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We are a community of faith striving to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves.

Dear members and friends of Christ Church,

As I have noted before, the Episcopal Church (and American Christianity more generally) is under great stress in the 2020s: attendance is little more than half what it was a decade ago (and longer trends are even worse), programs and ministries that thrived for decades are failing for lack of participants and volunteers, and the church feels less and less necessary in our society as more and more people turn to self-directed spirituality or reject religion altogether. We feel these stresses at Christ Church, as we observe empty pews and absent friends on Sunday mornings, note the lack of programs for children and youth, struggle to invite folks or connect with new folks who do come, and don't know what to do in response to these things.

So this Summer, the Vestry and I invite all of you to pray with us for Christ Church, asking for guidance as we engage in a parish-wide process to discern what God is calling us to do and be in this stressful time. Over the next couple of months, Vestry members will be contacting folks to talk about what you love about Christ Church, your concerns for Christ Church, and your hopes for the future of Christ Church and how God is calling you to be part of that future. Our hope is that, through the information from these conversations (which we will compile and present later in the Fall), we will discern God's call to this parish family and be able to start taking concrete steps toward answering that call, so that instead of focusing on the pressures and anxieties of this time, we can focus on God and how God is at work among us even now.

- Fr. John

Beware of Scams

Those whose phone numbers are in the church directory may have recently received a text purporting to be from Fr. John asking for an unspecified favor (which turned out to be money in the form of Ebay gift cards). This is an unfortunately common scam targeting churches; an unscrupulous actor obtains names of church members and contacts them pretending to be their pastor or another staff member, preying on the trust and care that exist within Christian communities. This is the third time Christ Church has been hit by such a scam in two years, and will probably not be the last, because our information is out there despite the efforts we have taken to protect it.

Please be wary and take steps to protect yourself:

- double-check the sender's phone number or address (it's trivially easy to make "John Adams" the display name of a number or email address that isn't his)
- be suspicious of vague requests or other messages that don't sound like the priest you know

- don't get caught by a false sense of urgency (for example, if someone actually wanted you to do something quickly, they wouldn't waste time by not saying what they needed in the first message)
- know our giving rules (all giving to the church, including Fr. John's discretionary fund, goes through the office and is not handled by Fr. John, so he would never ask you to send money in any form directly to him)
- if in doubt, do not respond to the sender but call, text, or email the Office or Fr. John using a number or address you already have.

A prayer for Christ Church in discernment

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family of Christ Church. Send your Holy Spirit to speak through us, that we may discern your will and be the community of faith you call us to be, striving to love you fully and our neighbors as ourselves. Guide our conversations, grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

New Study in Church History

On **Wednesday, June 5, at 10:30 in the Undercroft**, we will begin a new study **Make Disciples of All Nations: A History of the Early Church**, in which we will potentially consider (among other things) the acts of the apostles beyond what Luke recorded (such as Thomas' mission in India), why Christianity grew even though it was outlawed, early martyrs (with and without lions), Gnosticism and other variations on Christianity that were eventually deemed heretical, how the New Testament as we know it came to be, the acts and motives of the Emperor Constantine, the drama of the Council of Nicaea, and where the collapse of the Empire left the Church. At this first session, Fr. John will offer an overview of how the Church grew from a small group in Jerusalem to the sole legal religion of the Roman Empire, and we will discuss how frequently we want to meet before adjourning around 11:45 for Eucharist in the Chapel.

Wednesday Eucharist

On Wednesdays, we celebrate Holy Eucharist at Noon in the Chapel (enter via the glass Undercroft door at the back of the church building). These brief (thirty minutes) spoken services commemorate the saint of the day from the Episcopal calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts, and are perfect for those who want to attend a service but are unable to come on Sunday mornings or who want an additional gathering for corporate prayer to help them through the week. In June, there will be services June 5 and 19, but no services on June 12 or 26.

Summer Sundays

Continuing a summer tradition, we will have fellowship time with lemonade and cookies on the patio (or in the undercroft if it's raining) after the 10:30 service from **June 2 through August 25**; if you are willing to help bring beverages and treats or set up and clean up, please sign up at <https://christchurchmvl.org/volunteering.cfm?ID=318>.

Kings Grant Eucharist

Fr. John will celebrate the Eucharist in the chapel at Kings Grant at 1:30 pm on **Thursday, June 6**. Because of Independence Day, the July service will be on Wednesday, July 3 at 1:30 pm.

David Cole Service

The funeral for David Cole will be **Wednesday, June 12, at 3:30 pm**, followed by a committal in the columbarium, with no reception.

Public Theology

Public Theology meets on **Wednesday, June 12** at Mountain Valley Brewing (4220 Mountain Valley Rd, Axton). This month we are joined by Kim Bobo, Executive Director for Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, who will consider the link between theology, public theology, and the work of advocacy/lobbying. We

begin with socializing and food around 6:00, with the discussion going from 7:00 to 8:00; please note that the food truck (D's Hot Ice, serving hot dogs, burgers, wings, fries, chicken sandwiches, and Italian Ice) takes cash or Cash App only.

Bible Studies

Our Monday evening Bible study is on hiatus through the summer. Our Sunday morning Bible study (9:30 in the Parish House) is continuing to read the story of King David.

Parrish Award Winner

During the service on May 19, the 2024 Beverly S. Parrish, Jr. Christian Leadership Award was awarded to **Bradley Tyler Johnson VI**. At Christ Church, Tyler serves as an acolyte and helps with Loaves & Fishes, and at Greensboro Day School, he volunteered for a Tiny House Project and at the local Richard's Dinner on Christmas Day, earned a School Citizenship Award five years, tutored as a member of the National Honor Society, and for his senior year was awarded the best parking space (in the shade!) by the administration in recognition of his outstanding behavior and as a token of their esteem. In the Fall, he will study Engineering at Washington & Lee University.

Men's Club

The next meetings of the Men's Club will be September 4, October 2, and December 4; upcoming topics will include at least one discussion of the history of Christ Church and another Trivia Night led by Fr. John, with the entire congregation being invited to the latter. More details will be available as we get closer to the Fall.

Loaves & Fishes – June 26, 2024

Members of the community are invited to this free meal in our Undercroft from **5:00-6:00 p.m.** Spread the Word!

Andy and Tara Williams plan the meals, and the food is delicious! **We need volunteers to help prepare, serve, and clean up and to send desserts, fruit, and items listed below. Please sign up on the following link [Christ Episcopal Church - Martinsville, Virginia \(christchurchmvl.org\)](http://christchurchmvl.org) to help or to bring something.** Donations may be brought to the Office or Undercroft in the days leading up to each meal. We are serving dine-in only, with leftovers distributed as takeout only at the end of the meal.

*****Loaves & Fishes has lost the donations from the Lutheran Church which included such items as individually wrapped snacks, hygiene items (toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant), and household items (dish and laundry detergent - small bottles), and is asking for your donations of these items for the L&F attendees.**

Thank you for being so supportive! Andy & Tara Williams and the L&F Team

Pastoral Care Teams - Volunteers

We need more volunteers for the Pastoral Care Committee. These groups set up, clean up, and organize receptions for funerals, baptisms, confirmations, and when Bishop Mark comes. **We have one opening in February/August, March/September, and June/December.** Everybody serves two months. We also need substitutes if the people scheduled for those months are unavailable. Contact Deborah to volunteer and for which month group at 276-632-2896 or office@christchurchmvl.org. Thank you in advance for volunteering!

Grace Network - Our Grace Network Assignments for June: canned beans 15 oz. (any kind). For June: dish detergent, deodorant, laundry detergent, and hygiene items. As a Church family, we have committed to helping Grace Network with stocking their food pantry for those in need. Please remember to pick up our assigned item the next time you visit the grocery store. You can bring your items to the Church office OR put them in the little red wagon in the Narthex.

Prayer List

Every week during the Prayers of the People, we pray for the sick, injured, and those otherwise in need of our prayers; included is the list of (first) names of members of Christ Church for whom prayers have been requested and folks for whom members have requested prayers. To clear up confusion and provide more information for those who pray for the list during their daily prayers, we will begin including the annotated prayer list in our Friday email (along with the bulletin and announcements). When you send a prayer request to Deborah or Fr. John, please let us know how much or little you would like shared with the congregation.

Let Deborah or Fr. John know if anyone needs to be added or removed from the list.

Prayer List

Sue (Rosser)
Julia (Hall)
Betty (Budde) - continuing treatment for multiple myeloma
Nathan (Jane Thomasson's nephew)
Tom (Howland)
Linda (Isley)
Betsy (Smith)
Mary Ruth (Reynolds)
Thomas (son of Lynn and Phil Gardner)
Nancy
Trippi (Penn) – recovering from knee replacement
Mark Gauldin
Pat (a friend of Natalie Coleman)
Patty Ann
Tammy (a friend of Deborah Scearce's in hospice)

Server Schedule for June

**Team #1 – Beth Sibbick, Stuart Webster, LaRue Powers, Jane Thomasson, Beth Cahill, and Bill Sibbick
(Susan Critz – flower substitute)**

June 2 – Bob Bushnell, reader; Dawn Stone, Tom Webster, chalicers; Andy Quirk, Rebin Titus, Pete Scouras, ushers; Hank Long, camera operator; Ben Beeler, Bob Weatherall, counters; **volunteer needed**, nursery.

June 9 – Will Zimmer, reader; Natalie Coleman, Rives Coleman, chalicers; Ben Beeler, Dan Cahill, Michael Hodges, ushers; Coleman, acolyte; Andy Williams, camera operator; Ben Beeler, Bob Weatherall, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

June 16 – Hank Long, reader; Bob Bushnell, Dawn Stone, chalicers; Rives Coleman, Gus Barber, John Swezey, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Ben Beeler, Bob Weatherall, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

June 23 – Susan Critz, reader; Beverly Lyle, John Swezey, chalicers; Jay Dickens, Kyle Trent, Hank Long, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Ben Beeler, Bob Weatherall, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

June 30 – Morning Prayer – Hank Long, officiant; Jay Dickens, reader; Ben Lewis, Bob Weatherall, Bruce Mazurek, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Ben Beeler, Bob Weatherall, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.