

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

River Hills, Wisconsin



ANNUAL REPORT for the year 2016

Presented at the Annual Meeting, February 12, 2017

St. Christopher's Mission Statement

The mission of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church is to share the Gospel joyfully with everyone; offering a place in the heart of the North Shore where God's love is personally experienced. We are a sanctuary for spiritual growth, dedicated to serving Christ in our daily lives.
(2014)

The Annual Meeting for St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

February 12, 2017

10:15 AM after the 9 AM service

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

1. Call to Order – Mary Cady Thickens, Senior Warden
2. Approve Minutes from 2016 Annual Meeting
3. Presentation and election of Vestry Candidates

- *Kathy Schwab—to be elected to a one-year term (Class of 2018).
- *Trish Juranitch—to be elected to a two-year term (Class of 2019).
- *Charlie Koehn—to be elected to a three-year term (Class of 2020).
- *Marisa Roberts –to be elected to a three-year term (Class of 2020).
- *Bruce Holmes—to be elected to a three-year term (Class of 2020).

[Explanation: Kathy Schwab will fill an unexpired term in the Class of 2018. Marisa Roberts and Charlie Koehn were appointed by the Vestry to fill Class of 2017 terms. They will each now stand for election to their own three-year terms. Trish Juranitch will fill an open (never filled) term in the Class of 2019. Bruce Holmes will join Marisa and Charlie in the Class of 2020.

Our bylaws indicate the Vestry should be 6-9 members in size (not including the Wardens). We are extremely pleased this year to be electing a full slate of members. Thank you to each of our Vestry members for stepping up to serve Christ through St. Christopher's.]

4. Presentation and re-election of Wardens:

- *Senior Warden: Mary Cady Thickens
- *Junior Warden: Kenneth (Kip) Jacobs

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

- *Diane Eisen
- *Wendy Sopkovich
- *Mary Thickens
- *Marisa Roberts

6. Introduction of the Clerk of the Vestry: Harry Ansley. And our Treasurer, Charlie Koehn.

7. Remarks: Mary Cady Thickens, Senior Warden

8. Remarks: Kip Jacobs, Junior Warden.

9. Stewardship Campaign Analysis & Presentation of 2017 Budget

10. Adjournment.

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting
St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
January 31, 2016**

1. Call to Order:

Mary Cady Thickers, Senior Warden, called the meeting to order at 10:15am and led attendees in prayer.

2. Approve Minutes from 2015 Annual Meeting:

Bill Warner moved that the minutes of the January 25, 2015 Annual Meeting be approved as presented. MaryBeth Ansley seconded. The motion carried.

3. Presentation and Election of Vestry Candidates:

*Chris Mortenson—to be elected to a three year term.

*Dick Hackl—to be elected to a three year term.

*Kathleen McGarry—to be elected to a three year term.

*Kathie Eilers—to be elected to a two year term.

In presenting the published slate of candidates for election to the Vestry, Mary provided the following clarifications: In the class of 2016, there are three openings. Diane Eisen and Bill Warner are rotating out. Kathie Eilers, who was filling an unexpired term this year, will stand for her own two-year term. Kathy Stanford left the Vestry prior to her term expiring at the end of 2015. Also, when Darrell Fischer left the Vestry Tom Davies moved to Senior Warden and Mary replaced Tom as Junior Warden. MaryBeth Ansley was appointed to serve the remaining two years of Mary's term on the Vestry. Finally, after the publication of the official agenda for this meeting, Chris Mortenson withdrew his candidacy. Our vestry, per our by-laws, can be from 6-9 members in size (not including the Wardens). This election will give us 6 vestry members.

Diane Eisen moved that the slate of candidates be amended to eliminate Chris Mortenson and the remaining candidates be elected. Barbara Eckblad seconded. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

4. Presentation and re-election of Wardens:

*Senior Warden: Mary Cady Thickers

Mary noted that the Junior Warden position has been vacant since she became Senior Warden. After the publication of the agenda for this meeting, Kip Jacobs offered to stand for election as Junior Warden.

Owen Perry moved that Kip Jacobs be added as candidate for Junior Warden and the amended slate of candidates be elected. Kathy Housiaux seconded. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

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

- *Diane Eisen
- *Wendy Sopkovich
- *Mary Thickens
- *Marisa Roberts

Laura Thurow moved that the candidates be elected as presented. Bill Warner seconded. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

6. Introduction of the Clerk of the Vestry, Harry Ansley, and our Treasurer, Barbara Eckblad:

Mary recognized Harry and Barbara for their service and noted that each would be continuing in their respective positions. She also introduced Peggy Bean, Canon for Congregations at the Diocese of Milwaukee, who, as diocesan Transition Minister, will be working with the Vestry and Discernment Group in the search for a rector.

7. Remarks: Mary Cady Thickens, Senior Warden:

Mary took time to thank everyone whose committed efforts help make her job easier and keep St. Christopher's moving forward, from staff members to parishioners involved in our many committees and ministries.

8. Discernment Process: Mary Thickens, Senior Warden:

In noting that the discernment process had moved to the "discovery" phase, Mary stress the importance of garnering inputs from as many parishioners as possible. To that end, an all-parish event, facilitated by Martha Bergen, is scheduled for Saturday, February 20, 2016. Parishioners are urged to come together to talk about different periods in the parish's history, share lunch, identify trends and develop themes to help guide the Discernment Group.

Peggy reinforced the need for the broadest possible input, noting that a thorough understanding of our history helps us see how we have changed, what we are now and what we need to move forward successfully.

Mary renewed her commitment to regularly report to the parish on the group's progress.

9. Stewardship Campaign Analysis & Executive Summary – Financial Plan for St. Christopher's: Chris Mortenson:

In Chris' absence, Barbara provided an update on the current Stewardship campaign, an aggressive, multi-faceted effort aiming for a balanced budget within 3 years. While not all 2016 pledges have been received, 44 of the 65 received to date, including several 1st time pledges, represent increases averaging approximately 25 percent.

Without an accurate estimate of pledge income, the 2016 budget could not be finalized.

The Vestry now expects to approve the final 2016 budget by the end of February and present it to the parish in March.

Meanwhile, in addition to continuing to push for growth in the number and average size of individual pledges, the Vestry is exploring options for responsible use of Endowment Fund earnings and principle to maintain a balanced budget.

10. Recognition of outgoing vestry members, Diane Eisen and Bill Warner, and outgoing Co-Clerk of the Vestry, Janie Asmuth:

Mary thanked Diane, Bill and Janie for their dedicated service.

Janie took the opportunity to thank Mary for all her work to make the transition as easy as possible for the parish.

11. Adjournment:

There being no further business to discuss, **Rick Thickens moved that the meeting be adjourned. Bill seconded. The motion carried** and the meeting was adjourned at 10:50am.

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Respectfully submitted,
Harry Ansley, Clerk



Mary Cady Thickers

In 2015 Mary Thickers retired after a 43-year career in nursing. During her nursing career, most of her time was spent in critical care. She was the Director of the Emergency Department of Froedtert Health-Community Memorial Hospital for 16 years. Her focus was to create customer-centered programs, one of which was Family-Centered Care. This program provided options for family presence during all emergency care, including resuscitation. This program received state-wide and national attention.

Mary grew up in “upstate” New York as the daughter of a Methodist minister. She married Dick in 1973 and they have been members of St. Christopher’s since 1975. Their children grew up at St. Christopher’s and have both returned to their home church. Mary now happily watched their four grandchildren make St. Christopher’s a solid starting place for their faith journeys.

Mary serves as an acolyte for Sunday worship and has served on the Vestry and as Senior Warden in the past. She served as Senior Warden in 2016 as well.

Kenneth “Kip” Jacobs

Kip has worshiped at St. Christopher’s most of his life. He attended with his parents as a child during the first years of the church in the late 1950’s and 60’s. Kip has served as an usher, and acolyte for many years, and this is his second opportunity to join the vestry. Now acting as the Junior Warden, he continues to serve the church in other ways too.

Kip has restarted the Church’s community Garden “Love Grows” with a group of fellow parishioners to plant, water, weed and harvest food for The Gathering at St. James’ Church, a community outreach program at St. Christopher’s.

He could not imagine himself at any other church; he loves the St Christopher’s community and looks forward to serving the church in the future. He is married to Jill and they have 3 grown boys. Two are married and they also have a 3-year-old grandson.

Trish Juranitch

Trish lives in River Hills with her husband Bob, and their son Raymond, 13 years old. Their son Jackson, 23, is temporarily staying with them while he recovers from medical issues (he resides in Florida) and their daughter Laura, 20, attends college in upstate New York. (Laura was a St. Christopher’s nursery attendant for 6+ years!)

Trish moved to Dallas for college and then Chicago for graduate school and worked in the banking business. She moved back to the area to work at Cedarburg Lumber, the family business. Trish was Vice President of Cedarburg Lumber when the business was sold in 2005.

Trish has since filled her time with volunteer activities. She has served on the Board of Trustees at University School, ran several million-dollar fundraising campaigns and even an \$80,000 rummage sale! Her latest passion is assisting in getting juniors and seniors in high school internship positions to start their work portfolio.

Trish is a lifelong member of St. Christopher's, taught Ark Sunday school classes for seven years, was in one of the Adult Journey classes in the early 2000's, serves at The Gathering with Raymond and even played Mary in the pageant one year (Raymond was baby Jesus!). Trish truly enjoys worshipping with her family and parents, Bill and Sue Wernecke every Sunday.

Charlie Koehn

Charlie was born in Milwaukee, and grew up on the East Side, the son of two professional opera singers. He graduated from University School of Milwaukee and headed west to The University of Arizona in Tucson for a degree in History and Economics.

After graduation Charlie began his career in finance as an order runner in the Chicago trading pits. Moving to New York City for a promotion, Charlie met Sarah in Chicago a few days before. Romance bloomed into marriage and life in Greenwich Village.

Charlie has worked as an executive with several firms in Global Markets & Investments including JPMorgan Chase, Prudential Financial and most recently; Morgan Stanley. After moving back to Chicago, Charlie and Sarah moved to Fox Point full time in 2015 with twins (Charlie) Harvey, Jacqueline (4) and big sister Daphne (6). Charlie and Sarah have enjoyed the fellowship and spiritual journey at St. Christopher's since 2008.

Marisa Awodey Roberts

Marisa joined St. Christopher's Church in 2005 after being drawn to its welcoming community, beautiful church, and opportunity to create flower arrangements for the altar. She participated in the altar flower guild and Easter/Christmas decorating for many years. Currently Marisa is a member of the vestry, participates in discernment work and outreach, attended the diocesan convention, and helps with The Gathering. She looks forward to learning more about the Episcopal Church and increasing her

service to our greater community in the future. Marisa is most appreciative of the opportunities for growth extended to her at St. Christopher's.

Marisa was baptized, confirmed in, and attended St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Madison. As an adult she participated in other religious experiences when living in Sudan, Kenya, and with relatives in Lebanon.

Marisa feels fortunate to teach high school science (chemistry, biology, earth/space science, physics, and engineering) in a variety of schools in her career including Whitefish Bay, Shorewood, Mukwonago High Schools and Albuquerque Public Schools. In conjunction with MSOE she coached student SMART teams in working with researchers and creating three-dimensional biomolecular models. At MSOE's Center for Biomolecular Modeling Marisa developed curricula using 3-D chemical models, trained teachers in their educational use, and participated in research studies about their effectiveness in student learning, especially in the area of energetics.

Before teaching Marisa was Madison's first female garbage collector and first female firefighter for northern Nevada's BLM wildland firefighters. She worked as a wildlife technician for the DNR developing animal retrieval and data collection methods for coyotes and bobcat.

Marisa recently semi-retired after 32 years of teaching high school science and working as an adjunct professor at Concordia University of Wisconsin in the Graduate School of Education (methods of teaching, science teaching, face to face and online). She currently substitute teaches at Whitefish Bay Middle/High School and tutors students in chemistry and biology.

Marisa's hobbies include birding, gardening, travel, and spending time with family in Madison. In Bayside she serves as chair of the village's Architectural Review Committee.

Kathy Schwab

Kathy Schwab, 48, begins her 13th season with the Brewers, having been named as their Senior Director of Marketing in September 2004. She oversees all consumer marketing, general market and multicultural advertising, theme nights, creative, and branding initiatives for the organization.

Kathy and the marketing team have contributed to the Brewers surpassing 2.3 million tickets sold for the last 11 seasons, and have received regional and national recognition for their advertising and marketing efforts. Most recently, they were honored, for the fifth consecutive year, with The National Sports Forum's 2016 Overall Award of Excellence for their creative work across multiple media platforms. They were also Emmy Award winners for their Commercial Campaigns in 2013, 2014 and 2016; winner of the Outstanding Achievement in Sports Production in 2013; and winner of the Sports Program Segment for their "Happy" video in 2014.

Prior to joining the Brewers, Kathy served as Vice President of Account Services for Zizzo Group Advertising & Public Relations in Milwaukee from 2000–04. She also spent nearly ten years with The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. in Pennsylvania and held the position of Divisional Vice President/Creative Director prior to moving to Milwaukee in 1999.

Kathy is active in the Milwaukee community as well as nationally. She sits on the Community Initiatives and Advocacy Committee for Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Executive Council for Hunger Task Force; volunteers with the Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation; and serves on the steering committee for The National Sports Forum – the largest annual cross gathering of sports marketing, sales, promotions and event entertainment executives (NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL, Minor Leagues, Racing, Colleges, etc.) in North America.

Kathy is a member of TEMPO, a leading Milwaukee metro-area business organization; and was named to *The Business Journal's* "Forty Under 40" list in 2006.

A native of York, Pennsylvania, Kathy was a baptized, confirmed and active member of Shiloh United Church of Christ in York, Pennsylvania. She played Division III volleyball and graduated with a degree in English/professional writing and a minor in business administration from Elizabethtown College in 1990. Elizabethtown College is a small liberal arts college located in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania in Lancaster County. The school was founded in 1899 by members of the Church of the Brethren.

Kathy resides in Fox Point, Wisconsin and has been spiritedly involved at St. Christopher's since the day she and her beloved husband, Dick, entered its doors in October of 2014.

From the Senior Warden

I have to confess that in January 2016, when I assumed the role of Senior Warden here at St. Christopher's, I was a bit anxious. OK, let's be honest – I was terrified!

Our beloved church was in pain. We were grieving several real and/or perceived losses. We were angry and often pointing fingers at each other. As our numbers decreased we were projecting a budget deficit, and we were without a Rector. It felt chaotic and scary for all of us.

We needed a plan to be prepared for what God had in mind for St. Christopher's. After prayerful discussion at our Vestry meetings, it became evident that we must:

1. Heal the wounds of the people of St. Christopher's;
2. Find a way to responsibly manage the principle and earnings of the Endowment Fund – so our church is sustained while we grow both in membership and stewardship;
3. Call a Rector who will walk with us as we figure out what God wants us to do and be.

Things began to settle down once we had a plan. We decided to address healing as part of our discernment transition process.

1. We worked with the Rev. Martha Berger to look at our history and understand how our past impacted us today and will impact us tomorrow. We explored the dynamics of our congregation and as we talked with and listened to each other we began to heal.

We had wonderful supply clergy with us each Sunday this year, and as they preached the Gospel and its relevance today, we continued to heal.

There is a new and exciting energy at St. Christopher's. Our anger has dissipated, people we have missed are back amongst us. We are ready for new beginnings.

2. St. Christopher's is privileged to have a substantial Endowment Fund. We realize it has been entrusted to us and we must be good stewards of the resource. Since 2015 we have been using earnings from the Fund for outreach, capital expenses, and special projects. This year we investigated the possibility of borrowing from the fund, to reduce a budget deficit, if necessary. It is possible to do so at a very low interest rate and with a specific repayment schedule. We may need to do this in the future to meet expenses while we grow.

In the meantime, we will explore Legacy Planning to increase the Endowment as well as the earnings.

3. As you all know, the Discernment Group worked diligently to develop our Parish Portfolio, interview candidates, and call our new Rector, the Rev. Geoffrey Ward. We

will soon be planning how Father Geoff, the Vestry, and parishioners will use their gifts for ministry to strengthen and build up the church, and move forward together in our Christian journey.

I would like to give a shout out to our wonderful staff at St. Christopher's. The joy of serving the people of this church has been enhanced by the support of Gust Olson, our Parish Administrator, Katie Madlung, Christian Formation Coordinator, and Christian Rich, Interim Music Director.

I'm not terrified anymore! I think we are in a good place. I'm very excited about the future of our church and what God might have in store for us, and I thank you all for a year of prayers and support.

Blessings to each of you!

Mary Cady Thickens,
Senior Warden

Evangelism

St. Christopher's Church has a new committee this year, the Evangelism Committee. We began meeting in January, led by Emily Pfaff to discern our mission as a committee. We decided to host two events to promote connection and community at St. Christopher's parish this year. The first event was "The Lord's Prayer in Motion" with Stephanie Gadzik, a Diocesan Church Development Institute trainer. It was hosted on April 23rd and we learned a series of yoga poses that matched the words of the Lord's Prayer. The event was attended by about 18 people and was well received by all there.

Our second event was Cookies and Carols and was held on December 4th. As we've done in the past, we decorated cookies and sang traditional Christian carols together. Fortunately, this year we were accompanied by our interim music director, Christian Rich who delighted us by sharing backstories of our most favorite carols. It was a warm and wonderful way to start the Christmas season.

Despite Emily's departure during the summer when her family moved out of state, the committee continues to meet monthly to discuss how to promote community among our parishioners and extend invitations to others who may find a Christian home at St. Christopher's Church. We welcome ideas or suggestions on how to continue our work and anyone who would like to join us.

Prayerfully
Caro DeSisti
Diane Eisen
St. Christopher's Evangelism Committee



Interim Music Director's Report

A Time of Transition

After twenty-five years of dedicated service to St. Christopher's, Music Director John Beardsley retired at the end of the summer. John's admirable commitment to the church music program here lasted under several rectors. We thank John for his outstanding and longtime service and wish him well in his retirement and move to California.

St. Christopher's Choir

On Sunday, September 11th I began my tenure here at St. Christopher's. A new music director usually brings new ideas about choir music. These last five months have been no exception. Singing every Sunday at the 10:00 a.m. service, the choir has been busy learning an array of new pieces and psalm settings. Their talent, hard work, and enthusiasm, has been exemplary. Although the St. Christopher's Choir is a small ensemble, they are dedicated to supporting and enhancing the sung prayer of the worshipping community. The kind welcome they have extended to me has eased my transition period greatly. Choir members are: Diane Eisen, Laura Gough, Julie Holubowicz, Dee Lee, Hattie Purtell, Judy Scharfenberger and Nance Schmid. New members are always welcome and opportunities for church members to sing with the choir on special occasions are being explored.

Non-liturgical Musical Events

Advent was a busy time for music here at the church. After a year hiatus, *Cookies & Carols* returned on a snowy Second Sunday of Advent, December 4th. Jointly hosted by the Evangelism committee and the choir, this holiday family event featured cookies decorated by the children, the singing of Christmas carols, stories about various carols and the unexpected but delightful choreography of four-year-old Katherine DeSisti. Thirteen-year-old Raymond Juranitch was our Advent Wreath candle lighter and he also kept a watchful eye on the flames during the singing.

On the Third Sunday of Advent the church hosted *The Collegium Ladyes* who presented their annual Christmas Concert. This event consisted of medieval motets and carols mostly sung unaccompanied by this fourteen-voice ensemble. Many parishioners attended despite it being another snowy Sunday.

The Bach Chamber Choir will present *Peace and Rebirth* a concert of songs for the spring season, here on Sunday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m. Church members are cordially invited to attend. In a recent email to Mary Thickers from Lucy Cooper, their venue coordinator, stated "Our choir and our audience (we have many loyal followers who come to all our concerts) really love St. Christopher's both for the acoustics and the calm beauty of the space, especially when the sun is shining." I couldn't agree more!

The Stratton Memorial Organ

January marked the 50th anniversary of the installation of St. Christopher's pipe organ. Named the Stratton Memorial Organ, this instrument was given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Elizabeth Stratton McGregor by her mother, Mrs. Harold M. Stratton. Built by the Holtkamp Organ Company of Cleveland, Ohio, it has accompanied the worship of the St. Christopher's community every Sunday for five decades. To celebrate this instrument, the Milwaukee chapter of the American Guild of Organists will hold its annual members recital here on Sunday, May 7th at 3:00 pm. More information about this concert will be made available as the date nears.

A Personal Note

My sincere gratitude to so many of you who have expressed your welcome and kind support to me in these first five months of my tenure at St. Christopher's. I especially want to thank senior warden Mary Thickers and parish administrator Gust Olson for assisting me in my orientation to the musical-liturgical life of this community. My most frequent interactions here are with the choir and they have made me feel very much at home – thank you! Having now extended my initial commitment of four months, I now look forward to these months ahead and collaboration with our new rector to enhance and deepen the worship of the good people of St. Christopher's Church.

Christian Rich,
Interim Music Director



Nursery Report

St. Christopher's nursery is available for parents to take their children all year, serving our youngest parishioners and their families during Sunday services. Our nursery is bright and cheery and well stocked with toys to engage our youngest members while their parents are able to worship. There is no expectation that children be in the nursery. If you wish, your children can remain with you in the church. Even crying is lovely music as it is the harbinger of the next generation of church members.

However, should you wish to have your children in our nursery you should know that the nursery is staffed primarily with a bonded staff person who we contract with through CCN Nannies. She is assisted by the generous volunteer efforts of our parishioners of all ages. At all times there are two people staffing the nursery. And together, throughout the year they provide dedicated, consistent, safe and nurturing care for our little ones. We have beepers you can use as well if you would like us to contact you during the services.

Diane Eisen is the parish liaison for our nursery, Gust Olson arranges for the CCN Nannies and puts together the volunteer schedules, in the event you would like to volunteer.

The nursery is located down the main hall off the community room next to the rest rooms. We accept donations of items in good condition. If you have something you would like to donate, please take it to the office.

It is with deep appreciation for all the parents who have shared their children with us, and the staff and volunteers who care for them as well, that I submit this report.

Blessings,
Diane Eisen



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 2016 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. Each and every one of you are always willing and able to step up, especially at the last minute. Your continued help is appreciated in 2017. I would again like to say a special thank you to Lois Degener who continues to take home our linens each week and wash and iron them. This saves the church a considerable amount of money as many churches have to pay for this service. Thanks Lois!

Being the director of the Altar Guild continues to be a very rewarding labor of love. I enjoy working with all of the members, especially this past year. It has not always been easy, as each visiting priest has their own preference to how the altar is set, but I very much appreciate your flexibility.

We continue to seek out new members of the Altar Guild. The time commitment is minimal, but so very important. We even provide on the job training! This could also be a GREAT opportunity for some of our younger members of the congregation to get involved. Won't you please consider giving just a few moments of your time on Sunday when you are already at church?

Blessings for a peaceful and prosperous 2017!

Judy Scharfenberger
Altar Guild Director – 2016

Fellowship

We had another great year in fellowship. Harry Ansley and I along with all of you helped keep our youngest to our oldest St. Christopher's attendees full and happy after Sunday services. We all also together whipped up several potlucks for the annual school picnics and other celebrations. We look forward to another great year in 2017, carrying the word of Christ in the form of food and drink. Enjoy!

John Diedrich

Caring Committee

The Caring Committee is a group of parishioners who volunteer to assist functions at St. Christopher's. We attend weddings, rehearsals, concerts, funerals and other functions to provide a welcome, hospitality and oversight at the church. A blessing is that, though the committee is "fluid" and we don't have meetings, we always have someone at the church to represent St. Christopher's.

MaryBeth Ansley

Memorial Garden Redesign

Come out and see the changes in the Memorial Garden! In the early '80s the garden was established and has always been a wonderfully peaceful place at St. Christopher's. Flat, memorial stones were set in place to remember our loved ones. However, as time went on it was clear that there would not be enough room on the horizontal slabs to accommodate the 260 plots that exist in the garden.

With this in mind, it was decided to research and come up with a plan to memorialize all individuals in the memorial garden. Wednesday, November 2, 2016, four new, vertical memorial stones were set into place. The new granite stones arrived, engraved with the names of love ones who have passed away. The intersecting stones were set into place upon a sturdy foundation.

With great planning and little disruption to the area around the garden, we are blessed with a beautiful space that can be admired and revered for years to come. A prayerful thanks to Bill Wernecke and his committee for seeing this project through until completion.

Kip Jacobs,
Junior Warden



Children's Ministry

The children's ministry at St. Christopher's Church has made some small but noteworthy changes this year. We still have four classrooms just as we did last year. The youngest classroom, or the Ark, has the 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 have our oldest children, which include the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

We do, however, have three new teacher helpers this year. Nick Holmes helps in the Ark, Ava Fischer helps in the Weavers, and Olivia Weseman helps in the Journeymen. They have all been wonderful additions to our program. They help alongside our veteran teachers, Maddy Fischer who teaches in the Journeymen classroom, Rachel Powlen who teaches in the Weavers classroom, Zach Fischer and Micky Braeger who teach together in the Knitters classroom, and Robert Claud Diedrich and Nick Weseman who teach together in the Ark.

The curriculum we use to teach the children about God and His people stayed the same as last year. We continue to use the curriculum entitled "Spark: Activate Faith" for the Ark, Knitters, and Weavers, and all the children are learning about lessons from the first cyclical year of the program teaching key lessons from the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament stories are presented in the fall, and the New Testament stories are presented in the winter and spring. This fall the children learned the stories of Adam and Eve, Joseph, and Baby Moses. In the winter we shifted to Jesus' birth, the Angels' Visit, and the Wise Men. Currently the children are hearing the stories about John the Baptist, Jesus' trip to Nazareth, and The Disciples.

The Journeymen, on the other hand, are learning lessons from the Rite 13 curriculum since, just as last year, we had so many new children join that class. *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 make choices and decisions, how to ask for help, and what their image of God is.

The children's ministry at St. Christopher's Church would not be possible without the dedication of our wonderful teachers and teacher helpers, the support of our parents, 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

Outreach Committee members during 2016 included Steve Petrie, Chairman, Harry Ansley and Diane Eisen. In 2016 our work included awarding grants to local agencies, new initiatives and ongoing outreach activities as described below.

Endowment Fund Mini-Grants

Agencies with urgent, immediate needs, especially those providing services to children, was the focus of our 2016 Endowment Fund Mini-Grant program. Each of six (6) selected agencies were awarded \$3,000 mini-grants. (See separate article for more details.)

Sundries

St. Christopher's continues to support this vital ministry, frequently delivering large collections of sundries to St. James', including travel size shampoo, toothpaste, and laundry pods among others, for distribution to the homeless. Through July 23 at least 955 people were served.

The Gathering

At their annual Volunteer Appreciation Event, held on April 15, 2016 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, The Gathering recognized St. Christopher's Episcopal Church for having provided volunteer lunch service groups at least 85 times through 2015. MaryBeth and Harry Ansley represented St. Christopher's at the event and accepted the Certificate of Appreciation in the name of all volunteers. St. Christopher's volunteered another 6 times during 2016 and is scheduled for another 6 dates in 2017. (See separate article for more details.)

Community Garden

Produce from the garden was provided to The Gathering where it was used to help with their community meal program in subsequent months.

School Supplies Collection

Parishioners donated a great variety and quantity of items for our School Supplies Collection drive to benefit the children at Believers in Christ Christian Academy (where our MaryBeth Ansley is the 3rd grade teacher).

Collegium Ladyes Concert

A December 2016 Christmas Concert was sponsored, with free-will donations benefitting Welfare Warriors, a St. Christopher's Endowment Fund Mini-Grant recipient.

Christmas Outreach 2016

We partnered with St. Mary's Catholic Church in Menomonee Falls in support of their ongoing Burmese Refugee Ministry that seeks to assist newly arrived Burmese families in settling in the Milwaukee area. Most come with few of the necessities for establishing themselves in a new home. Our goal, along with St. Mary's, was to

provide some of those basics, and more, starting with Christmas. The Christmas tree in the Community Room was decorated with over 70 gift tags, each marked with the wishes of a member of one of the three families whose needs we would be addressing. Thanks to your generosity, every wish was filled and delivered to St. Mary's prior to Christmas for distribution to the families.

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For the Outreach Committee,
Harry Ansley

The Gathering and St. Christopher's: An Enduring Partnership

It's been 36 years since The Gathering was created in 1981, 35 years since the first Saturday lunch at St. James' Episcopal Church in January, 1982, and St. Christopher's has been a partner on that journey from the very beginning.

Ever since St. Christopher's parishioner George Green played a critical role in creating The Gathering, we've contributed our collective time and talents in support of the mission of The Gathering in countless ways and on untold occasions. In recent years, our focus has been on providing volunteer groups for Saturday lunch services, over 90 times since The Gathering started keeping an official count, including six (6) times in 2016, and have committed to another six (6) dates in 2017.

To everyone who already participates with us at The Gathering, thank you. If you have not yet had the opportunity to serve, we urge you to join with us soon. If you would like more information, or want to commit to any of the remaining 2017 dates, please contact Harry Ansley (hfansley@yahoo.com; 414-731-8350) or MaryBeth Ansley (marybethansley@yahoo.com).

The Gathering continues to directly address the issue of hunger in Milwaukee by serving those in need. We pray that you will choose to help continue the work of so many of our St. Christopher's "family"—past and present—and support The Gathering in their ongoing efforts to stop hunger—one day at a time, one person at a time.

The Gathering
"People in community feeding the hungry."

Harry & MaryBeth Ansley,
for the Outreach Committee

2016 Endowment Fund Grant Recipients Selected

***Our mission:** The Outreach Committee of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church works to spread the word of God through serving others. We listen to and care deeply about the needs of the people in our immediate community and the world beyond. We will work to inspire the parish to be involved in the outreach ministry which is firmly grounded in Christ's teachings.*

In keeping with our mission, the committee chose to focus its 2016 Endowment Grant Funding efforts upon **local agencies with urgent needs**, with a preference for those providing **services to children**.

The process remained unchanged from 2015:

- Mini-grant applications were solicited for grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 each, with nine (9) requests submitted. By focusing upon smaller programs, grant funds are more likely to represent a significant portion of the program/project budget, having a more critical impact with more easily measured results and could more readily inspire others within St. Christopher's to be involved in this or another outreach ministry.
- Committee members individually reviewed and evaluated each application per established criteria:
 - Is the project relevant to our area of focus?
 - Is the project specific, quantifiable and measurable?
 - Is the grant application accurate and complete?
 - Are the requested grant funds critical to the success of the project?
- The committee then met to discuss the projects, share individual ratings and generate a quantitative ranking of the requests to aid in determining which projects to put forward for possible funding. The agencies making requests were, in alphabetical order:
 - Burmese Refugee Ministry at St. Mary's Parish
 - Casa Maria Hospitality House
 - The Gathering
 - Grand Avenue Club
 - Meta House
 - Milwaukee LGBT Community Center
 - Sister Pat's House
 - Sojourner Family Peace Center
 - Welfare Warriors

While all the organizations were providing viable services in our area of focus, there was a significant fall-off in ratings between the top five (5) and bottom four (4) programs. Accordingly, the committee recommended to the Vestry that the five (5) highest ranking programs each be awarded \$3,000 mini-grants. The recommendation was approved at the January 12, 2017 Vestry meeting with funds distributed the following week.

Listed below are brief descriptions of the funded programs, including the approved grant amount and proposed evaluation methods:

Burmese Refugee Ministry at St. Mary's Parish

Amount Requested: \$3,000

Program Description: The ministry helps refugees from Burma (Myanmar) transition into American society, with a goal of making them as independent as possible. Ten (10) families will receive assistance during 2017.

Each family is visited, with an interpreter, to determine specific needs. Critical clothing and household items are provided—either through parishioner donations or purchase. Other essential services include: lessons in English; assistance with medical/dental appointments; driving to appointments; explaining various city-living and general life skills such as public transportation, mail, check-writing and home cleaning.

Mini grant funds will be used to purchase key items and services for the ten (10) families:

- Mattresses/box springs: \$1,000
- Gift cards for essential purchases: \$1,000
- Used appliances: \$500
- Interpreters fees @ \$10/hour: \$500

Evaluation: A report will be written about each family, including details on the range of services and items provided.

Casa Maria

Amount Requested: \$3,000

Program Description: Casa Maria provides direct monetary assistance to families staying in their emergency housing facility to help overcome small roadblocks to ending their homelessness. The barriers are many: doubled security deposits due to prior evictions; lack of appliances; paying past due electrical bills to get power turned on. Or it could be funds for a GED exam fee, a birth certificate, a background check, car repairs or work clothes. Needs vary by family, and each stipend is considered separately. A \$3,000 grant should help, on average, as many as twenty (20) families.

Evaluation: A Casa worker meets with each mother weekly to check on progress towards finding housing and to determine if a stipend is justified to help overcome any barriers being confronted. Afterwards the worker continues to follow up with the family to determine the effectiveness of the stipend and determine if any other funds might be needed.

The Gathering

Amount Requested: \$3,000

Program Description: The Gathering has been feeding the hungry in Milwaukee for more than 34 years, with St. Christopher's involvement from the very beginning—most recently in the form of volunteer service groups for the Saturday Lunch Program and providing produce from the Community Garden. This is an important, well managed and, until recently, well-funded organization.

Recent changes in priorities and procedures at two corporate donors have resulted in a combined loss of funding on the order of \$40,000-\$50,000 per year. The shortfall is currently being covered through reserves, but is not a sustainable solution. Fundraising activities are increasing, but program cuts are likely if deficit reduction is not achieved this year.

This mini-grant is simply a deficit reduction effort to help avoid cuts in critical programs, programs with very deep roots in the St. Christopher's community.

Evaluation: We will revisit with The Gathering the success of their overall fundraising efforts going into the next fiscal year, beginning July 01, 2017.

Milwaukee LGBT Community Center

Amount Requested: \$3,000

Program Description: Project Q is the youth program at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, serving upwards of 500 youth per year. The program is grant funded, but does not accommodate several key needs of this group ages 13-24 years.

Most come from very low income families or are homeless. They are chronically hungry, but there is no program budget for food. They come with backgrounds burdened with multiple traumas. The program seeks to meet some of their most basic needs of food, shelter and adult guidance. Further, the Center wants to offer them a view of a world larger than they know, instilling hope by exposing them to activities and resources in the greater Milwaukee area that they otherwise would not have access to. There is no program budget for bus passes to attend free events in the Milwaukee area that can either provide cultural enrichment or some desperately needed life skills development.

The mini-grant will enable the purchase of easily served, kid-friendly food as well as bus passes to enable attendance of local events.

Evaluation: Detailed records will be maintained concerning meals offered and bus passes provided for attendance at local activities.

Welfare Warriors

Amount Requested: \$3,000

Program Description: Funds are needed to cover telephone costs for the MOMSLine resource, printing and postage, and transportation for this Milwaukee non-profit made up of poor moms serving mothers and children in poverty, many of whom are homeless or struggling to avoid homelessness. Started in 1986, there has been no paid staff since 2007.

The MOMSLine gives mothers and others the tools needed to survive homelessness and poverty through skills sharing, education, and encouragement. Moms learn how to get food stamps, where to find food pantries or meal programs, how to navigate the W-2 system, and how to apply for disability when appropriate—as well as a variety of housing-related services.

A variety of informational pamphlets and survival guides must be printed/copied and distributed in support of the MOMSLine outreach and other efforts.

Volunteers are reimbursed for gas costs when providing transportation to necessary appointments and interviews for mothers in poverty who are unable to take the bus due to disability, last minute time changes, or if no bus line goes to their location—especially important for homeless families without family and friends in Milwaukee and lacking any support system.

Evaluation: Welfare Warriors evaluates goals on a case-by-case basis by individual volunteers as well as at monthly board meetings. At least two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors are current or former welfare beneficiaries.

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For the Outreach Committee
Harry Ansley

The Year in Review—2016

Baptism: Owen David Zwaska

New & Returning Members: Susie Wigdale & Marina, Michael Ruf & children

Memorial Services: Susan Rita Maisa, Huntington Eldridge, Jr.,
Nancy “Ginger” Browne (Committal), Richard “Dick” L. Schwab

Events

2/10 Ash Wednesday service with Bishop Miller, who supplied throughout Lent
2/20 Discernment Event with the Rev. Martha Berger
Holy Week: Maundy Thursday with overnight Vigil, Good Friday worship, Easter Vigil
4/10 Discernment Visit with Canon Peggy Bean
4/15 Gathering Volunteer Recognition for St. Christopher’s
4/17 Baptism of Owen David Zwaska
4/23 Yoga: The Lord’s Prayer in Motion
5/1 Bach Chamber Music Choir concert
5/8 Mother’s Day pancake fellowship
May – Planting the parish garden
6/5 End of school year picnic
6/12 9 AM Summer schedule begins
6/14 Book Discussion: *Crossing to Safety*
7/17 Memorial Service for Ginger Browne
8/6 Celebration BBQ for John Beardsley
8/28 Memorial Service for Dick Schwab
August- Outreach collection for school supplies
September – Harvesting the garden
9/11 Sunday school resumes – parish picnic
Christian Rich joins St. Christopher’s as Interim Music Director
10/30 Garden clean up begins
10/7-8 Diocesan Convention
11/2 Installation of renovated Memorial Garden
12/4 Cookies & Carols
12/11 Collegium Ladyes Benefit Concert
12/24 Christmas Eve Pageant and Christmas service at 10 pm
December – Christmas outreach for Burmese Refugees

Supply clergy:

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller, The Rt. Rev. Edwin L. Leidel,
The Rev. Pedro Acosta, The Rev. John Allen, The Rev. Tom Binder, The Rev.
Wayne Fehr,
The Rev. John Hickey, The Rev. Matthew Olver, The Rev. Richard Smiraglia

Ladies’ Night Out met three times
Book Discussion group met once

Diocesan Convention - St. Christopher's sent deputies: Diane Eisen, Mary Thickers,
Wendy Sopkovich, Marisa Roberts



Photograph by Mike DeSisti