

“It is not as important to begin as it is to learn to begin again.”
Theologian Karl Barth

Dear Friends,

The days of summer are waning away. The leaves are even now beginning to lace the rectory yard. The nights are growing cooler. Families are taking those last few days of relaxation and vacation before September arrives. And here at Christ Church, as with every year at this time, we invite everyone ***“Back to Church!”***

This year we really mean it. ***“Back to Church!”***

On Sunday, September 8th, we return to our much-loved church building after a summer of exile in the Parish Hall during the extended work on the ceiling. As much as I love our church building, I must say I really enjoyed our weeks in the Parish House. Worship spaces dictate the way we worship, and indeed it was a different experience with folding chairs, a portable keyboard, and much relaxed liturgy. Preaching feels different. Praying feels different. Passing the Peace is different. Even the way we engage the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist has a different feel. And how great it is to have Coffee brewing away within a few footsteps! I don't know about you, but it allowed me to take a step back and think about how we do “church” in a whole different way.

But now I am ready to be back: ***“Back to Church!”*** September quickens our spirits and calls us back from our summer “break”. It calls us to begin again and to renew the rhythm of our lives together. I think we are all ready to get back to the heart of our community and all that our community holds dear. September 8th not only will mark our return to the church with special prayers and blessings, it marks the Kick-Off of our Program Year. Our own Sue Napoletano will be addressing the congregation on this Sunday; she is not to be missed! The Church School will be registering children for the coming year – including a whole new class for our youngest learners with three new teachers ready to go. In the afternoon, our Youth and their parents will be gathering at the home of Susan and Bob Van Valkenburgh for a pool party. EFM (*Education, Formation, Ministry*) begins its weekly seminar at the rectory on Monday, September 9th. Peak of the Week begins Wednesday, September 11th, and GFS (*Girls Friendly Society*) is hosting a Mother/Daughter Tea on Sunday, September 15th. We will truly be ***“Back to Church!”***

Not only are our Christian Formation programs beginning again, but everything else as well. Before you know it, you will be getting details on our 2020 Stewardship Campaign Kick-Off. P.J. Reyes will be signing you up for our Fall Outreach Project, Crop Walk. And of course, you will begin hearing more and more about our biggest parish event of the year, The Christmas Bazaar and Lantern Tour.

But for one more moment, I want to get back to the church. After all, this is the 250th anniversary year for the church – don't you think it is fitting that we chose this year to tackle the ceiling? For the work never, ever ends – and as Barth reminds us, ***“It is not as important to begin as it is to learn to begin again”*** and that is exactly what we do. We will be looking back on our long history with the special Event. A lecture and reception on Saturday, September 14th at 5:00pm in the church building. We will be remembering our roots and those who made it possible for us to be here - even as we look forward to where God is leading us. For we are indeed ***back***. Ready to begin again, ready to be God's holy people in our own day and time.

Peace,

Mother Lisa+