

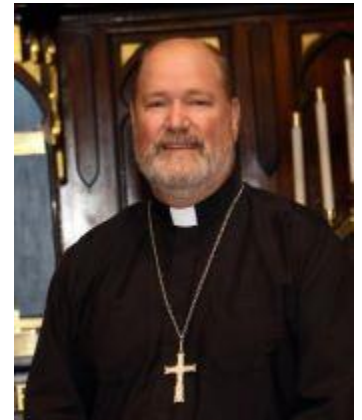
The Rainbow



December 2023

A Letter from Fr. Paul

Greetings to All and welcome to the Seasons of Advent and Christmas. The month of December is full of excitement, preparation, expectation, anxiety and for some, it can be a time of sadness. The Advent season can be a time of self-reflection, prayer and anticipation. We look for the joy in everyday experiences, comfort where there may be grief, and perform acts of love where there may be complacency. If you are seeking more to do or a quiet space, St. Margaret's Chapel at Christ Church will be open during regular church hours, all during Advent, for prayer and meditation. There are several prayer guides and a devotional provided by the Diocese of West Virginia for your use. Feel free to light a candle while you visit. Also, plan on attending a Wednesday Evening Prayer service at Christ Church, December 13 and 20 at 5:30. These will be short services in the middle of our busy weeks to help us along. And, we look forward to the joy of Christmas Eve; our evening service at Christ Church is at 5:30 with organ and harp music and full choir of voices. This is a beautiful service and I hope you all are making plans to attend.



Our family tradition is to attend Christmas Eve service and then enjoy pizza for dinner. We then open a couple of our presents for each other and stay up watching movies and talking about whatever. Christmas morning begins whenever we roll out of our warm, comfy beds. We go downstairs and settle into our spaces for the next few hours. Breakfast is usually a casserole of some kind. We open up the remaining gifts and the stockings full of scratch tickets (I hope one of us wins big this year!) and turn on *A Christmas Story* marathon. The Holiday meal is around 3 pm and afterwards, we all find a spot to recline and possibly "rest our eyeballs". More family will come into town the day after Christmas and stay a while, through my birthday. I've expressed to my family that I'm not interested in presents this year; their gift to me is taking the time away from their busy lives to travel to Bluefield and spend some quality days together, What a wonderful gift! I thank God for this opportunity to gather for the Holiday Season. I share my family traditions with you, and I would love to hear yours.

My prayer is that you all have a joyous, safe and memorable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Blessings of our Lord and Savior be with you all, now and always!

Fr. Paul

Where is the Love?

By Betty Nash

Matthew 22:36-40 NIV

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

When Father Paul preached about the laborers in the vineyard, I could really relate. Working in a busy Intensive Care Unit, we always had that one nurse who was never to be seen when her patient's call light was ringing non-stop, who never helped with a difficult patient admission, who needed a smoke break and who had to leave early due to a family crisis. And there we were, working without a lunch break, staying an hour past our shift and yes, making less money than her!

So I was just thinking "I don't blame those workers for being upset"... and then Father Paul asked us that difficult question "Where is the Love?" It sounds easy without the story attached to it ...oh, yes easy to love all the nice people at church, easy to love when everyone is smiling and being helpful, easy to love everyone who looks like us and thinks like us... BUT ... so very hard to love the unlovable, hard to love when we think we have been wronged, hard to love when they don't deserve it...and then the hard truth...DO ANY OF US DESERVE IT??? No, we don't...we fail to act on the greatest commandment.

Oh, yes, easy to love the Lord our God...he has given us our very breath, has given us a beautiful church building where we can worship freely in one on the best countries in the world, has given us the ability to see, to hear, to talk to people we love....

But then, Love your neighbor as yourself?...well, it depends on how my neighbor looks, what my neighbor says, is my neighbor doing his/her part to make this a better world.....I have a lot of check boxes

But Father Paul reminds us "Where is the Love?" and I realize it is exactly where I don't want to love that is my biggest challenge. But with God's Love, we can all learn to love even when it is difficult.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, Teach us to love.... In your name, we pray. Amen

Maya Ashton Merritt, the 11-month-old granddaughter of Christ Church members Rob and Mimi Merritt, was baptized at Christ Church in a private ceremony on Friday, Nov. 24, with the Rev. Paul Barker officiating. Maya's parents are Ashley and Charlie Merritt, Rob and Mimi's son and daughter-in-law, who live in Washington, DC. Charlie grew up in Christ Church and was baptized here as a four-month-old in 1990.



In addition to Pastor Paul, participants in the Liturgy included Rob Merritt, lector; Senior Warden Becky Beckett, acolyte; Betty Nash and Linda Thomas, Altar Guild; Jeff Brannon, who also grew up at Christ Church, as organist; and Jeff's wife, Alandra Brannon, a former Bluefield University student of Rob's, as pianist and violinist.

Maya's godparents, who both participated in the ceremony, are Caroline Merritt of Boulder, CO, daughter of Rob and Mimi, and Wesley Claffee of Philadelphia, PA, brother of Ashley Merritt.



Attending the Baptism were close family and friends, including Ashley Merritt's parents, Morris and Jackie Claffee of Virginia Beach, VA; Wesley Claffee's partner, Holly Mayton; and several of Charlie's best friends from Bluefield. Rob and Mimi hosted a reception at their home following the ceremony.

The Merritts wish to thank Pastor Paul, Becky Beckett, the Altar Guild, and all at Christ Church who made this special event the beautiful ceremony that it was. Thanks are also due Burton Kersey, who made possible the streaming of the service so that family and friends unable to attend could watch.

Parish Life Rainbow Report for December

by Linda Ammar and Mary Catherine Williams, Co-Chairpersons

We would like to thank everyone for their support this year in helping with all of the events that we had -- from Paul's Ordination, Confirmation with our Bishop, Coffee Hours, a Parish Luncheon, the Annual Picnic, and Canterbury Club gatherings, to the planting of spring, summer, and winter flowers and the watering and taking care of the flowers this summer. Thanks to David's Downtown in helping provide food for some of the events. We got a lot of help from everyone in doing these events. We welcome anyone who would like to help with this important ministry. If you are interested in hosting Coffee Hour, you may contact Linda Ammar or Mary Catherine Williams for more information.

Our next event will be Canterbury Club on December 10 at 6 p.m. at the home of John and Becky Beckett, 1500 College Avenue. Come and bring your favorite dish to share. Canterbury Club is an adult outing, so you may bring your adult beverage also. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex if you would like to host one next year. If you are interested in helping with Parish Life you may contact Linda Ammar lwammar1@gmail.com or Mary Catherine Williams mkw@dlwco.com. After the December 10 Canterbury Club at the Becketts', our next Canterbury Club will be at the home of Linda Thomas, 345 Mountain View Ave. on January 7 at 6 p.m.

**MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT
NOVEMBER 2023**

FOOD PANTRY

NOVEMBER 16, 2023

Grocery Shopper: Betty Nash

Number of bags distributed: 76

Food Vouchers Handed Out: 50

Volunteers: Betty Nash, Charlie Blevins, Bill Denny, Patricia and Peter Taylor

UNION MISSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Volunteers served 122 meals. Union Mission staff served an additional 24 meals on Thursday, making a total of 145 meals prepared, packaged and served

Menu: BBQ on a bun, baked beans, coleslaw, brownie and soft drink

Volunteers: Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa, and Patty Richardson from Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV; Fredia Helmandollar and Charlie Helmandollar, Senior Warden, from Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA; Betty Watson from Bluefield, VA

The next meal we prepare at the Union Mission will be on Wednesday, December 13, 2023.

SNACK BASKETS

We will be collecting snacks for the men at the Fellowship Home during the month of December. Baskets have been placed at the front of the church. Please consider donating a snack of your choice (homemade or store bought) – cookies, chips, cheese and crackers, drinks or drink mixes, nuts, nabs, popcorn, or candy are just some of the items possible. Thank you!!!

Prayer List

Please Keep the Following in Your

Prayers: Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Bob and Peggy Walk, Martha Linkous, Buck Sowers, Donna Fortune, Ed and Gladys Fortune, Jim and Chris Justice, Ivy and the Gaines Family, Russ and Debbie Hatfield, Mary Lou, Brian, Don Harris, Ted Lewis, Rebecca Broyles, Jim Dyer, Brian, Lane, Sherry, Scot, Max, Brad, Sandi, Joan, Mike Boosier, Pam Spracher, Barry Dinger, Joel Hammond, Martin and Ethan, Jim, Joan Gray, Rosemary, Eddie Hughes, Doug Truter, Jenessa, Ameiah, Beth Kane, Debbie H.

BIRTHDAYS

12/2 Rebecca Broyles
12/5 John Allen
12/14 Valerie Mahood
12/18 Susan Rutherford
12/23 Margaret (Maggie) Jusiel
12/29 Mary Catherine Williams

Minutes-CEC Vestry Meeting
November 15, 2023

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Vestry was held in the Library, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Present	Absent
Mary Catherine Williams	Mimi Merritt
Susanne Pulse	Peter Taylor
Peter Richardson	
Betty Nash	
Becky Beckett	
Vic Bowman	
Don Kersey	

Also present was Father Paul Barker

Father Paul called the meeting to order and declared a quorum.

Betty Nash gave the devotional.

Mary Catherine Williams made the motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting and Betty Nash seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Vestry members reviewed the financial documents. Financially the church remains in good condition. Unrestricted income was boosted by receipt of \$13,400 from St Lucy distribution. Property maintenance was \$1,700 less than budgeted. Food pantry expenses are \$15,294 year to date which is \$9,300 more than budget. Donald Kersey will look into that and report to the Vestry in December. Balance decreased by \$88,859 due to stock market downturn. Mary Catherine Williams made the motion to approve the financial report. Betty Nash seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Becky Beckett gave the senior warden's report. She asked that a letter be sent to the Tierney Foundation and the 1912 Foundation for assistance with repair of the roof.

Peter Richardson gave the junior warden's report. The new Buildings and Grounds policy was discussed. Peter Richardson made the motion to approve the use of the Buildings and Grounds policy. Becky Beckett seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Mary Catherine Williams gave the Parish Life report. Canterbury Club is scheduled for December 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at the Beckett's home. There is a 2024 sign-up sheet for Canterbury Club in the Narthex. Daughters of the King are considering purchasing material to make prayer beads in 2024.

Susanne Pulse gave the communications report. The Rainbow and the weekly e-mail are still being produced.

Betty Nash gave the evangelism report. Christ Church participated in Trunk or Treat at Bluefield City Park. There were 245 kids treated. Betty Nash will provide training on the use of the defibrillator as well as administration of Narcan on December 10, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.

Betty Nash gave the outreach report. Gift cards will be given out at the November food pantry. A large donation was made to the food pantry. Father Paul suggested that the loose offering in December be given to the food pantry.

Father Paul gave the education report. Sunday School is going well. Advent wreaths will be made after church on December 3. An advent devotional has been ordered.

Father Paul gave the Rector's report. He thanked Father Russ Hatfield and Brian Tracey for filling in for him on his vacation. He and Susanne Pulse reported on the 2023 convention held in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Father Paul will assist The Church of the Heavenly Rest with a full Eucharist service while Father Russ Hatfield is away. There will be three (3) Wednesday night services during the Advent Season. The first on December 6, 2023, will be at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Princeton, West Virginia. The other two services will be at Christ Church. The service on There will be two (2) Christmas Eve services – Advent 4 at 10:00 a.m. and the Christmas Eve service at 5:30 p.m.

Father Paul closed the meeting with a prayer.



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 First Sunday of Advent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	11	12	13 3:30 Union Mission 5:30 Evening Prayer	14	15	16
17 Third Sunday of Advent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	18	19	20 5:30 Evening Prayer 6:00 Men's Dinner 7:00 Vestry	21 Saint Thomas The Apostle 9:00 Food Pantry	22	23
24 Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00 Holy Eucharist 5:30 Christmas Eve Service	25	26 Saint Stephen Deacon and Martyr	27	28 The Holy Innocents	29	30
31 The First Sunday after Christmas Day 10:00 Holy Eucharist	Altar Guide for December: Linda Ammar, Betty Nash and Teresa Paine					

The following people have graciously donated flowers for the month of December:

December 3	Art Mead
December 10	Phil and Valerie Mahood
December 17	Delia Kersey
December 24	Barbara Sudduth
December 24	Barbara Sudduth
December 31	David and Debbie Faber

Lector and Acolyte Schedule for December:

Lector:	Acolyte:
Ted Lewis	Teresa Paine
David Kersey	Becky Beckett
Becky Beckett	Katherine Lewis
Bill Denny	Becky Kersey
Don Williams	Teresa Paine

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
200 DUHRING STREET
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To our friends and family:



December 2023

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