

Reports for the Annual Parish Meeting

January 31, 2021



Christ Episcopal Church
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Towanda, PA 18848
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The Rev. J. Lawrence Holman, Deacon

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Mission Statement

Christ Church- Towanda, PA

Christ Church, a Christian community empowered by the Holy Spirit and in unity with Jesus Christ, is a place:

1. ...to be grounded in the Holy Scriptures and God's love in order to develop faith in and love for God, and to develop gifts to do the work of ministry.
2. ...to worship and glorify our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus through Eucharist and other forms of praise and thanksgiving.
3. ...to pray for forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing.
4. ...to be united in fellowship within our church family, joyous in giving, sharing, encouraging, and being compassionate.

With love and faith in God our Father, Christ our Lord and Savior, and energized by the Holy Spirit, we are a church that endeavors to share God's gift of love by:

1. ...evangelizing the good news of Jesus Christ in our community.
2. ...bringing wholeness to the human soul through forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, compassion, and encouragement through the assurance of Jesus Christ's resurrection.
3. ...showing the knowledge of God's compassion through serving the community where social needs are found.
4. ...inviting others to join our Christian community through our involvement in the secular community.

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**MINUTES CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING
JANUARY 26, 2020
178TH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
20 MEMBERS PRESENT**

Marshall Dawsey, Senior Warden called meeting to order. The Rev. Canon Maureen Hipple offered a prayer. Ginnie Schoonover was appointed Secretary Pro Tem.

A call for a motion to accept the minutes of the January 27, 2019 meeting was answered by Marg Shaner and second by Kippy Vail. Motion passed unanimously.

The Rector was called on to comment on her report. She thanked everyone who has helped out in past year and noted there are newcomers to list. She asked that we push ourselves up and out. Bring a friend to church. The addition of the Grace Connection locating here has been good for us and the community.

The Senior Warden then thanked outgoing Vestry Members, Kippy Vail, Sue Schoonover and Lee Baker.

Outgoing Vestry members presented slate of three people willing to accept the call to serve on Vestry. Those presented are L.J. Lundy, John Schoonover and Mark Vail. Motion to accept slate made by Jim Haight and second by David Farr. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports presented in the Annual Report, except for Treasure's Report, were accepted by title. Motion to accept was made by Ginnie Schoonover and second by Hilary Haight. Motion passed unanimously.

Junior Warden, Larry Gehring added if you see something that needs his attention, please say something.

Maureen Gehring, Sunday School Superintendent added she is happy to have kids again. Only 2 or 3 but a start and they have siblings, she further stated, "looks good for down the road".

Treasurer, Gene Weisbrod was called upon to present his report.

Budget is balanced.

Reviewed Balance Sheet and Disbursement Sheets.

Presented the proposed budget for 2020 of \$143,750.00.

Motion to accept the proposed 2020 budget and to accept Treasurer's Report made by Kippy Vail and second by Hilary Haight. Motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginnie Schoonover

Ginnie Schoonover

Secretary Pro Tem

Senior Warden's Annual Report – 2020

2020 has been one of the most challenging years in the 179 years of our church history. Our Rector of many years is about to retire after a five-month Administrative Leave of Absence and we also find ourselves in the middle of an almost year long worldwide Pandemic. Short of a swarm of locusts coming into Northeast Pennsylvania we have truly been tested.

I must first thank each and every member of this parish. Every member of this community of brothers and sisters in Christ has been a blessing and shown tremendous patience, kindness and resiliency. Deacon Larry Holman has been nothing more than spectacular in his support and being the lone celebrant for most of this period. Your Vestry, Junior Warden, Clerk of Vestry and Treasurer have been united and very supportive and most generous in giving of their time and help in all areas as we walk through this challenge. Our church Secretary Amy McDonald continues to be one of our most beautiful blessings, she goes above and beyond every day.

We have been called upon to change everything, in the way, we know as church life. You have risen to every occasion that has come to us during this time. You have given me unwavering support and strength through one of the most humbling experiences of my life.

Bishop Kevin Nichols along with Pastor Melinda Artmen, newly appointed Missioner of the Northern Tier, have pledged their support and continued help during this momentous interval.

Starting and stopping Ingathering has been very difficult for all of us. Thanks to the wonderful technical skills of our Junior Warden, we have been able to bring you all services online. Unfortunately, not everyone has been able to take advantage of this opportunity and this presents another challenge to try to overcome.

As we go forward, I must once again ask for your support and patience. We are fortunate at this time to have a wonderful group of Supply priests and deacons. Pastor Melina Artman, Father Arthur Jones, Pastor Wanda Copeland, Deacon Larry Holman and the about to be ordained Deacon Betsy Sentigar. I have also requested help in searching for a possible Interim priest. I must prepare you to know there may be no interim priest available.

The process to get ready to search for a new priest must take place and Bishop Kevin and Pastor Melinda will guide us every step of the way. I know you will be discouraged when I tell you this will not be a speedy process. Please keep in mind we want to be healed and ready to welcome a new Rector.

We are survivors and have already shown our commitment to stay together as a church family and community. We will continue with worship services, in person or online as the pandemic dictates. We will also work toward church activities such as a bible study, phoning or visiting church family members, helping in the community as called.

It is my privilege to be your Senior Warden and earnestly thank you for being so supportive and look forward to the new opportunities that are developing for us. The state of Christ Church is strong and with the help of God we will emerge, bigger, better, and more loving of one another.

Yours in Christ,



Virginia Schoonover
Senior Warden

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ANNUAL MEETING REPORT FOR 2020 ACTIVITIES FOR DEACON LARRY HOLMAN

I returned home from Puerto Rico in late March, as COVID was underway. Later, the use of the Church building was prohibited until mid-year to November 20, when the use was again prohibited.

CHURCH SERVICE PARTICIPATION

We had Church sanctuary services from July 12 until November 15, with full security requirements. The attendance varied from 20 to 25. Rev. Hipple led/preached the 6 Services from July 12 to August 16.

I led/preached the 13 Services from August 23 to November 15, with the Bishop's permission to serve consecrated Bread with the Communion service.

I led/preached the internet presentation of the January 3, 2021 Service recorded on December 30. I assisted Rev. Hipple with a mid-year funeral.

VESTRY MEETING

I attended 5 meetings from August 27 to December 14, with the Bishop participating virtually at a couple.

DIOCESE

I represented Christ Church at the virtual October 3 annual convention.

I participated in a virtual meeting of the Bishop with the Diocesan Deacons.

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2020 Junior Warden

Stained glass windows

This summer Peggy Ehrhart (<https://www.ehrhartstainedglass.com/>) started working on repairing our windows. We took in between \$75,000 and 80,000 in our initial donation drive. An anonymous donor has come forward to cover most, if not all of the remaining costs. Before winter set in, Peggy cleaned and repaired four windows on the south side of the church and two of the altar windows.

New flooring

The carpeting throughout the hallways and rooms downstairs was replaced with laminate flooring. Most of this cost was covered by the Wonder Group.

Wi-fi access

Two routers/bridges have been installed to increase the internet coverage upstairs and down. Without them, we could not have virtual meetings in the Parish Hall nor broadcast live services.

Columbarium

The current columbarium in the chapel is almost at capacity. The niches are paid for by the members or the family that wishes to make use of the niches. The cost of a new, matching, 40-unit columbarium on the other side of the chapel is \$12,480. This is not a budget item and we would need members who may be interested in purchasing a unit to speak to Ginnie and make a payment to reserve the unit(s).

Basic Maintenance

- We continue with our boiler maintenance agreement with Postler & Jaeckle Corp. They replaced the boiler air circulator and replumbed the radiator from the acolyte room and moved it into the Grace Connection office.
- We continue to change over to LED bulbs throughout the church. All lights in the nave have been replaced as well as in the Sacristy. We have also added LEDs in the basement. Eventually we will have to figure out what to do about the altar lights.
- We continue our agreement with Kerner and Merchant, East Syracuse New York, for the maintenance and tuning of the Pipe organ. We have it tuned and repaired for Christmas and Easter each year.

We are still looking to compile a capital improvement plan and fund. For SOME reason that did not occur in 2020. For any item(s) that you believe should be addressed, please see a Vestry member to have it added to the list which will then need to be prioritized. One thing we need to take a serious look at is the organ.

If you have ever wondered about the hissing sounds coming from the organ, it is the wind reserve that has developed a number of leaks and has been simply patched over the last number of decades (“duct tape is our friend”). Looking forward, we will need to have this reservoir removed and repaired. As it continues to deteriorate, we will eventually no longer have a working instrument. The current guesstimate, no formal proposal has been made, will be in the neighborhood of \$15,000. It will require the removal of some of the pipes and of the wall with the decorative pipes behind the piano to take the chest out for those repairs.

Sunday School Report

Our Sunday School was active in the very beginning of 2020, but sadly the pandemic put an end to that. Even when we were able to hold church services with restrictions, it was not possible to have Sunday School. When we open-up again, hopefully we will be able to resume having classes.

In Christian Love,
Maurine Gehring

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

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2020 WONDER GROUP REPORT

This year the Wonder Group covered the cost of the new flooring that was installed in the downstairs hallway and the rooms used by Grace Connection, and also covered the cost of the paint in those rooms.

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Financial Summary December 2020 - Covid impact on our budget and operation:

The covid crisis greatly impacted our budget, in large part due to the current Diocesan restrictions on in-person services. Pledges are down \$20,000, plate income is down \$3,000, and other collections related to Sunday are down another \$3000. So total income is down about \$26000 or 20%. The vestry thanks everyone who has continued their support even though we do not have the opportunity to worship together.

Fortunately expenses are down \$6000 for the year, offsetting about a quarter of our reduced income. Some details: Worship and liturgy is down \$800. Secretarial salaries are down by \$1100 (we reduced secretarial hours from 5 to 3 days per week). Cleaning expenses are down \$1800. Music is down \$800. Utilities are down \$900. Office expenses are down \$400. Fellowship is down \$200. And, due to our Rector retiring, we have saved \$11,000 in clergy costs.

We applied and were approved for a governmental PPP loan for \$16200. The Paycheck Protection Plan was developed to aid small businesses like ours and allow us to pay employees in full during the first 16 weeks of the crisis. By meeting certain criteria, we were able to have the loan forgiven and turned into a grant. This effectively balances our budget for 2020.

Until we re-open for in-person services, we expect these losses of income to continue into 2021. This is partially because we lost a significant pledge due to the death of one of our church family and also have lost (at least temporarily) a couple of families to other churches due to our inability to offer in-person worship. Our proposed 2021 budget reflects a reduction in total income of \$20,000 versus last year and assumes in-person worship will resume no later than the second half of the year. The budget currently does not allow for a full-time rector.

At the present time our bank balance is healthy and, with limited pastoral expenses, we will survive the crisis. It will be difficult to determine just how much income will rebound with the future re-opening of in-person services and how much expenses will rebound by obtaining new pastoral care. We can't wait until life returns to something approaching normal.

Although some of what follows may duplicate the Junior Warden report, I must highlight these efforts. Without all of the normal daily distractions that life throws at us, several church members were able to take some time and spend it at the church to accomplish some much needed tasks. The bank flower bed was cleaned up and many weeds, ivy, and other non-desirable plants removed before 100 bags of mulch was spread. Even now, the mulch remains in place. The rectory grounds was also cleaned. In total, over 5 truckloads of debris was removed from our church grounds. In addition, one full truckload of metal was taken from the basement, closets, and rectory to Towanda Iron and Metal and disposed of responsibly. Another truckload of pallets was removed from the rectory basement and given to a person with an outdoor furnace to use as fuel. This removed a fire hazard as well as recycled these items.

Some changes were also made inside the church. Ancient carpets, over 40 years old, were removed from the classrooms and hallway. Subfloors were repaired in spots where there had been a bit of wood rot. The carpets were replaced with allergen-free vinyl planks. Those who have been in the church noticed a large reduction in the odors of mildew which had been present for some time. In addition, walls and woodwork were freshly painted. Overall, volunteers contributed 40 man-days of effort to spruce up the building and grounds.

Grace Connection is particularly pleased with our efforts as they now have bright, clean, allergen-free offices in which to conduct their mission. Grace Connection also benefited from the installation of a new radiator in their office, the cost of which was covered by a donation. Finally, the church contributed \$500 of gift certificates to Grace Connection for Christmas, which were used to provide needy families with funds to purchase gifts for their children.

With God's help and the support of our faithful church family, I am confident we will weather this storm and prosper.

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