

ISSUE

14

March 15, 2009

WEEKLY MESSENGER

CHRIST CHURCH IN SHORT HILLS

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SERMON PREACHED MARCH 8, 2009, BY SCOTT HOLCOMBE, REPRINTED BY REQUEST

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first American president who established what we have come to know as "the first 100 days report." He looked at what was going on in the country at the time, his goals for his presidency, and decided that it was important to give a first 100 days report. Not to be presumptuous, but my first 100 days occurs this week. For some of you, you may think "Has he been here that long?" and for others of you, you may have counted every day.

There have been many changes over the last 100 days. Some are obvious. A new game is being played here at Christ Church, "*where is Scott going to sit during the service?*" For those of you who haven't caught on to the obvious, I sit with my wife during church when I am not celebrating or doing any liturgical function. There have been other obvious changes- *the service bulletin*. 100 days ago that didn't exist. You had a nice neat little leaflet with one page and many people were used to that. And now there is this incredibly inefficient, paper wasting thing known as the service leaflet, which enables everyone to follow the service without juggling books. Some have enjoyed that. Some have let me know in calm and pleasant and inoffensive ways that they think it is a total waste. There have been other changes. *The children's choir and the Canterbury choir are now singing every month*. You are hearing some *new music* that you haven't heard before. *The Messenger is no longer mailed quarterly but emailed or picked up in your mailbox weekly*. Yes, you have a mailbox now. I hope you all will use it; it will save us about \$10,000 a year in postage.

You've probably noticed that my style is different. It is "*hands on*." When we had our painting party some one said, "You're probably the only rector of Christ Church that has helped paint his own office." And what's this about *Wednesday night services and 3 adult classes*? We used to shake the pastor's hand after church and now *you are in the narthex before church*. You come to church and read in the Weekly Messenger that *the altar rail is going to be left open*. What is he going to do next?

Y'all do a lot of stuff here really well. Christ Church is a great church and I'm thrilled to be a part of it. But there are some things that, I believe, needed tweaking, and for some that tweaking has been painful. For example, at the 8am service I totally changed people's spirituality when I moved the service ... about 20 feet. Little did I realize that God couldn't hear that far away. (laughter) People made comments, I said that I am just trying to get a feel for this place and I moved it back just exactly as Jesus had intended before the ascension. He must have said "the 8:00 service at CCSH will be in the side chapel." Now I know... the rest of the story. I have a different style. There are some people who are used to the style being ready... aim ... ready ... go to committee ... ready... talk to the vestry ... ready ... aim ... pray about it more ... ready ... have an adult forum ... ready... set a date on the calendar and communicate that by email, letter, telephone, and in every conversation, then fire.

And then there's Scott. Whose basic style and personality is *fire, fire, aim, fire, fire, fire, fire*. And for some of you, that's difficult and I apologize. The vestry and the search committee questioned amongst themselves "Are we really ready for him? Is he ready for us?" In these 100 days, we are testing the limits. I happen to believe, "yes," and from the response from many of you I believe that you would say "yes" too. In 100 days I've weathered Advent, Christmas, a rummage sale, Shrove Tuesday – with waffles, again another change! – Ash Wednesday, staff changes, responsibility changes and a subtle little thing known as ...winter. On a personal note, to be as transparent as I can, La Nora and I have realized that we've been doing some grieving. We left a community and a church that we loved and came to a church we are learning to love. This has been a difficult transition

in our lives. But we know that we are supposed to be here and we are thrilled in getting to know each of you. I've only had one funeral. I am scheduled for 3 weddings and the other clergy are getting ready for 2 more weddings. We've had unfortunately no births. So you all need to get going. We need to either birth people or evangelize people. That's the only 2 ways the church grows. Pick your choice. We can get serious about procreation or we can get serious about evangelism.

In the last 100 days, we've had some inconveniences, broken appliances and icy driveways. But we've also had another very positive phenomenon that is known to some in leadership but not to all. At this time of devastating economic upheaval and in discussions with clergy in this diocese and the diocese of south Florida, and now through the meeting of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes, and with rectors in New Orleans this past week, how many churches are in an incredible financial chaos. I hear reports regularly of churches whose income is down 20-40%. Yet, incredibly enough, *our income is up*. Our *number of pledges is up*. In 2008, our number of pledges was 180. In 2009 we have 195. In 2008, our pledged income was \$434,000 and in 2009, the pledged income is \$443,000. There were 22 *new families* to CCSH in the past year and 12 of them stepped up to the plate and made a financial pledge. Even more interesting, 26 family units who pledged in 2007, did not pledge in 2008, but *all 26 have pledged in 2009*.

It's often said that the church grows numerically, financially and hopefully spiritually when more people come in than depart. If you take all of the people we have lost, through transition, moved out of the area, died or changed churches we have basically lost \$7,836.00 in income. That is a miniscule amount compared to what other churches are experiencing.

As we look at change (and you'll notice I talk a lot about change) when I was in college I worked as a chemist assistant in a chemical laboratory. One of the things my boss taught me at the time was that catalysts generate heat, and without heat there can be no change. I know for some of you the idea of change and the church shouldn't go into the same sentence. But I hope that you will begin to understand that **change is not being made for change sake**. The changes have been brought about are being implemented to help grow this church in a healthy fashion. For those of you who wonder if we are going into a slight pause, the answer is "NO." Other changes are coming. One such change is this thing. It is a *digital tape recorder*. Eventually all of the sermons, classes and events will be taped digitally and available through the world wide web. For the time being, if you would like to hear a sermon just email Andi and she can send you the file so that you can hear what you may have missed. Eventually all of the classes that we offer and all sermons will be available so that you can keep up with what is going on.

There are going to be some *new staff people*. The personnel committee and the vestry are working with me to identify very specific needs in terms of personnel. We are looking at bringing on *a part time financial person, additional office help and a new job – someone that will be a coordinator of volunteers*. This person will help implement and involve new people in the life of the church as well as to assist committee chair people to assist in their committee needs.

We are *establishing a worship committee*. This is something that has been asked on several fronts (perhaps maybe to slow me down a little bit!) This committee will be established to look (under the leadership of vestry liaison, Lisa Gadsden) at what we do, why we do it, how we do it, and are we in need of change in certain areas.

We are looking at re-establishing non-function committees and those church committees that are functioning to explore how they may function in a more healthy fashion. There will be many things that we change. As we look, we have not brought in the kingdom of God. There are still people who are unchurched in our community and I hope and pray that as we look at what our life is like, not just in the next hundred days, but in the years ahead, that we will ask some very difficult questions.

One of those questions is not, "*what do I want*" or "*what do you want*, but "*what does God want? How can we prayerfully discern his will for this place?*" Another question that we must look at, "*How do we more intentionally connect with the Episcopal Church?*" While we have very clear ties in this community as a community church, we are an Episcopal Church. I am an Episcopal priest and I think that there are some linkages that we can make to solidly unite the two. I also think that as we move ahead, one of the things that I am hoping and praying, is that a new understanding develop in the life of the church about who the ministers of the church are. They are not the people who dress up funny on Sunday. At least as I read the Bible and BCP the ministers of the church are all of the baptized. Some of you will have a ministry in the church and some will have a ministry in the community or in the world or in your business or neighborhood. But I do think it is important that we understand that this development of ministry will force all of us from being observers to participants. To ask ourselves questions very simply, not what do we do for busyness or for church work but *what do we do to respond to our call for mission as baptized believers in Christ?*

These first 100 days have been a lot of fun, some aggravation, some tears, but I can say for both my wife and myself, that we are thrilled to be here. And I hope that as time goes on, if you can't say those same words now, that you will be able to say them shortly.



COMMITTEE BEING FORMED!

A new CCSH Worship Committee is now forming! If you're interested in joining this committee, please let Vestry liaison Lisa Gadsden (logadsden@aol.com) or Andi Hidalgo (andrea.hidalgo@ccshmail.org) know.

Sunday SCHOOL

Nursery News!

Please join in welcoming Holly Syracuse to our Sunday Nursery Staff. Holly is a recent graduate of the University of Hartford, with a major in Communications. A life-long member of Christ Church, Holly has assisted her mom, Audena, in the Godly Play class for a number of years. Holly joins Katie Tamaki in caring for infants through 3-year-olds, in room 212.



7th & 8th Grade Class brings food to needy

Nine members of the 7th & 8th grade class trekked to West Orange last Sunday, to bring supplies to the St. Mark's Food Pantry. The young people and their families donated over 300 items for needy persons in our area. Class teacher, Dan Graves, organized and led the trip, accompanied by Christ Church Sexton, James Johnson and Assistant Rector, Lisa Green.

ADULT FORM - 2008 MISSION TRIP

Sunday's Adult Forum will be about the 2008 YPF Mission Trip. The participants of the trip will talk about the knowledge and experience they gained, how they have grown as individuals, united as friends, and evolved as Christians. This is also a great chance to learn about the upcoming trip this Spring!



March Sunday Nursery Family Helpers:

March 15 :: Nwachuku

March 22 :: Reilley

March 29 :: Amarante



CHRIST CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL LENTEN PROJECT 2009

Malaria Kills A Child Every 30 Seconds, But It Doesn't Have To...

Christ Church Sunday School is raising money for *NetsforLife*. During Lent, children will be decorating their own coin boxes to collect money. They will take home their boxes, along with a booklet entitled "How do I thank you? Let me count the ways." Each day, families can read the brief devotion and make a donation in the coin box in thanksgiving for all of God's blessings. On Easter Sunday, children will bring their coin boxes to church as an offering to God for the important work of *NetsforLife*!

EVENSING AT GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Wise Women invite women of the parish to attend a Sung Evensong at General Theological Seminary on March 26th. We plan to leave from the church about 3:30 p.m. If you are interested, please email Jane Houston as soon as you can at jhouston@comcast.net.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND CANTERBURY CHOIR REHEARSAL SCHEDULES

Sunday, March 29 - rehearsal at 10:45 a.m. to prepare music for Palm and Easter Sunday

To all Canterbury Parents,
I'll be stopping up to their Godly Play class every week for the first 10-15 minutes so that there is more practice time. But we will need some good rehearsal time Sunday 3/29 after church at 10:45 in the Sanctuary. We have 2 songs to learn since we'll be singing on both Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. I will have song sheets available for you to take home on Sunday morning. Hope you can make arrangements for your children to stay. Thanks as always for your help!
Sue Bovan

CHILDREN'S AND CANTERBURY CHOIRS SINGING AT 9:30 EUCHARIST:

Please note: Children should arrive in the choir room by 9:05 to get robed and rehearsed. Thanks so much for your support!

Sunday, March 15 - singing 'Spirit Song'

Sunday, April 5 - Palm Sunday, singing 'Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord'

Sunday, April 12 - Easter Sunday, singing 'Now the Green Blade Riseth'

CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSAL

Sunday, March 15 - rehearsal at 10:45 a.m.

BIRTHDAYS

03/12 John Clemence
 03/12 Douglas Cundey
 03/12 Cole Woerner
 03/13 Anne Hansen
 03/14 James Morrison
 03/14 Blake Udland
 03/14 Lauren Graves
 03/15 Scott Kernen
 03/16 Scott Wright
 03/16 Madison Reilly
 03/17 Herbert Peterson
 03/17 Mary Roberts
 03/17 Gage Seeger
 03/18 Ken Udland
 03/18 Tyler Udland
 03/19 Julia Draper
 03/20 Jennie Graves
 03/20 Gary Busacca
 03/20 Ridley Lindstrom
 03/22 John Sogliuzzo
 03/22 Sophie Wang
 03/23 Amy Schott
 03/24 Alex Pelham-Webb
 03/24 Katie McChesney
 03/26 Peter Hansen
 03/26 Robert Arnold
 03/26 Caroline Richardson
 03/27 Patrick Haggerty
 03/28 Valerie Boyle
 03/30 David Graziano



ANNIVERSARIES

03/06 Kathleen + Rupert Zimmerer
 03/13 Penelope + Joe Kernen
 03/14 Virginia + George Freund
 03/16 La Nora + Scott Holcombe
 03/26 Anne + Peter Hansen
 03/27 Peggy + Robert Arnold
 03/29 Eileen + James Paduano

LENTEN CROSSES

Once again we are offering the small wooden pocket crosses that have become a tradition here at Christ Church. You will find them in a bowl on the shelf at the back of the sanctuary. We invite you to take a cross and carry it with you in your pocket. Somewhere along the line, you will meet someone who needs your cross more than you do. Give the cross to them and come get another. If you have not tried this form of pastoral care and evangelism, take the chance this year to make a difference in someone's life by showing them the reality of God in this world.

THE SECRETS OF THE WINDOWS

Did you miss the wonderful presentation of our stained glass windows on 02.28.09? You can now watch videos of the presentation on our website! The web address is:



www.christchurchshorthills.org/Windows.htm

Many thanks to TERRY FINAN for the videos!

ARE YOU GREEN?

If you would like to receive the Weekly Messenger by email only, please email Andi.

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

March 15

Lt. William D. Huyler, Jr.

March 22

Barbara Morehouse
 Christina Sinclaire
 Elizabeth & Murray Sinclaire

March 29

Laird Stephen Schober
 Albert E. Schober
 Myrtle Hager

EASTER FLOWERS!

During this Lenten period we look forward to seeing the altars once again decorated with flowers at Easter. If you would like to remember a loved one by making a contribution to the Easter Flower Fund, please send your donation to the Church office with the names of those to be remembered by April 6. Thank you.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>15</p> <p>8:00am - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School + Nursery Care</p> <p>9:30am - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>10:45am -Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:00am - Adult Forum - YPF</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:00am - Yoga</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:30am - Staff meeting</p> <p>7:30pm - Education for Ministry</p> <p>8:00pm - Vestry meeting</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:30am - Education for Ministry</p> <p>7:00pm - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>7:45pm - Lenten Classes</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:30am - Interweave Bible Study "Why Did Jesus Die?"</p>	<p>21</p> <p>8:30am - Careers in Transition</p>
<p>22</p> <p>8:00am - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>9:15am - Sunday School + Nursery Care</p> <p>9:30am - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>10:45am -Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:00am - Adult Forum</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:00am - Yoga</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:30am - Staff meeting</p> <p>7:30pm - Education for Ministry</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9:30am - Education for Ministry</p> <p>7:00pm - Holy Eucharist</p> <p>7:45pm - Lenten Classes</p>	<p>26</p> <p>3:00pm - Wise Women GTS sung evensong</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9:30am - Interweave Bible Study "Why Did Jesus Die?"</p>	<p>28</p>