

“Into Good Soil: Growing Our Faith” Mark 4.8

“The tour you gave to us was very interesting. I learned a lot about the history of Christ Church. I still cannot believe the church was built in the 1700’s. Thanks.” - Brady – Troop 210

Dear Friends,

When we think about Spiritual formation and Christian nurture, our minds have a tendency to immediately think about the kinds of things we do among our members. We think of Church School and Seeing is Believing. Youth Group Prime and GFS -Girls Friendly Society. Peak of the Week and EFM -Education Formation Ministry (*or as we like to say, Exploring Faith Matters*). Lenten programs and discussion groups like Circle of Friends.

These are certainly important to our community of faith and we could not do without such programs to help us delve deeper in to our spiritual selves. However, that is not all there is! As we think about our mission here at Christ Church, we are struck with the challenge and responsibility of taking this faith out into the wider community.

How do we do this? By taking every opportunity we can to open our doors to the wider community. This spring we hosted Boy Scout Troops and Cub Scout Packs on two different occasions. One evening belonged to Scouts in the Lincroft area, the other from Tinton Falls. The boys and their families love visiting Christ Church to learn about this wonderful historic place, meet a real rootin’ tootin’ cowboy, Mr. Benjamin Lippencott (portrayed by Mr. Bob Honecker) and as a part of advancing in their Duty to God, discussing the place of churches in American community life. Sometimes these troops come here because they have family here (as with the Dunford family) and often they have “heard about us” and that we always welcome these special visitors. We do!

This past month we continued the tradition of welcoming all the fourth grade classes from Shrewsbury Boro School. They also learned a lot about the history of this place – and surprised me by already knowing quite a bit about us, as they had been studying the Four Corners in school. They also had the good fortune of meeting Mrs. Florence Hazard (portrayed by Deacon Magdalena Aders) who charmed them with her knowledge of the area and her quick wit.

In May, I was fortunate to be asked to participate in Little Silver’s Student Government Day. This is a day set aside for graduating eighth graders to experience all that their town does for them by taking on the roles of Mayor, post office, fire departments, and everything else for the day. I talked to them about the importance of their places of worship in their town and their unique roles in making our world a better place. And of course, I started them out with an invocation.

Whenever we are asked, we do what we can to assist our community. This spring we donated two beautifully crafted gift baskets (a big thank you to Judi Buncher) for the SBS Education Fundraiser and for the Monmouth County Historical Association Fundraiser. The centerpiece of both baskets were a tour of our clock tower by our Historian, Mr. Bob Kelly, who has helped to make our history so accessible (thank you, Bob!) So very soon, two lucky winners will have the opportunity to learn all kinds of things about being Anglican in Monmouth County.

But that is not all! Once again we are partnering with the Monmouth County Historical Association to celebrate Independence Day on the Fourth of July. All of Shrewsbury (and many from much further places) will converge on the Allen House at 10:00am to read the Declaration of Independence and take part in other such activities, including tours of Christ Church and an introduction to our new Self-Guided Graveyard Tour.

I am always amazed at the conversations that arise out of these visits; it is as if people are waiting to be drawn into discussions about Faith, God, and what our church has meant in the lives of the people of Monmouth County. Those of us who worship here week after week can sometimes forget the power of this tool we have to enlighten others and invite them in.

As we celebrate Independence Day, may we be truly thankful for all the blessings God has bestowed upon us.
Peace,

Mother Lisa+