



# **Cross Current**

*December 2023—January 2024*



<sup>2</sup> Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation." <sup>3</sup> With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> In that day you will say: "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. <sup>5</sup> Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. <sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

*Isaiah 12:2-6 NIV*

## **Christ Episcopal Church**

35350 E. Division Road, St. Helens, OR 97051

(503) 397-1033

find us on 

## ***What is Christmas?***



When I was a child, Christmas was a secular holiday, at which my family decorated a tree and gave presents. I remember stockings with chocolate oranges and small toys, which we were allowed to open Christmas morning before our parents were up. For a child it was an exciting time, sometimes turning to disappointment or even tears.

For my family member who works retail, Christmas is a stressful and busy time, as the volume of shoppers swells, sometimes tempers run short, there are no days off except for illness, and sales determine company profit for the year.

For me now as an older adult, Christmas is a time for gratitude for the family members still here and memory of family members who have died. It is a time to be mindful of charitable giving and of the locally owned small businesses that depend on my custom.

In the church, Christmas is a celebration of hope. During Advent some of the oldest hymns in our tradition point us to the fallen nature of the world and to the hope of God's intervention of

grace. Our remembrance of the birth of Jesus reminds us of the small and insignificant-seeming ways in which God does great things. A baby among millions of other babies; a baby born to poor parents in an occupied country; a baby born in suspicious paternal circumstances.

Whatever your Christmas this year, may you look for hope; may you find signs of God's intervention of grace in unexpected ways.

Vicar Jaime



## ***...From the Treasurer***

### Financial Facts—October 2023

	October Actual	2023 YTD Actual	2023 YTD Budget
Income			
Contributions	\$6,495.11	\$81,475.78	\$71,400.00
Other Income	\$150.00	\$9,016.05	\$13,995.83
Total Income	\$6,645.11	\$90,491.83	\$85,395.83
Expenses	\$6,535.43	\$83,643.66	\$89,634.99
Net (Deficit)	\$109.68	\$6,848.17	(\$4,239.16)



Thank you to everyone for keeping your pledges current .

You can always mail your pledge to the church PO Box:

Christ Church  
PO BOX 478  
St. Helens, OR 97051

## ***Bishop's Advisory Committee***

The BAC has been very busy in the past two months. We held a mutual ministry review and a subsequent retreat. We found at the review that we wanted to consider the following questions about Christ Church:

What do we think we see as ways to make our church more inclusive and welcoming?

2) What do we convey to our congregation to make them feel included and want to be an active partner in the whole church organization?

This led to our Stewardship Luncheon, during which the congregation was asked to consider these questions.

We haven't had any major repairs needed in the past two months, which is great!

We are working on a building use policy for any individuals or groups who would like to use our building or grounds. This will be useful for when we invite people to share our Blessing Woods and Labyrinth.

Carol Craig  
Senior Warden



# ***Parish Health Ministry***

## ***What Next?***

I seem to be writing a lot of “what next” articles about Covid, Both my husband and I caught Covid for the first time last month—on a cruise ship, of course. There’s probably no better Petrie dish for catching any virus than an environment in which a large group of people from all over the globe gather together to eat and watch entertainment and interact with one another on excursions. I had nausea and a very runny nose, a low fever and no sense of smell. It wasn’t like any other virus I’ve had in the past. It felt very nasty.

But here’s what I *didn’t* have: difficulty breathing, a need to be seen by a doctor, a ventilator and a brush with death. I have mild chronic asthma, but I didn’t struggle to breathe. My husband, who has a heart arrhythmia, had a more trouble, but it was controlled with higher doses of the medication that he takes for fibrillation. A virus that killed almost a million people in the United States, almost all of them above age 70, in less than 2 years was a nasty nuisance for 76 year old Chuck and 73 year old me.

Why the difference?

The virus has mutated, of course, but we also had vaccinations, which I consider a modern miracle. If you take a look at the county by county Covid vaccination rate and compare it to the death rate from Covid, those counties with the lowest vaccination rate had the highest hospitalization and death rates from the virus.

So “what next?”, while still complicated, is at least more clear than it was. I expect that yearly vaccination for Covid, Flu and RSV will become a sensible norm. Wear a mask in crowds if you are vulnerable or if someone you live with is vulnerable. Stay home if you are sick.

Life has changed so much since the winter of 2020, but here we are. It isn’t a perfect world, but it’s vastly improved. Let us rejoice and give thanks for it.

*Carol Craig*

*Parish Health Ministries*

## ***Advent Adult Education***

At the Stewardship Luncheon on November 5 we discussed the importance of small-group adult education in creating and sustaining community. We decided that a variety of times and formats would be best, to suit peoples' different interests and commitments.

I am delighted to announce the first such offering, an Advent program created by The Episcopal Church: **The Way of Love—Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life.**

Patrichia Altimus will be leading this small-group journey through Advent on Wednesday evenings. You probably know Patrichia as one of the lay eucharistic ministers. You may not realize that she has an M.Div. from George Fox University, is a certified hospital chaplain, and is one of the chaplains associated with the Scappoose Police Department. She is also a member of the Third Order of Franciscans, who incorporates a Rule of Life in her own life.

I hope you will consider making this time of spiritual reflection and discussion part of your Advent journey this year. You may join either in person in the sanctuary or by Zoom, at 7 pm on Wednesdays November 29 and December 6, 13, and 20. The Zoom meeting ID is 890 7267 0391. The passcode is 822689.

If you are planning to participate by Zoom, please send an email to [christchurchsthelens@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchsthelens@gmail.com) and we will send you a link to the materials.

*Vicar Jaime*



## Advent Traditions

We all know of the Advent traditions like the Advent Calendar or the Advent Candle. There is another tradition that goes way back and it is the Jesse Tree.

The name comes from Jesse who was the Father of the great Jewish King David. One prophecy in the Bible, in the book of Isaiah, says:

*1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--*

*3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;*

*4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.*

*Isaiah 11:1-4 (NIV)*



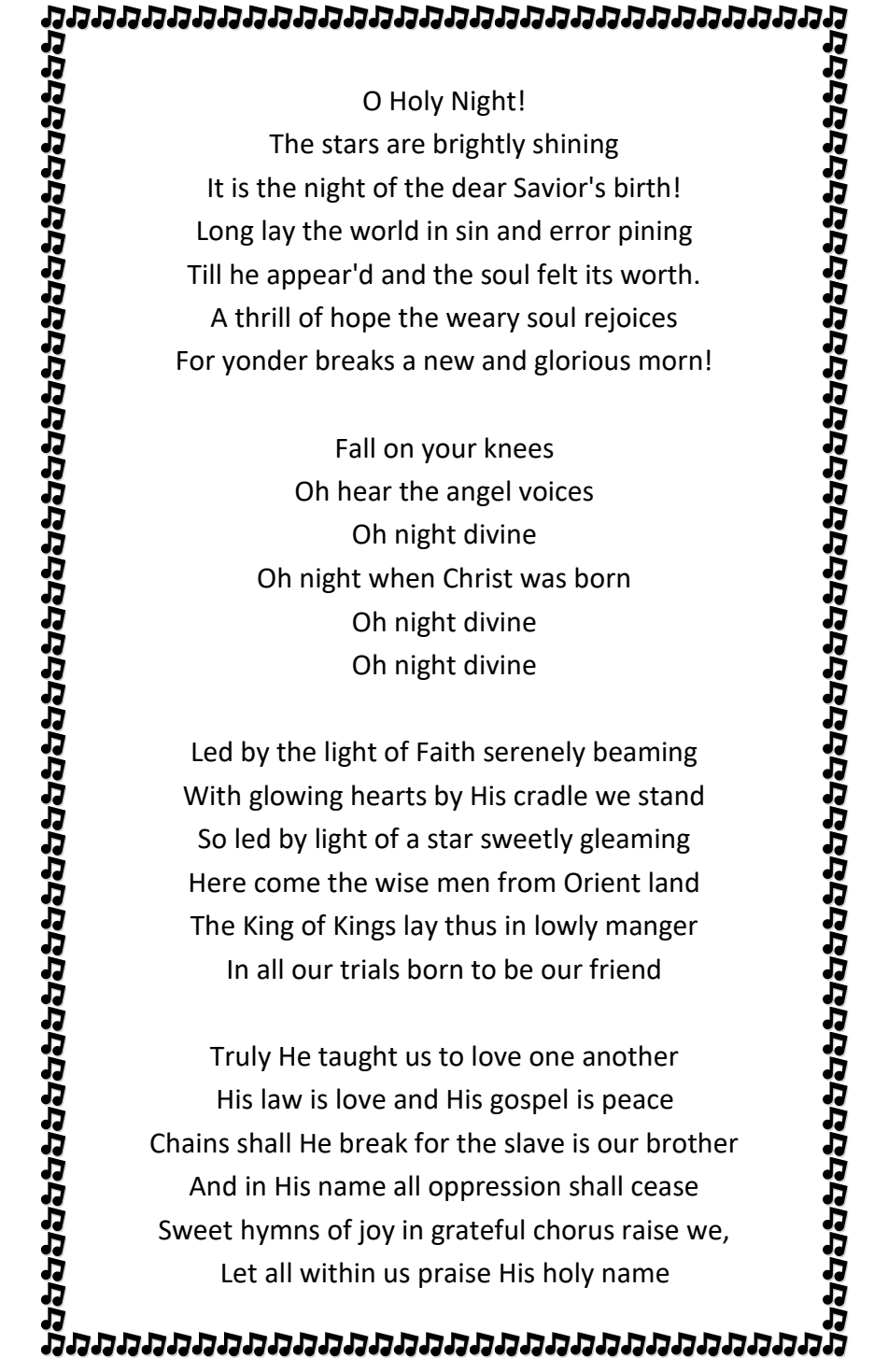
A branch is a sign of new life and new beginnings. Jesus was a descendent of King David and Christians believe that Jesus is this new branch.

The first Jesse trees were large carvings, tapestries or even stained glass windows put in Churches that helped illiterate people (people who can't read or write) to learn about the Bible from creation to the Christmas Story. But now Jesse Trees are used as a kind of Advent Calendar. You can use a normal Christmas tree or a banner in the shape of a tree. Each day through advent (or sometimes just on the four Sundays of advent) a special decoration or ornament that tells a story from the Bible, is hung on the tree.

For a list of bible verses and symbols that can be used for the ornaments click here: <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/jesse-trees>

You can make your own ornaments or buy them to start a new Advent Tradition!



A decorative border consisting of a continuous line of musical notes, resembling a treble clef staff, frames the entire page. The notes are black and vary in height, creating a rhythmic pattern around the text.

O Holy Night!  
The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees  
Oh hear the angel voices  
Oh night divine  
Oh night when Christ was born  
Oh night divine  
Oh night divine

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming  
Here come the wise men from Orient land  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger  
In all our trials born to be our friend

Truly He taught us to love one another  
His law is love and His gospel is peace  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression shall cease  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name

## ***Labyrinth Ready for Walkers!***



The labyrinth is not a maze. There are no tricks to it and no dead ends. It has a single circuitous path that winds its way into the center. The person walking it uses the same path to return from the center and the entrance then becomes the exit. The path is in full view, which

allows a person to be quiet and focus internally.

Generally there are three stages to the walk: releasing on the way in, receiving in the center and returning when you follow the return path back out of the labyrinth. Symbolically, and sometimes actually, you are taking back out into the world that which you have received.

To prepare, you may want to sit quietly to reflect before walking the labyrinth. Some people come with questions, others just to slow down and take time out from a busy life. Some come to find strength to take the next step. Many come during times of grief and loss.

Children enjoy the labyrinth and we ask that parents supervise their young children so all may enjoy the meditative aspects of the walk.

There are many ways to describe a labyrinth. It is a path of prayer, a walking meditation, a crucible of change, a watering hole for the spirit and a mirror of the soul.

To download a handout with guidelines for walking labyrinths, [please click here](#).

We ask that visitors be respectful of our neighbors and use the property during daylight hours.

Nancy Tarnai

## ***Saint Nicholas Tree!***



For the past two years youth of St. Helens High School whose parents cannot adequately support them have received help from members of Christ Church, in partnership with the Daybreak Kiwanis Club and the St. Helens School District.

My heart breaks when I see what these youth hope to receive from members of the community: grocery gift cards, socks, gift cards to allow them to share modest meals with friends. This year the focus is particularly on food, as many of them suffer hunger. Your generosity can help a youth believe that there is love and caring in the world.

This year I have named the giving tree the “Saint Nicholas Tree.” Nicholas of Myra, the real Santa Claus, is remembered for saving three girls from prostitution by providing them dowries when their parents could not. He is therefore the patron saint of students and children, among others. His day is December 6, and our gifts are requested by that date if possible, or the following Sunday, December 10, to allow for sorting and distribution before school lets out for Winter Break.

Vicar Jaime

# 49th Annual Arts & Crafts Faire Results



The Arts and Crafts Fair financial report is attached. There were so many customers coming to the fair that some had to wait for one customer to pull out before a parking spot would be open.

The kitchen had enough soup and pies and the customer had nothing but favorable comments to say on the quality of food our church provided. The artists were especially delighted with the chicken casserole which was Janet Sukau's recipe that she would prepare in the past.

Our cashier's table was able to stay on top of processing the customers which was remarkable given the artists sales totaled nearly \$10,000. Bernadette's jewelry stones alone brought in \$3,000 in sales.

Thank you to all our parishioners who chipped in to make our 49th annual fair a success.

*Cindi Caruso*

Arts and Crafts Fair				
Financial Results 2023				
<b>Beginning Balance</b>				<b>278.94</b>
beginning book balance				278.94
Artist Activity	Expenses	Revenue		
Table Fees		125.00		125.00
Sales		9,972.25		
85% of Sales pd to artists	8462.81	(8,462.81)		1,509.44
		-		-
				-
cash box shortage/lost tickets				-
Increase in Fund for Artist's activity				1,634.44
Donation- Kitchen				2.61
Kitchen Sales	(66.63)	326.75		260.12
Bake Table		413.75		413.75
other donations		0.00		0.00
Raffle Basket		99.00		99.00
expenses	(99.65)			(99.65)
merchant fees	(158.71)			(158.71)
bank fees	0.00			-
advertising	-	0.00		0.00
Paid to Christ Church	0.00			(2,100.00)
<b>Ending Balance</b>				<b>330.50</b>



## ***Columbia County Habitat for Humanity Updates***



Our Vernonia project is officially begun! Last month Phil Peerson donated all the excavation work needed to get started and last week our steady construction volunteers were able to complete the forms for the footings on this project. Our partner family commented, "I'm so very very grateful for all that everyone is doing...the excitement from seeing progress on the build is overwhelming. Thank you so very much."

In September we raised \$528 for our drive to help Habitat Maui rebuild the ten homes lost in the Hawaii fire. We have since sent Habitat Maui \$2500 by rounding up the matched donations that we promised to send to them. They have a long road ahead and we are proud to join their effort.

We would also like to honor Rosalynn Carter this month as well. While many people think of President Carter associated with Habitat, Mrs. Carter was just as much of a Habitat hero. She believed deeply in our mission and many times became very emotional when she talked about the families with whom the couple had worked. President and Mrs. Carter celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on a build site in Chicago; they camped out with volunteers in locations around the world; and they did countless interviews and appearances — many of them as part of long build days — to raise awareness about the need for adequate and affordable shelter. We feel a great loss today, but we are comforted by the knowledge that Mrs. Carter's legacy will live on through the people she touched and the example she set for servant leadership.



*Angela Carlson*  
Administrative Assistant  
Columbia Count Habitat for Humanity



## ***Christmas Service Schedule***

**Sunday Morning Service December 24, 2023—**  
Spoken Morning Prayer Service for the Fourth  
Sunday of Advent., 10 am, in the Chapel.

**Christmas Eve Service, with choir and music,**  
**December 24, 2023, 7:30 pm.**

**Christmas Day Service** - spoken Holy Eucharist,  
December 25, 2023, 10 am.

## ***Save the Dates***

- On **January 19, 2024**, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, The Rev. Dcn. SuEllen Pommier will be ordained to the priesthood. Many members of Christ Church remember with fondness SuEllen's diaconal service here.
- The Christ Episcopal Church **Annual Meeting** will be held on Sunday February 4, 2024.
- **May 25, 2024**, Bishop Diana Akiyama will be at Christ Church to dedicate the Blessing Woods Nature Park & Labyrinth.

# ***Calendar***

**Evening Prayer via Zoom**—Thursdays at 5 pm

**Sunday Service** - Sundays 10 am in person and on zoom.  
see the email invitation with the zoom link.



**Advent Program—“The Way of Love—Practices for a**

**Jesus-Centered Life.”** You may join either in person in the sanctuary or by Zoom, at 7 pm on Wednesdays November 29 and December 6, 13, and 20. The Zoom meeting ID is 890 7267 0391. The passcode is 822689. See page 7 for more details.

**Christmas Schedule**—See “Christmas Service Schedule” page 14.

**Annual Meeting**—Sunday February 4, 2024

**Dedication of Blessing Woods Nature Park & Labyrinth** with Bishop Diana Akiyama. May 25, 2024, 1:30 pm

## ***Prayer Requests***

Send requests to Kathryn Brittain by email at [kathjbritt@gmail.com](mailto:kathjbritt@gmail.com) or phone 503-543-6870 or cell phone 503-438-5908.

## ***Vicar Jaime’s Office Hours***

Thursday 1—5 pm  
Other days by Appointment

## ***FYI***



Our Website is: [www.christchurchsthelens.org](http://www.christchurchsthelens.org)

Email: [christchurchsthelens@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchsthelens@gmail.com)

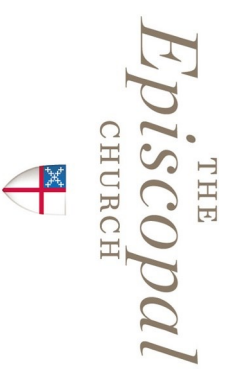
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*welcomes you*