: the welcome process and a new brochure.

A new welcome process will be rolled out at the Usher's Lunch on February 9, 2014. The purpose of this process is to welcome all members, visitors and newcomers to church on Sundays.

A new brochure was drafted and circulated for comments. Two brochures will be produced: an instructional piece to be placed in the pews for visitors and a position statement to be sent out to newcomers. The committee is working with a graphic designer to produce these brochures in early 2014.

The committee will continue to work in 2014 to support a welcoming environment for all members, visitors and newcomers.

Carrie Bedore



Caring Ministry

The Caring Ministry continues to be available to help our faith community during times of personal need: funerals, weddings, illness. They provide a ministry of presence and very real assistance in terms of direction and occasionally the offering of food. This ministry is indispensable particularly during funerals. Many thanks to Mary Jane Perry and Mary Beth Ansley who have coordinated this ministry this past year, and also to Diane Eisen who was often available to serve.



The Building and Grounds

We are justifiably proud of our lovely building and the gorgeous setting within which we are privileged to have our church home.

Memorial Garden:

This past year, under the careful watch of Chair, Helen Sheen, assisted by committee members Bill Wernecke and Joyce Kuehl, our Memorial Garden was, as always, gorgeous and changed seasonally. Under the care of our landscaper for this past year it was well tended. Money for the care of our Memorial Garden is in a restricted fund that comes from the sale of plots in the Garden. The current cost of a plot for burial in the Memorial Garden is \$1,000. This is a lovely, inexpensive and “green” way to arrange for one’s final remains. If you are interested in reserving a place in the Memorial Garden, please see Gust Olson, our Parish Administrator.

Landscaper:

Our landscaper this past year has been SMB Landscape Contractors. They did a nice job with our property. This coming year we are returning to our use of Oberndorfer’s (which we had used as our landscapers for many years previously) because they do our snow plowing and were not willing to do our snow plowing without also having the contract for our landscaping. They do an absolutely superlative job on our snow removal because they have a fleet of trucks that allows them to give us the timely attention that we need for services. Since we have also valued their work as a landscaper, we have returned to them for 2014. We will give SMB high recommendations, however, if asked.

The Building:

We have done a significant amount of work on the property this year:

- *We have a new church sign to replace the one that was rotting away. It is made of a material that will not rot.
- *We continued the phased painting of the outside of the building and did some needed painting on the inside of the church proper.
- *We replaced the railing at the door to the sacristy and updated the steps to that door which had been treacherous.
- *We did tuck pointing on the chimney and replaced some severely damaged masonry.
- *We put sweeps and crash bars on the front doors to the church rather than replacing those doors. This saved us a great deal of money. Thanks to Bill Wernecke and Curt Degener for this suggestion.
- *We refinished the floor in the church (*without taking out the pews!*)
- *We put new flooring in the kitchen to cover the cracks that had developed in the concrete.
- *We had our needlepoint kneelers in the church dry cleaned by Roth (thanks to Roz Krause!)
- *We got an estimate for what it would cost to refinish the floor in the Community Room and decided that we did not need to do that work at this time. (It’s very expensive!)
- *We decided that we could wait another year to reseal the parking lot. We will do so in 2014.

Most of the work that we did to the building was a capital expense and, therefore, underwritten by the Endowment.

In addition, of course, there are the ongoing issues with a building of this size and complexity. Compressors went out, phone lines deteriorated (many times!), service was lost to our fire/security system, toilets would not stop flushing, etc.

Many thanks to Mike Schneider, our building and grounds man extraordinaire, to Gust Olson for often being the one to do follow up with vendors, or be the onsite person, and to Tom Davies, our liaison from the Vestry.



Liturgy and Worship

What separates St. Christopher's from a non-profit organization, a country club, or some other human services agency is worship. First and foremost we are Christians, and Christians worship together. Our worship is strong and joyous. It is ordered but informal. It is consistent because we use the liturgies from the Book of Common Prayer.

We continue to have two services and will continue to have two services for the foreseeable future.

In 2013 our 8AM worship service uses Rite I (the traditional language from the Book of Common Prayer—think “vouchsafe and bounden duty. . .”), has diminished music (two hymns), relies on the piano, and, in general, is a smaller, more quiet and reflective service.

Our 10AM service during the school year utilizes our talented choir, has full hymnody, uses both the organ and the piano, and has lots of children who come to be with us following the Peace. It uses Rite II (the contemporary language from the Book of Common Prayer.)

We have continued to have our children's worship services four times a year held in the Community Room, and this year we have added the ministry of Rays of Light, a praise and worship band.

Our choir has been willing to constantly add new music to their repertoire and the result has been some lovely anthems and service music. We are indebted to them for the beauty of our 10AM worship experience.

We have, on two occasions this past year celebrated the venerable Anglican service of Morning Prayer when Debra has been on vacation or otherwise absent from the parish. Thanks to Bonnie Thomson, Susan Hackl and Rob Quirk, who have been willing to be trained to preside at Morning Prayer.

There is also a Thursday morning 7AM worshipping community that comes together to worship during the school year (September through June.) They met sporadically in people's homes during July and August for Morning Prayer.

Many thanks to the Rev. Deacon Tom Binder (ret.) for presiding at Morning Prayer and the distribution of Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament for this group when Debra has been absent.

The Year in Review—2013

Baptisms: Charles Harvey & Jacqueline Bess Koehn, Remington Marie Comer, Rowan Aring Sadoff, Ryan William Piper

New & Returning Members: Marilyn & John Allen, Edith Braeger (Micky & Augie), Cana & Colin Comer (Remington), Elizabeth Elser, Carol McGee (Anna, Christopher, Kathryn, Matthew & Elizabeth), Ada & Jeanne Ada Nielsen, Ryan Piper, Ann Rawlinson, Janet & Robert Brown, Liza & David Sadoff (Rowan)

Memorial Services: Patricia Wilmeth, Francie Silverman, Shirley Barfield, Mary Lee Jacobs, Bettye Smith, Patricia Sullivan, Ettore Barbatelli, Julie Walker (Committal)

Events

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1/27 Children's Service | 9/8 Rally Day (Christian education begins) followed by parish picnic |
| 2/12 Shrove Tuesday pancakes and Burying the Alleluias | 9/12 Farewell to Deacon Sheila Scott |
| 3/10 Outreach Sunday with Rusty Borkin, Common Ground | 9/29 Blessing of the Animals |
| Holy Week: Agape Dinner and Maundy Thursday with overnight Vigil, Good Friday worship, Easter Vigil | Fall - Bambi took up residence in the north woods |
| 4/28 Bishop Miller's Visitation: Annie Bedore, Judy Scharfenberger confirmed; Carrie Bedore, Barbara Eckblad, Dick Hackl received | 10/6 Children' Service with Rays of Light |
| 5/5 Outreach Sunday with Dr. Melanie Stewart | 10/26 Safeguarding God's Children workshop |
| 5/12 Mother's Day pancake breakfast | 11/10 Pancake fellowship |
| 5/19 Fourth Children's Service | 11/16 Homosexuality, Theology and the Bible - A day with Canon Victoria Lynn Garvey |
| 6/9 Last day of Sunday School & parish picnic | 11/28 Thanksgiving Service |
| 6/15 Church Clean up day | 11/23 Progressive Dinner for outreach |
| 7/14 Rays of Light (Praise band) inaugural | 11/24 Children's Service with Rays of Light |
| | 12/15 Cookies and Carols |
| | 12/24 Christmas Eve Pageant and Christmas service at 10 pm |

Adult Christian Formation: Episcopal 101 (spring), Bible Basics (fall & winter)

Vestry mini-retreated four times

Morning Prayer at St. Christopher's celebrated twice

Book Discussion group met four times

Diocesan Convention - St. Christopher's sent deputies: Mary Thickers, Wendy Sopkovich, Judy Scharfenberger, the Rev. Debra Trakel

Common Ground - St. Christopher's participated in the Suburban/Rural Caucus with Diane Eisen, Carolyn Davies and the Rev. Debra Trakel