

“It is a wondrous, exhilarating, frightening, joyous, awesome time to be the Church.”

The Right Reverend William H. (Chip) Stokes, XII Bishop of New Jersey

Dear Friends,

The Bishop is coming! The Bishop is coming! We are greatly anticipating his visit, which is part of the celebration of both the 250th anniversary of the erection of our church building and the 300th anniversary of our graveyard. I am certain that his message to us on that day will be something of what he wrote in his blog, “It is a wondrous, exhilarating, frightening, joyous, awesome time to be the Church,” for those words are certainly true! The work of the church has perhaps never been so important and so needed as it is for us at this juncture in our history. We celebrate our history and the faith that has been passed down to us, but oh, how we look forward to the work our Lord has before us!

Preparations are well underway for this event, and you will be learning more about them as the time draws near. The service itself will include confirmations and receptions into the Episcopal Church. Music will be performed by both our own Saint Gregory’s Choir and MadRegalia, with pieces that will span the history of our presence here on the corner of Sycamore and Broad. I am delighted that Sue Napoletano and the Church School are working on their own little “history” - a special book composed and illustrated by our children, which they will present to the Bishop during the course of the service. A delicious catered luncheon will be served following the service, and we look forward to all of our members and friends joining us in fellowship and sharing with Bishop Chip all that we love, hope, and dream for our church.

But there is more to the day than even the special liturgy and what *we* do in anticipation of our Bishop’s visit. *He* also comes prepared and he comes with a mission to us: He comes to encourage us in our ministry. He comes to learn something of who we are as a community of faith and what we are doing both within our parish and out in the world. He comes to share with us something of the greater vision of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New Jersey, of which we are all a part. I am excited that we have several adults who will be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church on that day – and of course, if you would like to be in that number, do talk to me about attending our “Foundations of the Episcopal Church” Seminar on Saturday, June 1st.

What is your part in all of this? **First**, mark your calendar! *We want you to be here with us.* For we are not fully Christ Church without you. **Second**, invite your family and friends. It is not often that we celebrate *two* anniversaries; it is a wonderful opportunity to invite others to see what this faith is about. **Third**, you can help us get ready...by volunteering to set up, by offering to serve at the altar or as ushers and greeters. Talk to Bob Kelly about projects in the graveyard; in the next few weeks we will be working hard to get everything “just so” before the big day. **Lastly**, I would like to direct your attention to one of the bulletin boards in the Parish House. On it is posted the question, “*Where did you encounter God this week?*” There are post-it notes on the board and a pen is hanging, ready to go. As you make your way through your week, do consider where you have encountered God: in the smile of a child? The embrace of a parishioner? The beauty of a piece of music? The sun warm on your back? Come Sunday, do jot down your thoughts. It is one way we share who we are and the spirituality that steadies us on our journey together.

I am so looking forward to this special anniversary and the presence of our Bishop as we celebrate. His words are ringing in my ear: It IS a wondrous, exhilarating, frightening, joyous, awesome time to be the Church. Especially to be Christ Church.

Peace,

Mother Lisa+