Tell the world about our Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 1, 9 AM to 2 PM.

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The Hidden Word: dazzle
“The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”

December, 2007
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Christ Church Christmas Fair
Saturday, December 1st
9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
“Best Cookie Walk on the Seacoast…”
“Loved the International feel of it all.”
“Really unusual ...a very unique Christmas Fair!”

These and other equally glowing comments were heard during and after last year’s Christ Church Christmas Fair. And, the superlatives will be flying again this year because everything that made last year’s fair great is in place again. Not only will there be another Cookie Walk, but “A Greater Gift” returns with handcrafted items from around the world, and “Beads for Life” is back with gorgeous jewelry from Africa. Plus, there will be all sorts of crafts and eclectic items and, new this year, Café CC (or is it Si Si!?) And, our new cookbook for 2007, Divine Desserts, will make its first appearance!

The only thing that could possibly prevent us from having the best Christ Church Christmas Fair ever is if you don’t come and/or you don’t bring your friends and family. If you can stay and help for a couple of hours, so much the better! But, as with life, just showing up is the main thing ...and spending money. This is a major church fund-raiser.

Christmas Fair Volunteer Opportunities Abound!
We need help before, during, and after the fair. I think most of last year’s helpers will attest to the fact that the longer you stay, the more fun you have, but if your time is limited, please try to commit to one of the following

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God’s Dream for the World

Early last August the gospel passage from Luke contained the other version of the Lord’s Prayer.

Steve Godfrey was filling in for Dan. He mentioned that some thought around heaven and God’s kingdom was in fact God’s dream for the world.

That was a powerful image for me, and one that I think about every day. How I, a flawed Human being, can help realize that dream in some small way.

A friend of ours died suddenly last week as a result of a stroke. He was only 51. His Memorial Service at the Surfers’ Beach in Rye was attended by over 40 of his fellow surfers and at least that many of his friends. Of the many folks who spoke during the service, the theme that repeated itself over and over was one of his love and respect for others. Todd, in fact — in his own quirky way — was living God’s dream for the world.

Clearly, that dream needn’t be grand. In fact the beauty was the simplicity of action in daily life.

I am grateful for those examples that I see and hear about, because I know that I may be able to help create that dream in some small way.

In this month when we celebrate God’s humanity, please think about how we might be able to be a part of God’s dream for the World.

Your brother,

Peter

See you at the Fair!

One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving.

—Amy Carmichael
Advent: The Season of Preparation

On Sunday, December 2nd, we begin a new church year with the celebration of the first Sunday of Advent. It wasn't until the Sixth Century that Advent began to be celebrated as a liturgical season. The original purpose of the season was to prepare for the celebration of Christmas, to commemorate the birth of our Lord. Soon Advent developed an eschatological (end time) character, and the focus shifted to the Second Coming of Christ. With this shift in focus came a shift in the tone of the season. The joyful anticipation and celebration of Advent was replaced by a more somber tone of penance and self-examination.

Recently, the Church has developed a more balanced and well-rounded understanding of Advent. We now recognize the importance of three aspects of preparation. They are preparation for the commemoration of the original coming of Jesus Christ into our world; preparation for Christ's rebirth into our hearts; and a preparation for the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. All three aspects are now included in our Advent liturgical celebrations.

The scripture readings during Advent reflect the three aspects of preparation. The readings of the first two Sundays of Advent focus on the end of time, when Christ will come again to judge the world. The scripture readings of the third and fourth Sundays of Advent focus on the original birth of Jesus, and we are encouraged to allow Jesus to come into our hearts in a new way each year. Thus the first two weeks have a somber/reflective tone and the last two weeks have a more joyful tone.

There are many ways to celebrate the season of Advent. Perhaps an Advent wreath could help you stay focused on the season, or a special prayer before meals, or perhaps helping the poor in some way. While we prepare our homes for the celebration of Christmas, let's not forget to prepare our hearts as well. In whatever way we choose to prepare, may this Advent season help all of us to focus on the true meaning of the Coming of Jesus!

Our Christmas Worship Service this year will be held at 6PM on Christmas Eve. Christmas Carols will begin at 5:30PM. All children present will be invited to help in the telling of the Christmas Story.
Buildings & Grounds Committee Compiles “Master List”

The Buildings & Grounds Committee met on Saturday, November 17 to begin the process of compiling a list of all of the Christ Church building & grounds-related tasks, chores, and duties that are done on an annual, monthly, or seasonal basis. In attendance at the meeting were Dave Burke, Chair; plus Craig Davis, Leo Gagnon, Peter Monte, and Pastor Dan Bernier.

We brainstormed as many ideas as we could think of, put them into a spreadsheet divided into things to be done monthly, and created lists of resource folks and phone numbers, etc. One reason for doing this is to relieve Dan of many of the multitude of dazzle “around the church” B & G duties that he has done up until recently, so that his time is freed up to spend on his more direct ministerial duties. The other main reason is to create a record and resource file, so that the information is not just retained in one or two person’s memories, but is written down so that it can be accessed by various folks when they need it. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Very Successful Fall Buildings & Grounds Clean-Up

Thank you to all the members of the Congregation who stayed after Services on Sunday, the 10th to participate in the Fall Clean-Up! I would name names, but the turnout was so good that I am afraid that I would miss someone. We had enough people that we were able to spread the work between inside & outside clean-up jobs.

The sanctuary was vacuumed, swept, mopped and dusted from top to bottom. Outside, the weather cooperated, and under sunny skies we dragged dozens of tarps of leaves out into the woods, cleaned up garbage from the side of the road, and trimmed back a lot of bushes and perennials to prepare them for their winter “nap.” We had fun working together as a team.

We also got to share a pleasant pizza lunch together, and had the opportunity to get to know some of our fellow Parishioners a little better. Thanks again to all of you who worked so hard to shape up the building and grounds. You can be proud of what we accomplished together!

Dave Burke

Christ Church Chronicle
Christ Church’s 125th Anniversary Committee Moves Forward, Planning Year-Long Celebration

The 125th-Anniversary Committee held its third meeting on Wednesday, November 14. We want to share with you what we have accomplished, or at least initiated so far.

One piece of exciting news is that Linda McVay has offered to create a sculpture to commemorate our anniversary. We met with her and she shared some thoughts as to subject matter and type of sculpture. She asked us, and we in turn ask you, for suggestions about a spot in the church, the chapel, or the education wing, where a free-standing sculpture or a bas-relief might be displayed. Linda suggested possible subjects including the Good Samaritan or Jesus with a lamb on his shoulder or in his arms. We liked both these suggestions and invite you to make other suggestions as to subject matter. Please send an e-mail to or see Grover with any such thoughts or ideas.

The Banquet site has been chosen: it’s the Frank Jones Center just off the Route 1 By-Pass north of the church. Put the date on your calendar right now! It will be on Sunday, September 21, 2008, immediately following a festival Eucharist celebrated by our Bishop at Christ Church. We’ll have more information about costs in the coming months, but we are resolved to make it possible for every member of the congregation to attend the Eucharist and the banquet.

We have settled on the phrase “Open to Change” as the theme for the 125th Anniversary celebration. Change is a fact of life and certainly Christ Church has experienced its share of changes, from the destruction of the old church building and a new start at our present location, to changes in the way we worship. We pray to God that we remain open to change as he guides us toward an unknown, yet hopeful, future.

We have also written an Anniversary prayer that will be used throughout 2008, which we would like to share with you:

“Loving God, for 125 years you have guided this congregation in all seasons and brought us together to serve as witnesses to your word; Be present with us now as we celebrate the gift of our church family. Make us welcoming to all whom we meet here, and committed to working for peace and justice, in our own community and in the wider world. Guide us in being faithful caretakers of your church as we look to the future with hearts full of hope. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who went about creating circles of friends and taught us to remember those in need. Amen.”

We hope soon to make final decisions on a series of perhaps four major

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events leading up to the anniversary Eucharist and banquet in September. We hope, among other things, to organize a concert featuring an array of local musicians, and to arrange a talk by NHPTV personality Fritz Wetherbee. We welcome any suggestions that you may have for other events or for local musicians who might be available for a concert.

Finally, you will already be aware, from an article in the November *Chronicler*, of the progress we have made in conceptualizing the “Banner” project. We urge everyone in the congregation - man, woman or child – to design a square to be incorporated into the Banner. Plan to exercise your creativity!

We on the Committee are tremendously excited about this upcoming year of celebration and we hope that you are as well!

**Grover Marshall, Chair**

**125th Anniversary Committee**

**Holly**

Holly is a popular decoration at Christmastime, not just for its beauty but also for its religious significance. Holly’s thorny leaves and red berries symbolize Jesus’ Passion and blood, reminding us of the fate awaiting the Christ child. According to old Christian legends, holly first sprang up under Christ’s footsteps, and his cross was made from the wood of holly.

**Social Action & Awareness Groups Are Delving Deeper**

Christ Church currently has two different gatherings of people that have been meeting for several weeks now as part of our Social Action and Awareness program. Below is a quick update on what each group has been doing.

The Sunday morning group (every week at 8:45am) has been working on our own awareness of our attitude, gratitude, and purpose during our day-to-day lives. We are discovering that it is much easier to get wrapped up in stress, worry, and frustration during the week than it is to carry an inner peace! Our awarenesses are impacting the daily choices we make about how we will interact with others and ourselves each day.

The Monday evening group (bi-weekly at 6:30pm) has been exploring the difference between social actions that become a “transaction” vs. social action that evolves out of a committed community of people. We are finding more value in the relational aspect of Social Action than the transaction of “doing a good deed”; our awarenesses are impacting how we interact with others in our group and our church community. Please see Nancy Morrison if you are interested in joining either of these ongoing groups.
Bible Basics

The Sunday Bible Readings

By Rev. Dan Bernier

On the First Sunday of Advent, December 2nd 2007, the Episcopal Church will begin using a new lectionary (the Revised Common Lectionary) at our Sunday Services. For those of you who are unfamiliar with what a lectionary is, it is a table of readings from scripture appointed to be read at public worship. This association of particular texts with specific days dates back to the 4th century.

The Lectionary (1969) developed by the Roman Catholic Church provided for a three-year cycle of Sunday readings in which Matthew, Mark and Luke are read in successive years with some material from John read in each year. This Roman lectionary provided the basis for the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer 1979, as well as those developed by many other denominations.

The Common Lectionary, published in 1983, was an ecumenical project of several American and Canadian denominations, developed out of a concern for the unity of the Church and a desire for a common experience of Scripture. It was intended as a harmonization of the many different denominational approaches to the three-year lectionary. It has been in trial use in the Episcopal Church since 1983.


The 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in June 2006 directed that the Revised Common Lectionary – Episcopal Edition, replace the Book of Common Prayer lectionary. Some of the reasons for the change are: (1) there is an option for semi-continuous reading of the great Old Testament narratives on the Sundays after Pentecost; (2) there is an option for readings in thematic harmony with the Gospel of the day for the Sundays after Pentecost; (3) there is an inclusion of women and their role in salvation history, offering texts about women never heard on Sunday before. The Revised Common Lectionary, which will now be used for Sunday worship, has been slightly modified to conform to Episcopal worship needs.
Behind the Scenes

With Dawn Marie Evans

Christ Church Office Manager

Dawn Marie Evans (“Dawnie”) has been Christ Episcopal Church’s Office Manager for one year. She was recommended for the job by Donna Packard – her friend of six years – who had previously held the position. When she first started working for Christ Church, she also held three other part-time positions, including a similar job at another church, working for an interior designer, and as a sub-contractor for the State of Maine. She is now working exclusively for us, plus she has her own business (more about that below). She is very grateful to be working with Dan (who is very supportive), as well as with all of us parishioners. She especially appreciates Dan’s patience with her, and his sense of humor.

Dawn was born and grew up in the Verde Valley of Arizona, in a little town called Cottonwood. Several of her family members moved to New England in the mid-nineties, and she followed them here in 1999, settling in Dover. Her first job in the area was as a waitress at Harvey’s in Dover. She says that she met some nice people, but figured out that she did not like waitressing very much. Within the past few months she moved closer to us, “trading” her place in Dover for a home in Elwyn Park, here in Portsmouth.

She has held several other jobs since that first one, but one of her most important decisions was to attend classes at the Misty Meadow Farm in Lee, where she earned a certificate in Herbal Medicine. She enjoyed learning to identify, harvest, and dry her own herbs. She loved it so much that she started her own business: SunMoonStars Herbals. She currently makes custom-blended bath salts, salt scrubs, and teas, and sells them at extremely reasonable prices ($5 to $10) to local customers in the greater Seacoast area.

In her position as our Office Manager, Dawn is often the voice and “face” of Christ Church when folks call or stop in that need assistance of some sort. This is one of her favorite parts of the job, as she gets to be directly involved in “social action” with all sorts of people who just need...
a little help to get by. She is responsible for disbursing grocery items from our food pantry, and is greatly appreciative of the donations of food items from members of our congregation!

She also disburses $15 gasoline vouchers, which folks use to put a little gas in their car so that they can take their child to the doctors, or get to an important job interview. Dawn says that the funds for these vouchers come from Dan’s Vicar’s Discretionary Fund, which is always in need of replenishment. Some folks need help in this area more than once, however the funds are in such limited supply that they can only get a gasoline voucher (redeemable for about 5 gallons of gas, which does not go very far) once every three months. During this Holiday Season, Dawn is hoping that more parishioners will be moved to donate to this very important and helpful Fund.

In addition to dealing with the public, she orders the flowers for the altar area each week, and keeps the calendar updated on our website. Dawn’s other major responsibility is creating the weekly Bulletin for our Sunday Services. She is the one who gathers all of the information from Dan and Alexis, plus notices from all of us, and puts it together. She would also like you to know that she is responsible for inserting all of the bloopers, misprints, and typos in each bulletin, to keep us smiling and entertained when we are reading it! She welcomes your suggestions, as well as notes regarding omissions & corrections, and requests that you keep her posted on upcoming birthdays and anniversaries, as the church’s records in this area are often incomplete.

The love of Dawn’s life is her two-year old daughter, Maggie! Maggie attends Little Blessings Preschool on Monday’s and Wednesdays while her Mom is working in our office, and both of them love the arrangement. Maggie is delightfully precocious, is a budding artist, and loves piggy-back rides and Scooby Doo!

Dawn’s other interests include gardening, cooking, & baking. She enjoys walks in the woods, and is an artist and photographer as well. And if you want to really get on her good side when you stop in, she loves coffee!

Financial Update from 2007

The gap between our 2007 Income and Expenses continues to get narrower, but we still need your help! A few members of our congregation have stepped forward to say that they have had an exceptionally good year! Due to that, they were able to give a little more than they had pledged, that would help offset those who had to reduce the size of their pledges, due to financial circumstances. To date the $8,000.00 deficit has been reduced to $5,500.00. If any additional members of the congregation are able to give more than they had originally pledged, please contact Shad as soon as possible THANKS!
Our Adult Education Program

This fall we finished our study of the 8 Millennium Development goals on Nov. 18. This fall we covered goal 6-8. Goal 6, Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases was covered in an article in the Sept Chronicler. Our after church adult forums covered Goal 7, Ensure Environmental Sustainability in October and Goal 8, Develop a Global Partnership for Developments with Targets for Aid, Trade, and Debt Relief. These last two goals are ones that can be affected by choices that you and I make in our everyday lives.

Care of the environment, is a form of stewardship. All the earth was created by God and is God’s gift to us, and is it our responsibility to be good stewards of the earth. In our discussion we talked about some of the things we can do to care for the environment.

CO₂ is the primary cause of Global warming and is produced by electric power plants which burn fossil fuels (Oil, coal, natural gas) and by direct use of fossil fuels, such as gasoline and diesel fuel. So what can we do

• Buy local food, since it travels only a short distance it uses less gasoline
• Drive less by carpooling, or combining many small trips into one
• Turn down your thermostat 2 or 3 degrees which uses less oil, or electricity
• Replace conventional dazzle light bulbs with compact florescent ones, using less electricity

Clean water is necessary for life for everyone, and is decreasing in supply. So you can decrease the use of clean water

and where possible avoid adding pollution to water sources.

• Buy organic, because it uses less chemicals whose runoff pollutes our streams and rivers
• Pick up after your dog, pet waste pollutes ground water through storm runoff
• Don’t leave water on unnecessarily, such as while you brush your teeth
• Catch rain from your downspouts and use it to water yard, garden and flowers

It takes energy and raw materials to make things to so the few thing made, the better for the environment.

• Recycling papers, cans, bottles, and other packaging
• Reuse where you can
• Buy used, there is another form of recycling
• Find someone who can use things you no longer need, this is another form of recycling

Bottled water uses oil to make the plastic for the bottles and pumping water from underground sources depletes the sources use for well and municipal water, making low-cost water less available.

Besides helping the environment, many of these things can also save you money.

In our spring study we will continue to look at how our everyday choices can contribute to sustainable global development and environmental sustainability. If you have any particular things related to these topics that you would like to see us study or cover in our study, please let me know.

Thanks,

Betty Lane
Report from the Chair of the Stewardship Committee

Thanksgiving is the time of year when we can take a moment to reflect on all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. In looking back on the year at Christ Church I think we can all appreciate the hard work that many have volunteered to carry out the missions of the Christ Church Community with their time and their financial support. Below is a list of some of the activities that embody the spirit of Christ Church:

- Religious Services and Sacraments
- Religious Education
- Pastoral Care
- Music
- Diocesan Ministries
- Hospitality
- Utilities, Maintenance, and Repairs
- Outreach Programs
  - Social Action and Awareness
  - Salvation Army Soup Kitchen
  - Edgewood Center Outreach
  - Love in Action
  - Support of Millennium Development Goals
  - Seacoast Outright

At this time of year we are asked to make a pledge to support all the work that Christ Church is planning to support in 2008. If you have already submitted your pledge card I on behalf of Christ Church I thank you. If you have not yet submitted a pledge card there is still time and I pray that you take a moment to reflect on all the great work that Christ Church does in the local as well as world community prior to making your pledge. Pledging and making a financial commitment to Christ Church is a very personal decision and a very critical one to ensure that the programs that Christ Church has committed to are indeed realized. The Biblical standard of giving is the Tithe or 10% of one’s income; however, the spirit of the gift is as important as the amount. God reminds us that the gifts that have been given to us in life are merely ours to borrow and that as stewards of God’s generosity it is our responsibility to use them well. I encourage you to reflect on how you have benefited from being a member of the Christ Church community when making a pledge.

The upcoming year marks the 125th anniversary of Christ Church and in addition to our regular operating needs we have many capital improvements that need to be addressed such as paving, painting and window replacement that will require additional funds over and above the regular operating budget. Please take these into consideration when making your pledge as we are going to be addressing these improvements in the near future and will be in need of the funds to accomplish them through our Capital Pledge Program for which you can make a pledge in addition to your pledge to the operating fund.

As Stewards of the gifts that God has given us, may you share your financial resources with generosity and thankfulness for the love that God has given all of us at Christ Church.

With Peace and Appreciation,

Lee Hoginski
Chair, Stewardship
New Christ Church Cookbook: *Divine Desserts* Available in December

The Christ Church Cookbook Committee is pleased to announce that their newest collection of favorite Christ Church Parishioner’s recipes, entitled “Divine Desserts”, will be available this week! Its initial release will be at the Annual Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 1st, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Following its availability there, the committee will have copies for sale just in time for the Holiday Season. They will make a great gift, or you can simply use some of the recipes yourself to add to your Holiday cheer.

Christmas Eve Prayer

Give us, O God, the vision which can see your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

—Frank Borman, Apollo 8 commander

125th Anniversary Quilt Workshop Reminder

On Sunday, December 2nd, directly following our Sunday Service, there will be an informational workshop in the religious education room regarding our 125th Anniversary Quilt Project. Come and find out more about how we will be assembling the commemorative 12-inch fabric squares using ribbons (ties), and get lots of ideas about different dazzle techniques that you and your family members can use to create your personalized squares! This first workshop will last 45-minutes to an hour. More workshops will be scheduled during the next six months where we will be making squares together, and starting to assemble them.

Bible Quiz

Two of the four New Testament Gospels tell in some detail about Jesus’ birth. The other two do not. Choose which two Gospels give the Christmas account:

A. Matthew and Mark
B. Matthew and Luke
C. Mark and John
D. Luke and John

[answer on page 20]
Advent
In an Advent speech in 2002, Pope John Paul II said, “The liturgy of Advent helps us to understand fully the value and meaning of the mystery of Christmas. It is not just about commemorating the historical event, which occurred some 2,000 years ago in a little village of Judea. Instead, it is necessary to understand that the whole of our life must be an ‘advent,’ a vigilant awaiting of the final coming of Christ. To predispose our mind to welcome the Lord who, as we say in the Creed, one day will come to judge the living and the dead, we must learn to recognize him as present in the events of daily life. Therefore, Advent is, so to speak, an intense training that directs us decisively toward him who already came, who will come and who comes continuously.”

The Same Old Song
Meeting a parishioner on the street, a pastor asked why he had not seen the fellow at worship very often. “Well,” the man complained, “it seems like every time I go to church you sing the same old hymns.”

“Oh,” replied the preacher. “What hymns are those?”

“So,” said the man, “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

November Community Supper Was Tasty and Fun!
It was hard to decide which was more enjoyable at Christ Church’s most recent Community Supper on Saturday evening November 17th. If you were a fan of delicious food, we had it, in the form of a delectable pork roast with all the fixin’s! Dessert was fantastic too, although one of the pecan pies did cause quite a debate at one end of the table: was there or wasn’t there chocolate as one of the ingredients? Turns out that Joyce P. with her discerning southern palate was right – there was chocolate in it!

Fun – we had a lot of that too, starting with the set-up crew. There were several experienced hands – some of whom remember the elaborate suppers of days gone by that were put on by the St. Mary’s Guild – to guide those of us with less experience in getting things set up just right! Don’t you know that one has to use just the right combination of silverware patterns when one is doing the “eating utensil napkin wraps”?

And community – it was evident in abundance. While the total turn-out was in the mid-30’s, the folks that were there represented a perfect blend of long-time parishioners, newer parishioners, and folks who are not yet members of our congregation. We had families with two and three generations of family members present. And we had the blessing of all breaking bread together around one long table. Believe me when I say, you do not want to miss our next Community Supper! Stay tuned here for more details.....
Province I Gathers for Faith and Advocacy

by Charlie Nichols

The dioceses of The Episcopal Church are divided into regional groupings known as Provinces. In our case, the six New England States with their seven dioceses – Massachusetts divides between East and West – form Province I. The Province gathers each year on the Friday and Saturday before Thanksgiving to conduct business on Friday morning and to offer an educational program Friday afternoon and Saturday.

This fall’s theme was “Faith, Advocacy, and Public Policy: Reclaiming Our Voice for Justice, Mercy and Kindness”. Those gathered sought to look at all levels of public policy – whether local, state, or federal – and ask how we might become agents of transformation and create public policy that addresses the needs of all of God’s people.

After a brief opening worship, we moved to breakout sessions. I attended a workshop on community organizing and public advocacy in local congregations, in which we looked at strategies for lobbying state legislators. Legislators need and want to know what issues we care about and our reasons for caring. They also need to hear how a bill affects those around us.

Following Friday’s dinner we heard from The Rev. Dr. Randall Balmer, professor of American religious history at Columbia University. Dr. Balmer is highly critical of the evangelical movement, arguing that modern evangelicals have forgotten the roots of the movement which originated in 19th-century activism on issues that helped those marginalized by society: abolition, women’s suffrage and universal education. Balmer insists liberal Christians can and must reclaim evangelical activism.

Saturday morning opened with Morning Prayer, followed by a panel discussion that included NH Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter. Shea-Porter shared that as a child, she learned we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, and she strives to hold this value in front of her as she considers legislation. She urged us to make sure we let our elected representatives know that we need to take care of others.

For my next workshop, I chose a session on the legal do’s and don’ts of political action in churches. While there are restrictions contained in the IRS code that governs religious organizations, many activities can and should be done in our parishes.

The conference closed with the Holy Eucharist, with the sermon offered by MA State Representative Byron Rushing. Rushing has been in the MA House for a quarter-century, and has spent his life in pursuit of justice – both economic and civil – for all peoples in the United States and around the world. Rushing, a long-time, active Episcopalian, has fought for the civil rights and dignity of all people in his dual roles of activist and teacher.

The next Province I Conference is March 7-9, 2008. This late winter gathering focuses on stewardship, evangelism, and congregational development, and is open to all.
Children’s Faith Formation Fall Summary

This fall in Godly Play we spent time in the desert with the People of God, and we saw that God is in all places at all times. We learned that God helps God’s people, and that God loved God’s People so much, that God gave us the Ten Best Ways to live. In December, we will get ready for the Mystery of Christmas through an exploration of the season of Advent. We will also prepare to share the Christmas story with the congregation at our Christmas Eve service.

If you are interested in helping with a Godly Play session, or in learning more about the program, please contact Jessica McClain at 603-969-9845 or at jessica.mcclain@gmail.com. Or just stop her at coffee hour with any questions that you may have!

Jessica McClain
Christian Education for Children

Love in Action Moving Days & Yard Clean-Up

Members of the Love in Action Committee have been “on the move” lately. Starting earlier this fall with Norene Carter, various members of the group have helped get parishioners packed and moved to new locations ranging from the seacoast area to Tennessee. A couple of months ago, Lisa Rioper found herself whisked into her new location in no time flat. Most recently a large contingent helped Chick Anderson’s son Raymond load her belongings into a Large U-Haul truck, so that he could drive it to Tennessee to meet up with his Mom.

Lest you think that moving furniture is all this group can do, rest assured that we “leave” no stone unturned, nor branch or brush behind when it comes to yard work. Recently a small crew have been helping Jean Wadman get her yard cleaned up from a large tree that had come down there. If you’d like to help get this project finished up, please contact Craig Davis.

Chris Winn, who heads this Committee, will be meeting with Father Dan soon to refine the process of how various projects that parishioners need help with are chosen for action by this group. If you, or someone you know, has a project that needs doing, and lack the financial and/or physical resources to get it done, please contact Chris Winn or Father Dan to discuss it.

December, 2007
Margin: How to Create the Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves You Need (A Review)

“Marginless is fatigue; margin is energy.” This quotation used by Richard Swenson in the 1990’s to describe society is just as real for the 21st Century. Business people know the term profit margin in reference to the bottom line. Margin is the amount left over when all of the revenues and expenses are balanced. The margin is left to reinvest.

Swenson challenges us to look at how much margin do we have in our lives. He states that margin is “the space that once existed between ourselves and our limits. It’s something held in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations. It’s the gap between rest and exhaustion, between breathing freely and suffocating.”

We all have only 24 hours in a day. What is our margin at the end of those 24 hours? What do we have left over after we have worked 10 hours at our job, taken the kids to soccer practice and piano lessons, spent 45 minutes in traffic, worried about our finances and our health, and had a spat with our spouse? Do we have any margin of time, of emotional or spiritual energy? The hour we spend in church may be the only margin we have during week, but even then we may be focusing on next week’s work, the next church supper, or church finances.

Swenson looks at the pain of our overload. We have more “things per person” than any other time in our history he says. We have limits, but few of us care to take a look at what those are and to adjust our lives within those limits and give ourselves margin. We remain overwhelmed and overloaded.

Margin is more than a self-help book. It is an analysis of our broken society. Swenson analyzes the pain of our progress, of pushing ourselves to our limits and beyond. He shows where margin might be gained in our emotional energy, physical energy, time, and finances. By gaining margin, we gain health according to Swenson. The price of living a marginless life may be life itself. We can live a more simple, balanced life if we give ourselves margin. Margin is a book about health based on spiritual principles and disciplines. It is a book that can change your life.

Mary Anne Totten
Christ Church Chronicle
International Christmas Fair '07

Saturday, December 1st
9 to 2
Christ Episcopal Church
1035 Lafayette Road
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

including

• Artisans from Asia, Africa, and Latin America through A Greater Gift¹ and the One Campaign²
• Bead for Life table with work by Ugandan women
• Handcrafts from New Hampshire and the World
• Book signing by our own Katherine Towler
• Local Crafters  • Silent Auction  • Bake Sale

Cookie Walk
and oh so much more!!

Buy a slice of cake, pie or bread and enjoy it with a cup of coffee in our café area.

¹promoting social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world  ²the campaign to make poverty history
Christmas at Little Blessings

Most likely everyone who is reading this article has heard about our Christmas Pageant. Some of you may even have seen it. But there are many things that happen behind the scenes at Little Blessings around the holidays that you may never have heard about. They all have to do with the generosity of people and they all contribute to a loving, family-like environment. Did you know that the Preschool class sponsors an annual food drive? We teach the children about giving, about helping those less fortunate; and the children bring in canned goods to be donated to the Salvation Army.

The parents, who, like all of us, are so busy during the holidays, yet they never forget the staff. It seems as though almost daily the teachers are treated to homemade goodies brought in by parents to show their appreciation of the teacher’s hard work. The parents also bring in all of the food for our Christmas party after the Pageant.

Parents again take time out of their busy schedules to help us with chores such as moving the marble top from the altar so that we can move the altar back for the Pageant. They help by bringing in wagons for the Pageant, carpooling on Pageant day, and sending in money to help purchase Santa gifts for the children.

The staff has reached out to the community in past years by donating to the Make A Wish Foundation, in honor of a former student. They have also chosen to replace a staff Secret Santa event with gifts for a Little Blessings family in need.

Even our neighbors get in the act. MacDonald’s offers their parking lot for overflow parking on Pageant day. Clear Channel Communications records all of our Christmas songs for us.

All of these good works contribute to an atmosphere of kindness, sprinkled with laughter. They make Little Blessings what it is: more than a childcare facility… it is a family.

Pat Woollett
Just for Kids

Paper Bag Luminarias

Lead your family and friends to your house this holiday with luminarias celebrating Jesus' birth.

What You Need:
- Pencil
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Hole punch, tack or pushpin
- Sand
- Votive candles or tea lights

What You Do:

1. Draw a simple picture, word or symbol of Jesus' birth on the bag; for example, a star, a manger, a heart, a lamb, a wise man or the word "JOY."

2. Using a hole punch or pushpin, punch holes along the drawing, leaving a little space between each hole. Punch all the way through both sides of the bag so you end up with the same design on both sides when the bag is opened. When using a pin, place a piece of cardboard under the bag or work on carpet so nothing gets damaged.

3. Open the bag and fill each luminaria with about two inches of sand. Then sink a votive candle or tea light in the center of the sand.

4. Place the luminarias along a walk, patio or porch. Have an adult light the candles.

December, 2007

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**From the Editor**

During this holiday season we all get caught up in the dazzle details of gift buying, meal preparation, holiday get-togethers, the winter wonderland (that I consider beautiful for about a minute, then I realize the implications of black ice, snow removal and the bone-chill of winter weather), and possibly greater involvement with church services, activities and spiritual reflection. Somehow (and this is not true of all of us, but many) reaching out to others less fortunate to make their Christmas brighter, more festive and certainly happier slips by us unintentionally. We all need to hear our conscience speak to us about the opportunity to help one another (and not just at this one time of the year — although it is a great beginning point).

In spite of all the commercialization that we have disdained for years, in spite of our own physical or financial limitations, in spite of pressures by many groups to “dig deep” and make a difference, it really doesn’t take a pirate’s booty to make a significant impact on someone’s life. This is especially true for someone that is downtrodden, depressed and struggling with serious crises.

And “little” favors, simple gifts, brief moments of offering a helping hand, seemingly small acts of love for another all add up. And they can become quite addictive. There is that trite expression that says “the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.” I believe that the road to Heaven is paved with good deeds...and words...and thoughts.

May you and yours have a blessed and joyous Christmas, and may it come from a plethora of little expressions of love for others.

**Gary Dozier**
**Co-Editor**

Bible Quiz answer [from page 12]: B