

# THE CROWN

*The Newsletter of Christ Church, Shrewsbury*  
*Christ Church is a community committed to exploring the reality of God in today's world.*

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Volume XXIV Issue I

February 2024

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*After a recent funeral, a family gave this framed winter print of Christ Church to Mother Lisa.  
They had not been official members of the church, but loved it all the same.  
We do as well.*

## RECTOR'S REPORT FOR 2023

*(As is the custom, Mother Lisa's report made at the Annual Meeting is printed for you here)*

***Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.  
2 Thessalonians 2.16, 17***

The year 2023 was filled with both joys and with sadness. Last year at this time, I was far away from Shrewsbury in Oklahoma on sabbatical. I spent ten wonderful weeks with my family, while renovating the house I had recently bought in my hometown of Bartlesville. It was a welcome break: doing things that I do not usually do: peeling wallpaper, painting walls, and scrounging estate sales for furniture. My sisters were a great help, and it worked to bring us together in a way we had not been since we were kids. During that time, I continued my Cloistering articles, attended the local Episcopal Church, and filled my spiritual reserve tank. I returned to Shrewsbury just before Holy Week, ready to once again get down to the business of being an Episcopal priest and pastor.

The Parish received a wonderful gift when Reverend Bill Balmer, received permission to return to Christ Church in January. Bill grew up at Christ Church and he and his wife Jane were very active and raised their family here. I cannot tell you how delighted Deacon Cuff and I am to have both Bill and his wife Jane back here (where I have always thought they belonged!) They both add another needed dimension to our faith community here; Deacon Vicki Cuff and I have had our ministries strengthened by Bill's presence.

January was also filled with sadness with the unexpected death of our Sexton, Kevin Carroll. Kevin had some serious health issues, but loved being here at Christ Church and serving us in any way he could. His sunny disposition was always a personal boost to me; I miss him greatly. Fortunately for us, Jeff Veil stepped back into the job for a period of time while we assessed our situation and figured out a replacement. Then Halina Nibbling stepped into the Sexton position – while declining any payment. What a blessing she has been! Halina is a whirlwind of energy, brightening up our place every time she is here. She has also taken on a couple of other volunteers who come every Thursday to pitch in. The place is in wonderful shape, and we are truly grateful. Halina is a living demonstration of how one can give in more ways than simply contributing money.

In the spring another big change came: the Diocese said goodbye to Bishop Stokes and welcomed Bishop Sally French and her family to New Jersey. Her leadership style is very different from Chip's, and I am looking forward to seeing what gifts she brings the wider Church.

More changes came in the fall: Jeff Veil and I set the date and celebrated the beginning of our marriage right here with all of you. Not much has changed on the outside, but we are both very happy and were delighted to begin this new phase of our lives with our beloved parish family. I think everyone agreed that after eighteen years together, it was about time.

I could not leave out one thing that truly shaped our year: what I have often called *The Coffee Pot Affair*. The malfunction of the coffee machine in the Parish House Kitchen in August of 2022 left us without a functioning Parish House for a good part of this year. Total renovations were made; you can read about them elsewhere in this report. But the ramifications were indeed great, biting into the usual programs we use the House for, including the offices and classrooms. We are finally getting back to a more "normal" way of life together.

The year seemed to end on a dramatic (and what first seemed a rather alarming) note: after careful scrutiny of our finances, the Vestry was put on high alert: things ne Dearest Mother Lisa and Christ Church Shrewsbury Family, Although it's too late to greet you about this, but I still want to tell you Merry Christmas and have a prosperous New year to each and everyone. I write this letter to say thank you for all the help. Last December we had our midterm examination.

And I'm proud to say that I passed the exam. Although I haven't gotten the perfect score but I'm just happy that I passed them. Thank God. This January 11 and 12 will be our final examination for this term. And I believe that God will stay beside me to help and guide me. Last Sunday is what we called here the epiphany. Like the star that guided the 3 kings for them to reach where Jesus was born, I believe that God is always there to lead me along the way too. ed to be addressed and decisions made. For me, that meant immediately going back to writing my Cloistering articles. I have found they are a way to help keep parishioners who cannot be here on Sundays feeling a little more connected to us. We will be looking at other things we can do to encourage the faithfulness of our current members and how to increase the fold.

We also let our Office Administrator go at the end of the year. I am very happy to announce that Casey Surgent has just agreed to come back on staff; we are now reevaluating that position to decrease the hours and cost. She knows our parish well and is a great asset to us. We have held our Music Director's salary at the 2023 level, but I am taking a cut in hours (and pay) which will affect almost all phases of our ministry together. This means more responsibility for each of you, as we figure out how everything will work to get done the things we need to get done.

A busy year. An unexpected year! All kinds of things are moving and changing. Which is why now more than ever, we need to claim the words of the Apostle Paul: *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.*

Peace,  
*Mother Lisa Mitchell+*

### **Welcome Back, Casey Surgent!**

The vestry and congregation are very excited to welcome Casey Surgent back to the Christ Church Office. After a hiatus of caring for grandchildren, Casey is ready to get back into the life and ministry of the church. This does not mean she is done being Grandma, but she is ready to take on some new challenges (and some old ones, too).

As we are still working on what the new office staffing will look like, please contact the Church Office before dropping by. We are still looking for volunteers who can staff the office for a few hours a week answering phones, receiving guests, and a few light tasks. We look forward to hearing from you.

### **Disinfecting our Buildings**

We may be getting used to hearing about covid, but that doesn't mean we take being safe for granted! The church and parish house continue to be disinfected utilizing the electrostatic fogger, particularly during the cold months of flu and colds. Both buildings are fogged/sprayed frequently in order to maintain cleanliness and eliminate the Covid, Flu and RSV viruses and any prevalent bacteria. As these maladies continue to circulate, the best approach is to eliminate any chance that our properties harbor the viruses. We continue to offer masks to anyone who so chooses to wear it and extras are located at the ushers' tables. Hand sanitizer is available in church as well as in the kitchen and bathrooms of the parish house. Stay safe as you enjoy our church services and the company of our parish friends.

*Elaine Feyereisen*

## **Coffee Hour**

Coffee Hour is covered for February. And even the first two Sundays in March! That is quite an accomplishment; thanks to all who signed up. Do take a look at your calendar and let us know if there is a day you and your family can host in March or April (or even beyond!). Never done Coffee Hour before? We will help! We can pair you up with a seasoned pro and help you find your way around the kitchen.

Coffee Hour not only is a great ministry for our parishioners, but hosting it is also a great way to get to know who's who and what's going on. Come join our Coffee Hour Team!

## **Ushering in Ushers!**

I often wonder what we would do without our ushers. The ushers represent the church, and they are the 1<sup>st</sup> person a guest or parishioner meets upon arriving. The ushers answer the visitors' questions, make them feel welcome, direct them to the restroom, the nursery and invite them to coffee hour. The ushers make sure the assigned lectors are present and if not, they find a substitute. The 8:00 AM service has one usher and there are 2 at 10:00 AM. They arrive about 20 minutes prior to the start of the service. Often, they also act as tour guides! After the service, the ushers straighten up the kneelers and the pews, getting the church ready for the next service!

Want to give it a try? It's easy! We are always looking for ushers for both services. The more ushers we have, the less you will serve! Please consider volunteering! If you are interested in serving or have questions, please see Mother Lisa or myself.

Peggy James, Usher Coordinator

## **Musical Ideas for the New Year!**

This month, our Crown music article is a bit different. Rather than the usual interesting insights into hymns, sacred music composers, and the like, I will be outlining some of our ideas for the upcoming months.

Guitar Workshop: I will offer a brief guitar workshop for interested Church congregants: I will go over how to assess your guitar's strings, tuning, seating and positioning, and basic chord strumming and picking. Children, teenagers, and adults are all welcome. Owning a guitar is suggested, but, if you are interested in info on what kind of guitar to obtain, I can help explain the various types. If it goes well, the plan is to have a guitar workshop/informal class more regularly.

A bit of my own guitar-related background, since several folks have asked: I majored in classical guitar, and minored in Renaissance lute, at the Peabody Institute, where I studied for my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Iris and I formed a new classical music ensemble, *Thoreau Ensemble* (on hiatus) that often premiered music by living composers. I also played guitar on a professional recording featuring settings of Emily Dickenson poems by the composer Beata Moon. These days, we play more as a mixed instrument family band—similar to what we play in church at times. I have taught guitar, music history class, and other music classes ranging from PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade to community college, and everything in between.

And, while we are on the topic of guitar—where did the guitar get its name, you might ask? The “tar” part of the name comes from the Sanskrit word for string. “Guitar” derives directly from the Spanish “guitarra,” after the Arabic “qitar,” after the ancient Greek “kithara.” If you grasp nothing other than that the guitar has been on a globetrotting evolution for centuries, that's a good starting point.

By Patrick Durek

**Girls Friendly Society (GFS)**

Scheduling conflicts and illness have plagued the Shrewsbury chapter of GFS this past month, and our group is trying to find a format that works well for everyone. On Sunday, Jan. 14, GFS hosted coffee hour -- and a special thanks is owed to Branch Advisor Dorrie Pedalino for all the yummy treats.

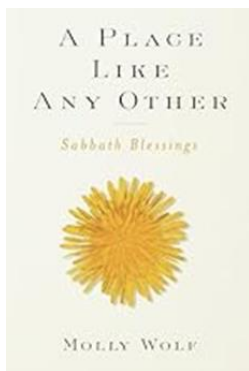
Also on the 14th, Isabelle and Isara Durek were officially inducted into the group. The ceremony was performed by Junior Leaders Erin Pedalino and Cassandra Reagan. We hope to induct a few more girls later in the spring. **No plans have been made for GFS for February.** If you are interested in learning more about GFS, please reach out to Chapter Leader Stacy Reagan at (732) 859-3585.

### **From Our Filipino Students**

Dearest Mother Lisa and Christ Church Shrewsbury Family,

Although it's too late to greet you about this, but I still want to tell you Merry Christmas and have a prosperous New year to each and everyone. I write this letter to say thank you for all the help. Last December we had our midterm examination. And I'm proud to say that I passed the exam. Although I haven't gotten the perfect score but I'm just happy that I passed them. Thank God. January 11 and 12 was our final examination for this term, and I believe that God was beside me to help and guide me. We recently celebrated what we call here the Epiphany. Like the star that guided the three kings for them to reach where Jesus was born, I believe that God is always there to lead me along the way too.

Julien and Phoenix Canoy



### **Peak in the Week**

We're peaking around snow and ice and planning for February's book that will be **A Place like Any Other** by Molly Wolf. The Amazon description says: "Presenting a thought-provoking collection of reflections and observations on the role of God in everyday life, this collection of essays by the author of *Hiding in Plain Sight* discusses her own spiritual experiences and lessons and shows how anyone can discover God's presence in their own life." Well, who couldn't benefit from that?

Peak in the Week—9:30 most every Wednesday, in the parish house. Informal Eucharist followed by the book discussion. Munchies too.

### **Epiphany Pageant 2024 Finale**

It's all over but the memories. And what memories. Dancing Angels, an unexpected Sage, Martin, the Memorial Black Panther (of course there's a story there—ask Mrs. Nap about it), wonderful families stepping in to support and fill empty character spaces—that's what I LOVE about Christ Church, Shrewsbury! Young Jesus wore the Memorial Bob Kelly head gear (we remember with gratitude how wonderfully supportive Bob was with our Epiphany Pageants).

Thank you all so very much for always being willing to roll with the punches of weather, rehearsals, illness, birthday parties, previous plans, last minute needs—the parish of Christ Church, Shrewsbury should take a bow, an encore, and definitely "Break A Leg". You deserve it!

Much love and gratitude, Donna Devlin



*Our beloved Altar Guild Directress and friend, Phyllis Edwards died suddenly on January 28th. This photo of her and husband George were taken earlier this month. They had been married for over 55 years.*

**Things of Note for the February Calendar:**

Vestry Retreat Feb 23- 24

Mother Lisa gone February 7 – 13

Ash Wednesday February 14 – 9:30 am and 5pm services

Pancake Breakfast Sunday February 11 – Superbowl Vote!

## THOSE WHO SERVE February 2024

*Please Note: We need additional acolytes to serve at the 5pm service on Ash Wednesday. Email the office.*

### February 4

Acolytes:	8:00am	Judi Buncher
	10:00am	Joshua & Matthew Dunford, Halina Nibbling, Edgar John
Lector:	8:00am	Dianne Regiec
	10:00am	Patrick Durek/Isabelle Chen-Durek
Ushers:	8:00am	Peggy James
	10:00am	Elaine Feyereisen, George Edwards
Altar Guild:		Cindy Webster
St. Mary's Choir		Brother Richard Biernacki
Coffee Hour:		Colleen and Mark Roth

### February 11

Acolytes:	8:00am	Edgar John
	10:00am	Andrew Brown, Brian Wachter Isabel and Isara Chen-Durek
Lector:	8:00am	Priscilla Gettis
	10:00am	Dash Cassidy/Laura Stroebe
Ushers:	8:00am	Carl Alfano
	10:00am	Bramley Maber, Christine Maber
Altar Guild:		Judi Buncher, Mark Roth, Colleen Roth
Coffee Hour:		Church School

### February 14 Ash Wednesday 5pm

Acolytes:		Priscilla Gettis
Lector		Bob Honecker/Bill Cuff
Usher		Walter Dein

### February 18

Acolytes:	8:00am	Judi Buncher
	10:00am	Cassandra Murphy, Edgar John Halina Nibbling
Lector:	8:00am	Walter Dein
	10:00am	Robert Maber/Elaine Feyereisen
Ushers:	8:00am	John Callaghan
	10:00am	Larry Nibbling, Connie Goddard
Altar Guild:		Halina Nibbling
Coffee Hour:		Walter Dein and Friends

### February 25

Acolytes:	8:00am	Edgar John
	10:00am	Joshua & Matthew Dunford, Halina Nibbling
Lector:	8:00am	Peggy James
	10:00am	Connie Goddard/Mark Roth
Ushers:	8:00am	Judi Buncher
	10:00am	Rod Webster, Jim O'Connor
Altar Guild:		Cindy Webster
Coffee Hour:		Nancy and Bob Stewart