

***The Yearly Bucket List Oath:***  
***I solemnly swear to create memories that last a lifetime.***  
***I vow to make an impression on the world, not the couch.***  
***I promise to dream about unrealistic goals.***  
***And make them my reality. - Anonymous***

Dear Friends,

Many of us have thoughts about our own, personal bucket lists. Whether we have put pen to paper or have simply housed a mental list. It is a wonderful thing to be able to check them off – as I recently was able to do, having achieved a few of my own while on Sabbatical. And as I get up (earlier than usual) every morning to spend an hour working on my Spanish, I am hoping to “√” it off my list....just in time for one another item – but this one, from our Parish Bucket List.

What am I talking about? In our recent parish conversations we shared with one another the many dreams and hopes we have for Christ Church – what could be called “The Christ Church Bucket List”.

Some of the aspirations were of little surprise. I had in fact thought of them myself. But I was totally surprised by some of *your* wonderful desires and the vision of what we together can be.

Someone mentioned hosting foreign exchange students. We included that in the brochure “Make Us Instruments of Your Blessing”, but I really didn’t think there was much chance in anything materializing along those lines. Was I surprised! Days after finishing the brochure I received a call from an organization wanting to place a high school student with one of our families – and voila! Peggy James and John Callaghan will be welcoming a Chinese young man into their home this August. Be careful what you pray for – or what you put on that bucket list!

Someone else mentioned the parish should go on a mission trip. “Well”, I thought to myself, “If someone has the time and inclination to do all the planning and work that needs to go into something like that...” You can see I am sometimes lacking in the FAITH department – but I *did* make sure that “Mission Trips” went into the Brochure. Shortly thereafter – yes, you guessed it! – I got an email informing me that the Monmouth Convocation is going on a Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic next April – and you are all invited! Isn’t it amazing what God does when we simply put it out there? And how wonderfully it fits in with my own Bucket List item of becoming fluent in Spanish. I am sending in my deposit this week (there is information on the trip elsewhere in this newsletter; do take a look and send in yours, too) and now I am even more determined than ever to keep at the Spanish so I can take a stab at preaching when we land in the Dominican Republic next April.

Many of you mentioned wanting our Church to be known as a place of Sanctuary. Opening our doors to the community around us, perhaps offering ESL classes (English as a Second Language) and exploring what we might do to respond to the current refugee crisis. You may not be able to guess what has happened in the meantime (I know I was not able to do so): I got an email from a cleric who I had met in Ecuador in February. While I was there, I had told him and his wife that if they ever made it to the States to look me up (I tell this to folks wherever I travel). His email told me that they were on their way to New Jersey. On July 12th I met them at the Little Silver Train Station and spent the day showing them the churches of Monmouth County and talking about the possibility of them doing ministry in this part of the State. Before his ordination José was a community activist and organizer and Mercedes is a social worker, and of course both fluent in Spanish; the perfect résumés to tackle so many of our dreams! I am now seeing our Parish Bucket List with a set of new eyes; who knows what God will do among us next?

So: this has been my summer so far. It is proving to be a time of renewed dreams and of collecting a vision for what will come next. I invite you to share with me and the congregation what you have been thinking, praying, working on during the summer. Look through the Brochure you recently received in the mail; are you finding it a reality? Have ideas of how we can “√” off one more item?

It is a wonderful thing to dream. It is better to find a dream take shape in reality. And best of all is to do so with the Community of Faith, with God’s help.

Peace,  
*Mother Lisa+*

P.S. I just got off the phone with Dave Cassidy who told me he is on his way to Canada to work on a documentary about refugee families. I asked him to see if there may be a possibility for us to partner in the support and care of that work. Cross your fingers and say your prayers; God is certainly at work!