



## January 2024 Newsletter

Blessed Christmastide everyone! December wrapped up the year in some special ways. It began with a very fun and successful “kids day” (Note in your calendar the next one on **Saturday March 23** during which we’ll introduce the kids to all the events of Holy Week), and an exuberant visit with our bishop. A few days later, an outreach opportunity blossomed into a parish event as a whole group of members entered the men’s state prison in Concord to wrap the toys and gifts that we and the other parishes of the diocese donated so that the inmates there would have something to give to their children for Christmas. Everyone had a good time and expressed interest in offering some volunteer hands-on help with the ChiPs program next year. Then on December 24 we had double services – celebrating Advent 4 with a focus on Mary Sunday morning then having a beautiful Christmas Eve service that evening.

I want to thank everyone for the gorgeous flowers donated in memory and in thanksgiving for the people you love; the months of practice the choir put in to provide special music for Christmas; and the altar guild and others who had everything so organized that the advent decorations were taken down and the Christmas ones set up in record time!

We’re not quite done with Christmas (don’t forget we have 12 days!). This Sunday December 31<sup>st</sup> will be a service of **Christmas lessons and carols**. We’ll be singing more of the Christmas music we love as well as hearing a couple of pieces the choir did on Christmas Eve. Then on January 7, we’ll be celebrating the **Epiphany** and reflecting about the familiar story of the visit of the wise men (or kings, or magi, or astrologers/astronomers, or wise women, or magicians!) Afterwards – we’ll be taking down the Christmas decorations and giving away most of the donated flowers to any who would like them.

The season of Christmas is short, but the meaning of it is one that can give us hope and courage and even a sense of joy in difficult times through all the days of the year. For God in Christ didn't just come just a long time ago, but comes again and again in all kinds of ways and through all kinds of people. Take some quiet time especially during these 12 days to let that message of good news sink into your heart.

Peace and all good,  
Carolyn

## *OUTREACH*

**Chips :** For the first time in several years due to Covid, the diocesan Christmas program for children of incarcerated parents was held again this year. St. David's was very generous and purchased many toys and books. When they were brought to diocesan convention, those loading the collection truck were astounded by how much our little church gave. The gifts were then brought to St. Paul's school, sorted, brought to the prisons where parents chose a toy and a book to give each of their children, which were wrapped for them and then they gave them to their kids. For some children this was their only toy; and for all, it was an opportunity for parents to maintain family bonds during this time of separation. Thank you all!

**Dave Hall Fund:** The DCYF supervisor of the area foster children's services contacted us asking for gift cards for financially strapped families caring for foster children to be used for food and gifts for the children for Christmas. Six families were given a card worth \$100 each. Foster families actually get very limited financial help from the state for taking in these children who are going through a very uncertain and often traumatic time.

December Outreach – **Episcopal Relief and Development:** This Sunday will be the last opportunity this year to donate some financial support for this outreach arm of the Episcopal Church responding to natural disasters, refugees, crises, and ongoing economic support and development throughout the world. Please be generous!

**January Outreach – Family Promise:** Family Promise is an interfaith organization that has been providing transitional housing, meals, case management, financial planning and career development for families with children from Southern New Hampshire for over 17 years. A total of 85% of the families completing the program have remained stable and self-sufficient. An organization we once actively participated in and is worthy of our ongoing financial support.

## *ANNUAL MEETING*

Our annual parish meeting will be on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is an important meeting to express our gratitude for so many who have served the church in all kinds of ways, discuss our financial status and budget for 2023, and elect members to some official positions. We'll have worship as usual at 9:30 and after a brief break for some coffee and refreshments, convene the meeting in which those on zoom can participate.

This year we have a number of positions open: A Warden (Barbara Klenner has finished her term, a vestry member (replacing Dianna Chamberlain), and a delegate. (The position of Treasurer, Clerk, and the other Warden are also renewed unless other people would also like to run for those positions.) Job descriptions are posted at the end of this newsletter as well as on the small bulletin board by the copy machine room. If you are interested in any of these positions, you can speak to Carolyn or submit a name into the nomination box in the foyer. If there are more candidates than openings for each position, an election by ballot is held. All those who have served in each of these positions feel they have learned so much and have forged a deeper understanding and commitment to our church and its ministry.

There are also other positions not requiring formal elections, but ones in which team leadership should be rotated. In particular, Lana has been heading up the Altar Guild for many years and could use a break, and similarly Barbara Klenner would deeply appreciate having another help coordinate the meeting times and agenda for the Property Committee. Both of them would be happy to support and guide anyone as they begin their leadership role.

*Diane Soucy* – Speaking of various positions, our deepest gratitude goes to Diane Soucy for creating the bulletins for Sunday worship each week. Diane will be moving early in the year to a senior housing complex in Amesbury, Massachusetts. Her faithful presence, work, and prayers will be deeply missed. And thank you to *Kathy Boutin* who has volunteered to take over Diane's work in the office!

***SAFE CHURCH TRAINING*** – We are working to gradually build a program of Christian formation for the children of the church. It is not just the responsibility of a few volunteers but of every member. The safe church training for our diocese consists simply of watching several videos and becoming familiar with the diocesan policies for the protection of both children and adults. You can take this training on your own using your computer, or the vestry will be doing it as a group on *February 19* at 6:30 PM. Please let Carolyn or Michele Quinn (who will be our new Safe Church Minister in 2024) if you are interested.

### ***JUST FOR FUN***

**Winter Doldrums Pot-Luck Supper and Yankee Swap** – Many years ago a blizzard forced the cancellation of a parish yankee swap which was rescheduled in February. Everyone decided that this fun event was perfect to break up what can feel like a long dark winter. So hold the date of Saturday February 17. More details will come out closer, but in the meantime you may want to keep an eye out for a gift to swap which can be anything – crazy, cheap, edible, nice, funny. Almost every time there is one or two gifts that everyone wants and gets swapped back and forth over and over again. Great night for good food and laughter!

## *JOB DESCRIPTIONS*

### **Vestry**

The Vestry is a board of dedicated church lay people, who work with the priest in conducting the business matters of the church, overseeing the care of the property, and being leaders in supporting the life and ministry of the parish. By canon law, the vestry is also responsible for electing and calling a priest when necessary.

Vestry members commit themselves to:

- attend meetings currently on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday from 6:30-8:30 PM. (This is free to be changed as works out best for the entire group. There may be special meetings upon occasion.)
- attend an annual vestry retreat (usually a Saturday event);
- Be accessible to parish members to listen to their concerns and advise the vestry accordingly ;
- Support the parish and its priest through prayer, attendance at Sunday worship, financial pledge, and being engaged in its ongoing ministry and mission.

Vestry members normally serve a three-year term.

### **Parish Delegate**

Parish delegates are elected lay members representing their parish at area parish meetings and at Diocesan Convention. Delegates learn about and communicate what is happening in the Diocese to the members of their parish and vestry; elect people to some diocesan committees and representatives to General convention; and vote on the diocesan budget and presented resolutions.

Delegates commit themselves to:

- attend meetings of the Southern Convocation (6 times a year usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month). During the winter months meetings have been via zoom at 6:30pm lasting around an hour. This year May, June, Sept., and Oct have been in-person or hybrid.
- attend the annual Diocesan Convention. Convention has been a zoom business meeting on a Friday evening late Oct/ early November, with an in-person meeting the next day for worship and discussion. We don't know yet whether diocesan convention will be a zoom or an in person meeting in early November.

Parish Delegates normally serve two-year terms.

**Warden** - In addition to the responsibilities of all vestry members, the Wardens:

- Meet or speak with the rector on a regular basis to review the life and work of the congregation, plan ahead, and anticipate and resolve problems; and maintain confidentiality where appropriate.
- Provide leadership so the vestry can identify the vision and mission of the congregation, make and implement plans, assess progress, and celebrate achievements.

- Provide leadership in the congregation by demonstrating a consistently positive attitude that seeks to solve problems, recognize accomplishments, and give thanks for those things which build community and further the mission of the Church.
- Be available to discuss any and all concerns with members of the congregation; avoid making hasty judgments; avoid triangles by encouraging complainants to speak to those involved.
- Ensure that policies and procedures are in place and enforced regarding employee and volunteer misconduct; take any questions, concerns, and complaints to the rector and/or appropriate authorities immediately.
- Take action to intervene promptly (with others as appropriate) in the event that the rector is charged with misconduct, has problems with drugs or alcohol or is acting inappropriately; speak with the rector and the bishop.
- Petition the bishop in writing on behalf of the vestry to intervene in cases where conflict imperils the pastoral relationship between the rector and congregation.
- Encourage the rector to take corrective steps as appropriate in cases where the rector is overworked, disregarding her health and well-being, or that of her family.
- Assist in identifying persons for leadership roles and participate in inviting them in those roles.
- *In the absence of the rector:* notify the bishop promptly and make provisions for worship services; lead the congregation by ensuring worship services and pastoral needs are met; chair vestry meetings; maintain employee relations and communication with the diocese; ensure that the selection process for a new rector has begun and submit to the bishop the name of the person proposed to be called as rector 30 days before the election and notify the bishop in writing of the result of the election; and develop a letter of agreement with the new rector which is subject to the bishop's approval

The Wardens are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting with a renewed election each year for a maximum of 5 years.



**MAY THE NEW YEAR BE ONE OF JOY AND MEANING!**