

**Sunday, December 20
Deadline for
Christmas Flowers**

We will have beautiful flowers to ornament our sanctuary during the Christmas season. You may make a donation for Christmas flowers and designate your gift in memory of or in thanksgiving for someone. There will be Christmas flower donation envelopes in the welcome center or you may mail your donation and information to the church office

Lessons and Carols

The 27th Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols Beginning December 6.

Our annual Festival of lessons and Carols will continue. This year however, because of Covid-19 our Lessons and Carols will be virtual and available through our website and YouTube station for the entire season of Advent and Christmas.

This year along with the traditional scripture readings and Father Roy's introduction to each Bible reading, John and Trish will draw from the past to include recordings and videos of some of our favorite carols.

Thank you, John and Trish and all the musicians that have contributed to our first 26 years of lessons and Carols. We pray that this video presentation will bless you during this holiday season.

www.ChristEpiscopalBallstonSpa.com

You Tube - Christ Episcopal Church Ballston Spa, NY



November-December 2020

Dear Friends,

The *Forward Day by Day* had a study a few months ago about a father who went to his rabbi asking for help for his son. "What can I do about my son? He ignores the Jewish ways. He does not eat kosher. He is dating a gentile. He no longer observes the Sabbath. I must bring him back. What can I do?" The rabbi looked at the man and said, "Love him more than ever."

As we approach the Christmas season in this year of pandemic, with so much fear, anger, anxiety, sadness, polarization and other concerns swirling around us, it's easy for us to focus on the wrong we see in others. Such judgement rarely produces health. The way of Jesus is to love people more than ever. As we approach the Christmas season this year, more than ever we need to open our hearts to the truth that He loved us so much that He came amongst us. As a gift of Grace, and despite our own failings and wayward paths, we need to accept that gift and, in return, share that gift of grace with others. Struggling with someone? Love them more than ever.

In His Name,
Fr Derik Roy

Thanksgiving Service

Join us for worship on Thanksgiving Day at 10 am.

Covid Update

Not much has changed since the update provided in the September-October newsletter in terms of our Sunday worship. Masks are still required and we are observing social distancing requirements. Only the bread is being distributed during the Eucharist.

The church has purchased a fogger. This is a ULV disinfectant atomizer that is used to completely disinfect not only surfaces but also the air. This will be used between services and can be used in other church rooms and buildings. The vestry also is continuing to find a solution for an air exchange system in the sanctuary. We began talking with contractors a few months ago and still are waiting for official proposals. As one might suspect they are very busy. We are doing all we can to create a safe place to gather to worship.

Please don't forget if our three services on Sunday at 8 am, 10 am and 5 pm don't work for you, we now have a 9:15 am Wednesday Service and a noon Friday service. Also our 10 am service is live-streamed and available on our YouTube site. You may access it at Christ Episcopal Church Ballston Spa NY YouTube or through our website.

Sunday December 20 - Greening of the church [after the 10:00am service]

You are invited to join the Altar Guild in decorating the church for Christmas.

Christmas Worship Services

As of this writing we will be holding our traditional Christmas Eve services at 4:30 pm, 8:00 pm, and 11:00 pm, and Christmas Day at 9:00 am.

A Christmas worship committee will be looking at how best to gather for worship for Christmas given all the covid-19 restrictions. Look for some innovative ideas.

Christ Episcopal Church

15 West High St.
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Children's Sunday School has returned to Christ Church!

Although it may look a little different for now, we are so happy to give our children the opportunity to continue their faith journeys. All grade levels are currently studying safely at home and it is never too late to join.

Our PreK kids through 4th graders have been completing their lectionary lessons at home with their families, under the guidance of a Sunday School Teacher. The tween and teen groups meet weekly via zoom, to discuss different religious topics and Bible readings.

For more information on how your child can join, kindly call the Church Office or email Katie Skanes at mkcb.skane@gmail.com.



Christmas Pageant

We will be putting together a unique video Christmas Pageant this year. Any child who wants to be involved needs to contact Kristin McCabe at

McCabePianoStudio@gmail.com to be given a part. There will be parts for everyone who would like to read, sing, dress up in costume, etc. We will be asking families to video their own part and upload it to a Google drive and we will then show the finished project on the 4th Sunday of Advent (December 20th) via screen in church and on our website. Submissions need to be uploaded by **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6th** so that we have time to edit it together.



Youth Group Opportunity

The diocese is offering a weekly youth group for middle school and high school aged youth. The group is called Rooted and held every Thursday from 6:45-8:00pm at St George's Clifton Park. If your child is interested in attending let Fr Roy know and he will give you more details. The group is led by our Diocesan Youth ministry team, Daniel Hyde and Kaitlyn Hyde.

KidsFirst

Our children's ministry at KidsFirst continues to do well even in the midst of Covid19. With strong leadership from our director Mary Malandrino, our enrollment is almost at capacity as we do our best to provide a Christ centered loving environment for over 70 children.

We did recently have our first Covid19 scare and because one of the children in one of our classes was exposed to covid19, following the guidelines of the Department of Health, we closed down that classroom for 14 days. This has affected 7 families and two of our teachers. Not only did we follow all that the Department of Health required but we also went above and beyond with sanitizing and doing all we can to keep everyone safe.

Some other exciting news to share: Thanks to the Jennifer Crimi Sunshine Fund and Dennis and Lynne Crimi we have been able to make amazing changes to improve our playground. Included in these changes are an AstroTurf surface to replace mud, dirt puddles and roots. Also thank you to the many that volunteered their help to do the labor.

We will also be establishing a scholarship fund to honor Jennifer Crimi. This fund will ultimately be used to provide financial help to families who struggle with the high cost of daycare. Much more about this will be forthcoming in the months ahead. Other than that, our normal Thanksgiving and Christmas programs will be different because of covid-19. We are hoping that as we enter a New Year things will get back to some sense of normalcy. We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Missions

November – December	Thanksgiving bags and Toy give-away
January – February	Belize Mission

HELP SUPPORT FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY THIS THANKSGIVING!

First Presbyterian Church is once again organizing an **Ecumenical Thanksgiving Bag Ministry** and we invite you to be a part. Last year we provided over 200 dinners to families in need. Families sign up through our local food pantry. Here's how you can help:

FILL A BAG (Bags may be picked up in church office or in welcome center)

with items needed for a basic and healthy Thanksgiving meal, and a \$10 gift card to a local grocery store OR an 8-14 pound frozen turkey to go along with it. A suggested list is attached to each bag along with other important instructions.

DELIVER the bag and turkey to the First Presbyterian Church on **COLLECTION SUNDAY**, November 22 from 11:30 am—2 pm. Your donation is tax deductible if you save your receipts and attach them to a signed tax receipt that will be available on that day. (This year, on that day you can also drop off your bag at Christ Church and we will see it gets across the street)

VOLUNTEER to help at the First Presbyterian Church on **DISTRIBUTION MONDAY**, November 23 from 12—6 pm. Contact the church to volunteer.

THANK YOU for your help as we seek to be a blessing to those in need this Thanksgiving!

Toy Give Away

This year because of Covid-19 the need will be greater than ever before. Covid-19 will make the process of distributing toys different this year as we do our best to keep everyone safe. More details about the distribution will be shared once they have been worked out.

If you would like to help these are the ways:

Contribute money via mail, offering plate or online giving with your gift clearly designated for the Toy give-away.

Bring toys to the church

Volunteer your time to help the day of the distribution. If interested, please contact Jeanne at the church office 518-885-1031

Belize Family Fellowship

What is Jesus doing in the midst of Covid-19? Although there are many consequences of this world-wide pandemic- socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually- we are thankful for something God is doing in the middle of it. We are grateful to have been able to hold in-person services on Sunday mornings and youth group on Thursday nights, for the month of June, and part of July. Then restrictions were placed back on the "church" meeting. We have taken to sharing encouragement and teaching online on the church Facebook page, Mt. Hope Bible Church. This is neat because it is making the sharing available to friends in the states, Allison's sisters and relatives around the nation, as well as others in our village who were not attending church in person. We are thankful for this opportunity.

The thing we are most thankful for though, is our family. We are so glad that the four of us love spending time together. Allison always makes us laugh. He was hired and is working hard on a building project in the village and has been able to hire young men to work with him, providing a discipleship opportunity in many ways. I have started homeschooling the girls full time, and we are loving these days together learning and growing. Since church activities are on hold, we have had every night of the week to be together as a family. We often had to pack up our family and head to church three nights a week. While we know this is ministry God has called us to, we see how the Lord has used Covid-19 to give us family fellowship.

We pray together every night before bed, and the girls are praying big. Allison and I are diligently praying for spiritual strongholds in our new neighborhood to be broken, as there are many. The girls are learning new kids' worship songs and going around the house singing. We have worked together to start a group of raised garden beds, and we actually have plants growing for the first time ever! We also got a new puppy, so our big dogs could raise her up and teach her the ropes of family protection before either of them passes on (both are older). We have sat and watched movies with meaning, and been reminded of God's faithfulness. While this season looks nothing like we expected, we are thankful to the Lord for the family fellowship He has provided.

Diocesan Convention

On Saturday, October 24 the Diocese held its annual convention almost 6 months after our original convention dates and for the first time ever it was a virtual meeting. Our clergy and lay deputies; Don and Julie Rohr and Jayne Schmidt met in our Sanctuary to view the proceedings on our big screen, with our own personal tablets, smartphones or laptops that were used for us to vote.

Without doubt **the highlight of the meeting was the surprising announcement by Bishop Love of his stepping down as Bishop. He will continue as our bishop until February 1, 2021.** His address, which concludes with his announcement of resigning can be found on our Diocesan website;

www.dioceseofalbany.org.

Please pray for him and our diocese as we move forward. Father Roy was elected to serve a second term on the Standing Committee. This is particularly important especially with Bishop Love stepping down since it will be the role of the standing Committee to organize and call for the election of a new Bishop. Other necessary business was conducted, including elections for various committees passing the budget and reports from the Cathedral, Spiritual Life Center, missions and more. Thank you to our lay deputies and clergy for participating in this year's convention.

Thank you

John and Theresa Polson and their core of volunteers who have kept the food pantry running during a very difficult, but much needed time.

Jeremy Bailey for continuing to provide his technical expertise and time to produce on-line services for those not attending the in-person worship services.

To the Crimi family for their generous donation through the Jennifer Crimi Sunshine Fund to improve the playground.

To all those that gave of their time and energy to work on the playground.

For Dennis Crimi who organized and planned all that needed to be done for the playground project.

To Wanda and her staff and volunteers at Noah's Attic, especially given the upcoming Christmas sale.

To all of our church family for your continued financial support. Your generosity continues to allow us to continue our ministries, pay our staff and honor our financial commitments. Amazingly, our overall giving is ahead of our giving from last year at this time, even though many of you have not felt safe coming to worship and have been mailing in your offerings or using our online giving.

Donna Hatley wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and the beautiful prayer quilt.

Calling Team

As the pandemic continues we hope to do all that we can to be of support to one another. We have special concerns for those feeling isolated. To help reach out to those feeling alone or just missing fellowship we are putting together a ministry of "calling". Some of you have already been doing this—thank you! However, we hope to be better organized and do our best to reach every person within our church family. If you think you would like to join this calling team ministry, please contact Father Roy or Jeanne in the church office. If you commit to this ministry you will be given 4-6 names of people to reach out to with a call once or twice a month. There will be a brief meeting once we know who is willing to be a caller to go over specifics. Thank you.

-The Pastoral Ministries Vestry Team

**Noah's Attic is in need of volunteers. Thursdays and Saturdays.
Please call Wanda 518 885-9455**

Learning Opportunities

Small Group Bible Study

God himself is a community of three persons in one — the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — who exist in perfect unity. So, it is not surprising that from the beginning, God created us to be in community with one another. Genesis 2:18 states: "It is not good for man to be alone." This passage is often used in the context of marriage, but it also speaks to our fundamental need to connect with others in the human community. Community is deeply grounded in the nature of God. It flows from who God is; because he is community, he creates community. It is his gift of himself to humans.

When Jesus' ministry began, he called 12 disciples to be his primary relational and ministry community. Did Jesus need this motley crew to help him? Not really. But Jesus chose to love them, teach them, and pour himself into relationships with them, thereby creating the first "small group." The apostles continued Jesus' model and formed a community of believers who loved God and loved one another. Despite incredible persecution and against all odds, this rag-tag group of Jesus-followers launched small communities (that is churches) that proclaimed the gospel and changed the world forever. For the New Testament church, it was a way of life, encompassing every area of their lives. Their relationships with one another were critical to their pursuit of Jesus, their growth in Christ, and their witness to the Good News. It is impossible to experience biblical community apart from spiritually significant, intentional relationships with other believers.

It is in small groups that people can get close enough to know each other, to care and share, to challenge and support, to confide and confess, to forgive and be forgiven, to laugh and weep together, to be accountable to each other, to watch over each other, and to grow together. Personal growth does not happen in isolation. It is the result of interactive relationships. Small groups are God's gift to foster changes in character and spiritual growth.

We have a small group bible study at Christ Church, led by Bonnie Hall, which has been meeting together on Tuesday mornings for three years. We can all attest to the fact that miracles happen in small Bible study groups. We read and study scripture, coming together weekly to share what we discern. Hearing each other's views is where the magic happens — deepening our understanding, sometimes dramatically. For the past year we've been working our way through Paul's Letters — currently we're starting on his letter to the Romans. We would welcome more members. If you're interested contact Bonnie Hall.

This study is in-person, in the welcome center on Tuesdays at 10:00am

Tuesday Evening Woman's Lectionary Zoom Study 6:30 pm

We focus on the scripture readings for each Sunday. Please contact Rachel Norsworthy at rachel.norsworthy@gmail.com or the church office, if you wish to join.

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion Service will begin at 9:15am. We will meet in the Sanctuary (main church)

Study Group at 10:00am. This will be an in-person study. Currently we are viewing and discussing the critically acclaimed series "The Chosen," about the life of Jesus. It is never too late to join us. Starting in Advent we will begin the 5-session study called *Who is Jesus* by Louie Giglio. All meetings are being held in the main church to allow for social distancing.

Wednesday Evening Men's Zoom Lectionary—7:00 pm

If you'd like to join our Bible Study via zoom please notify Fr Roy, Noel Drindak, or the church office. Each week we study the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday.



Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is blessed to announce that the sacristy will be receiving an update after the first of the year, with contributions from memorial funds and monies. The original woodwork will be replicated for our new cabinets, and a new sink and counter- will replace the 1940s sink and storage. Our materials for the projects are being ordered through Curtis Lumber, and our construction is being done by Peter Champagne, with Mike Luger and others assisting. We are looking forward to sharing the completed project in early spring along with a special church service of blessings on our updated sacristy.

-Respectfully submitted,
Julia Duchesne Altar Guild



Daughters of The King ~ DOK

As like everyone else, St. Agnes Chapter DOK had a very eventful calendar for 2020, then came COVID-19. We have been staying connected with each other via e-mails, cards, telephone calls and some Zoom meetings.

In August we resumed gathering monthly, with social distancing, of course. In September we were able to gather for a nice Day Retreat at Dcn Lynne's beautiful estate. This proved to be what so many of us needed. We also were so very blessed to gather for our one and only Beautiful Margaret Anderson's 100th Birthday. More to come on that in the January newsletter.

DOK completed a National 52 day Nehemiah Prayer Challenge and focused on Peace, Love, and Unity. This proved to bring a great witness to many, praying consecutively in such great numbers, and with such focus.

We also have been blessed to have Patricia Ellis transfer into our chapter. Welcome, Pat! With social distancing, we are gathering monthly to pray and encourage one another. May we continue to have and keep the faith during COVID-19. This too shall pass.

Bambi Becker ~ DOK President

Quilting Ministry

The quilting ministry meets on the third Saturday of the month from 10 am until noon. If you would like to request a quilt for a loved one in need of healing, our 8 am Sunday worship contact is Joyce Reed; Jayne Schmidt for our 10 am worship service; or you can call the church office. Don't forget that we continue to collect "Jesus" dollars that are used to support the quilting ministry.

Deacon Lynne is available for free **pastoral counseling** by phone. It is available on Thursdays and by appointment only. If you are interested please contact Deacon Lynne by email: lynncrimi@verizon.net.

Friday Spiritual Safety Net

All of us are aware of the potential disruption and uncertainty swarming around us.

Multiple sources of stress threaten our sense of balance. These challenges include; but are not limited to:

- Continual outbreaks of Covid 19 and real possibility of a "dark winter".
- Economic disruption in employment and higher prices for food, goods, and services.
- Instability in public and private education.
- Social unrest and intolerance in race relations.
- The wellbeing of our present Bishop and the future of our diocese.
- The presidential election and its aftermath.

Yet, each one of us is required to navigate an unknown tomorrow and next week. Building a spiritual safety net is a healthy response and antidote to the endemic uncertainty and anxiety of the times. That is why our weekly Friday liturgy of silent prayer and Holy Eucharist is important. The format is based upon "Communion under special circumstances" from our book of common Prayer (p.396)

The **noontime service in the main church** does not exceed thirty minutes. It includes petitionary prayer for:

- Relief and divine protection from Covid19
- The safety of all parishioners and loved ones
- National unity and accord; respecting others with whom we disagree
- The wellbeing of our present Bishop and the future of our diocese

The following prayers and thanksgiving for the loving presence of our Lord.

- Reception of Holy Eucharist
- Silent prayers and rest
- Brief closing

Through prayer and sacrament, we can experience the peace of Christ.

If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Gil.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is doing well and preparing for the last few months of the year. Since we've cut our hours, we've been pleased to find that we are still serving approximately 250 people a month. We will be keeping an eye on our numbers and maybe adding more hours beginning in the new year. If you would like to volunteer please email theresapolson@gmail.com.

The Food Pantry will again be signing up families for the ecumenical Thanksgiving bags that the Presbyterian church is coordinating. Families can sign up for the bags at our Food Pantry during our open hours. We will also be signing up families for our annual toy drive in December after the Thanksgiving holiday. Watch for the advertisements. Happy Holidays to all!



Noah's Attic Christmas Sale.

It's time to prepare for the annual Noah's Attic Christmas Sale! We're going to have the sale as close to normal as we can. Masks are required.

We've been collecting items for sale all year long and The Boy Scouts will bring the items from the attic to the parish hall for us to set up in the parish hall on Nov 9, 10 and 11.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

If you can help with setup, please contact Wanda at Noah's Attic: 518-885-9455

**The Christmas Sale will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday,
November 12,13,14 from 9:30 am - 4:00 pm.**