



St. Christopher's Courier

June 2015

The Rector's Musings

The thing about sabbaticals is that you slow down. For me it is the blessed release of not thinking at the end of every day, "well, I got through 75% of my 'have to get completed' list," and instead to have the time to think big, to dream, to remember, to lament, and to be grateful.

My sister has a discipline of gratitude. I am learning from her as I read her daily Facebook posts about the things that make her grateful. She is grateful for big and small. She is grateful for things for which I do not find gratitude within me (hot weather, for example). But still, at the end of the day she has a tidy list of gratitudes and I see what she is up to. If you hold yourself accountable each day for gratitude, you find more things for which to be grateful. And that makes life better. Simple? No, it's a discipline. She works at it.

We think of discipline as curbing those things that we do wrong. We think about disciplining our children. But we can also think of discipline as a way to give us more of the good things in life. Like health, and a feeling of well being.

As I have been thinking about it these past weeks, cultivating gratitude is just better all the way around than finding fault, or blaming, or worse, shaming. There is a place for lament in the world (perhaps I'll write about that in the future). But lament is not what we usually do. More often, I find myself grouching or complaining. Lament is different, but gratitude is better.

For example, I can lament a lack of worship attendance in the summer (or anytime, I suppose), or I can be grateful to and for those who take time out of competing claims and internal doubts to still come and worship.

I can lament the folks who I no longer see at St. Christopher's (well, indeed, I can get downright snarky about that at times!), or I can be grateful for the new folks who I am now privileged to know and come to love; and also grateful for the folks who have taken on new roles of ministry that have been held by others in the past. I can lament all those who have died these past five years at St. Christopher's, or I can be grateful that I came to know some of them well, and grateful that I was able to be with them and their families as they came to the end of their lives. I can miss them and still be grateful.

If I open my eyes to gratitude my life abounds in good things. I don't really have to search for reasons to be grateful, I just have to turn my heart towards gratitude and there they are, all these reasons to be grateful: A parking space right near the door to the store... a child who is made happy by a card I sent to her.... days of low humidity... unblocked writer's block.... a friend rebounding from a stroke... a dog who jumps up in my lap just to be held and petted.... a new album of Gregorian Chant newly released... a new book by a favorite author to savor... the smell of newly cut grass... an unexpected rainbow... a memory of joy... the simple experience of God's presence.

I could go on and incur some eye rolling. (And be grateful that you are reading and paying enough attention to roll your eyes!) But instead let me suggest that *you* try out gratitude as a discipline for

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

even a day. Watch for the big things like health and food on your table. But watch for the small things, too: like a sunset, or a child's hand in your hand, or a softly snoring animal.

And because I am your priest, may I lovingly remind you to take even a moment each day to be grateful for God's presence in your life. God, who is equally everywhere, appreciates our gratitude.

See you all soon and sending love—with gratitude for all of you... Debra +

The Warden's Thoughts

Summer is here! The list of things we want to accomplish when the weather is warm seems nearly impossible to achieve. We get to enjoy the warmth of the sun, the smell of grass and flowers, the sound of birds, the rumble of a good thunderstorm. Camp fires, cookouts with friends, weekend escapes... It is what we wait all winter for.

Thinking about what I wanted to do with my family this summer triggered some challenging thoughts. "Winter is going to come back. How am I going to enjoy every ounce of summer and prepare for winter?" PANIC!!!! I heard myself say, "I just am not ready for winter. I am not liking this!" Those thoughts just ruined my summer solace!

A couple things came to mind subsequently.

1. Make an effort to get outside and enjoy being outside whether you are playing or working.
2. Go to church when the weather is nice to thank God for the variations of summer and our seasons. After church go in back to see the progress of the garden.
3. Make plans now so that we can enjoy winter. Do we need different clothes? Do we need to plan a trip or two in advance? What do we need?
4. Why does our relationship with God change by season? In essence; warm weather equals vacation from God and church. Cooler weather has families packing themselves in the car every Sunday preparing for Christmas and Easter. Why does our commitment change?
5. What does the next season of our church community look like? What do we need to do now so that we can enjoy our future? Ideas are great but what is our personal commitment?

I am going to make this short so you (and I) can get outside.

"Thank God!"

Darrell Fischer,
Senior Warden

The Treasurer's Tickler

*"Just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with the
Scripture – 'I believed and so I spoke' – we also believe and so we speak..."*
2 Corinthians 4:13

Did you know that our word "parish" comes from the Greek *paraoikos*, which means "*pilgrim, passing stranger*". I didn't. That is an interesting concept – *pilgrim, passing stranger* – when we think about it. The earliest Christians saw their gathered group of Christians, who worshipped together, praised our Lord together, prayed together, shared the bread and wine together, fundamentally as *pilgrims, passing strangers*. Pilgrims. Passing. These words infer a journey, movement. This flies in the face of how I see our parish at St. Christopher's and me as a *parishioner*. Does it challenge the way you see yourself as a *parishioner*? I think of myself as having *arrived*. Do you? I think of my place as a *parishioner* as one of *being*, not *journeying*. Do you?

If you and I take the witness of the earliest Christians to heart, living our lives as *parishioners* in the way they believed Christians should live, then we will change how we see ourselves. They remind us, by the name they have given us – *parishioners* – that we are journeying, just like those we meet who are coming to our *parish*, as *strangers*, to seek God in our midst. We are *passing strangers*, just like those who come through our doors as *passing strangers*, looking to see if God is with us, if they can find God here in our *parish*. We are no different than they are. So, let's greet our fellow *passing strangers* who visit us this summer in the truth that we are alike and not different. They are no more *passing strangers* than we are.

Blessings,

Barbara Eckblad, Treasurer

Behind the Scenes at St. Christopher's

St. Christopher's has been blessed with a recent transplant from Lake Forest, Illinois. JEANNE ADA NIELSEN moved with her family to River Hills two years ago. Jeanne Ada has since contributed to the life of St. Christopher's in many ways.



You may have seen Jeanne Ada as an acolyte or as a reader at the Easter Vigil. She often helps her mom Ada set up for social events and has served at The Gathering. Unless you have a nursery age child, you may not know that she is very frequently in the nursery during the 10:00 service. This is truly a "behind the scenes" endeavor and a valuable service to parents of young children. She likes helping out with our youngest parishioners.

Jeanne Ada is an avid exercise buff. She does Dancercise and Zumba as well as working out on the treadmill and the elliptical machine. Recently she has become a part of the Milwaukee area "Best Buddies" program and is looking forward to meeting a new buddy as her previous friend moved out of town.

When asked why she liked St. Christopher's, one thing she mentioned was that she could walk to church. She has found many friendly people with whom she can interact. She enjoys the church potlucks, Ladies' Night Out and the kids' activities.

Thank you, Jeanne Ada, for your contributions to the life of St. Christopher's.

Carolyn Davies

Qs from the Pews

This month's Qs is not from any one specific person but rather responds to the various people who have asked about what will be happening at General Convention this year in Salt Lake City.

The last week in June and the first week in July is our church's triennial General Convention. This year promises to be a very important General Convention. The 800 plus deputies and 300 plus bishops will consider legislation across a variety of issues. Perhaps the most significant of those will be:

*They will consider re-organizing the church at the national level. They will consider changing the role of the Presiding Bishop, moving the church center from Manhattan, downsizing General Convention, moving to a unicameral Convention, etc. There has been a task force studying these issues for the past three years and there is sure to be controversy about what to do next.

Editor's Note: 'Qs from the Pews' are taken from questions that come up at Coffee Hour or in conversation with the Rector. If you have a Q to submit for this column, please email the Rector or the office.

*The Bishops will select a new Presiding Bishop who will then need to be confirmed by the House of Deputies.

*They will again talk about liturgical issues regarding the blessings of same sex unions. This issue has taken a more prominent place on the church's radar because of how many states now allow for gay and lesbian couples to get married, and because the Supreme Court is likely to make some sort of decision nationally while Convention is in session.

*Denominational health care issues.

Convention is in legislative session for ten days. There are many issues that they will consider along with worshipping every day, using the exhibit hall, holding hearings, having reunions, etc. I encourage everyone to go to the General Convention website and the media hub to follow some of the live stream action in both Houses. It's your church at its messy best.

See you in August! The Priest (aka Debra)

Ladies' Night Out in June

What: Ladies Night Out

When: Thursday evening, June 25, 2015 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Where: 1060 West Bradley Road, River Hills

Cost: Flat fee of \$10 per person, everything included

Type of Meal: A Grazing Dinner with space and time to talk with everyone

RSVP by sending a note to Ada Nielsen: acn53217@gmail.com
or calling her at 312-953-1083

Outreach from St. Christopher's

SUMMER COLLECTIONS

Red Door Clothing at St. James'

Twice a month people in need of clothing come to St. James'. Needed this summer:

Men's t shirts

Men's belts

Men's jeans

Individually wrapped snacks such as granola bars, candy, etc.

There is a blue bin in the community room.

School Supplies –

We will again be collecting school supplies and backpacks for distribution in the fall. Ask your children to save unused supplies from this year. So often they are tossed and could be donated to children in need. More info on this in July. Stay tuned.

Keep the Sundries Coming!

You may be interested in knowing that the Sundries ministry has served 477 guests through May of this year.

This month we will be delivering another generous supply of Sundries for that ministry at St. James' Episcopal Church on Wisconsin Avenue. The special interest of the month is laundry pods. The pods are individually bagged with instructions, and each pod provides an opportunity for those who need them to keep their clothes clean.

The distribution date for June is the 27th, together we are making a difference!

Diane Eisen and Carolyn Davies
for St. Christopher's 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.

End of Year Picnic



*Photographs by
Darrell Fischer*

May 31, 2015



Planting the Garden



May 31, 2015

*Photographs by
Darrell Fischer and
(bottom this page)
Susan Hackl*



Events in June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office closed	2 Office closed	3	4 7 AM—Holy Eucharist & Discussion—last of the summer	5	6
7 9 AM Holy Eucharist; Nursery open; 10:20 AM Outreach Committee mtg.	8	9	10	11	12	13 9:45 AM—1:15 PM—St. Christopher's at The Gathering
14 9 AM Holy Eucharist; Nursery open	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 9 AM Holy Eucharist; Nursery open	22	23 6:30 PM—Vestry Meeting	24	25 6:30 PM—Ladies' Night Out	26	27
28 9 AM Holy Eucharist; Nursery open	29	30				




**THE GATHERING'S 2015
GOLF CLASSIC**
Monday, June 22nd
Evergreen Golf Club - Elkhorn, WI
 to benefit The Gathering meal programs,
 Milwaukee, WI
12:30 Lunch
1:30 Shotgun Start
Followed by Dinner and Raffle
\$125/golfer
 • You may register online at www.thegatheringwis.org • or by calling The
 Gathering at 414-272-4122 • or via e-mail at soulfood@thegatheringwis.org
People in community feeding Milwaukee's hungry since 1982

JUNE MILESTONES	
BIRTHDAYS	
1	Kathy Schwab
5	Darrell Fischer
7	John Diedrich Jackson Marlin
13	Margy Stratton
15	Ada Nielsen
16	Lisa Lindsay
17	Allen Higgins Ally Thurow
18	Anne Bedore Addison Darrow
21	Mike Grehn
23	Liza Sadoff
24	Sue Wernecke
25	Daryl Perry
27	Jimmy Weseman
ANNIVERSARIES	
1	Julia & David Uihlein
7	Anne & Roy LaBudde
8	Beth & David Sande
10	Patti Brose & Mark Ziskind
14	Terry & Dirk Hausmann
17	Laura & Jason Thurow Nancy & William Warner
20	Carol & Dick Wythes
26	Sue & Bill Wernecke Susan & Dick Hackl
30	Roz & Charlie Krause Lilias & Jackson Bruce

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Email: office@stchristopherswi.org
Rector's Email: revdebra@aol.com
Website: www.stchristopherswi.org

Parish Office

Open Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Staff

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*
Gust Olson III, *Parish Administrator*
John Beardsley, *Music Director*
Katie Madlung, *Christian Formation Coordinator*
Gloria Bond, *Housekeeper*
Michael Schneider, *Building & Grounds Supervisor*

Vestry – Meets 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Darrell Fischer and Tom Davies, *Wardens*
Janie Asmuth & Harry Ansley, *Co-Clerks*
(2016) - Kathie Eilers, Diane Eisen & Bill Warner
(2017)- Alan Becker, Carrie Bedore & Kathy Stanford
(2018) - Barbara Eckblad & Mary Thickers

Committee and Ministry Contacts

Altar Flowers: Roz Krause
Altar Guild: Judy Scharfenberger
Building & Grounds: Tom Davies
Caring Ministry: M.J. Perry, MaryBeth Ansley
Memorial Garden: Bill Wernecke, Kathy Stanford
Outreach: Steve Petrie
Prayer Chain: Kathy Housiaux

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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THE COURIER

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

The Holy Eucharist

Summer Sundays 9:00 a.m.

Thursday Eucharist on hiatus until September

Outdoor Labyrinth - open to the public, weather permitting

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*

