



December 2020

The Harvest

Be on Guard! Be Alert!

“At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory.

“Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that his return is very near, right at the door.

“However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.

And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert !

It seems as if we have been ‘waiting’ since mid-March for life to return to ‘normal’. And still, we wait – and the news is more foreboding with the passing of everyday. When will it be over? When will we be able to resume our lives? When will we be able to come back to Church, celebrate as a Community once again? Partake in fellowship and sip a cup of coffee at coffee hour? When will we be able to hug a friend, meet for lunch, and catch up on what everyone has been doing since last we met? I am afraid the answer is, ‘I don't know.’

But I do have a suspicion that when we are able to safely leave our abode, life will be different; it will be changed. How? In what way(s)? Again, I don't know. We will just have to ‘wait and see’. This is a sacred time: Be on guard! Stay alert!

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To Connect to Christ Church via Zoom

<https://christlockport.info/>

Compline – Wednesday 7:00 pm
Zoom Coffee Hour – Sunday 12:30
Sunday Service Options
Donate with PayPal

2nd Saturday Food Drives

The second Saturday of each month we collect nonperishable food to help with the great need in our area. The next drive will be **December 12th 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.**

In particular, our donations the next few months will be used for three purposes:

1. The Blessing Boxes in Lockport – food for whoever needs it
2. Helping a few families in Christ Church who are experiencing food insecurities
3. The Agri-Center where the migrant workers seek assistance of all sorts. This year because of COVID the migrants are forced to stay here even though there is no work for them now. They are not prepared for northern winters or extended periods without pay. These are the same folks who would normally come for our Christmas Outreach before they headed south to their next job.

We also try to support Brother's Keeper when we are able.

To make a donation, please just pull into the bell tower drive, and we will take your donation – you don't even need to get out of the car. Or send a check to Christ Episcopal Church and note Outreach on the memo line.

Please consider what non-perishable items you might contribute to help our neighbors. The need is great. What a blessing to be able to share what we have been given.

Life with all its ruthless brutality and regal beauty is providing us with an opportunity to reflect on what is happening to us and around us because of the pandemic. What is there for us to learn?

Thomas Wolfe's novel *You Can't Go Home Again* tells us that we can never go back to the way things were or how we remember them. In many ways that is so sad. And yet there is a wonderful freedom in that awareness, for we are let go to explore new beginnings. There is indeed only one constant in life and that is change. During this time of Pandemic Advent we can contemplate how our lives will be changed as a result of this time of waiting to see how life will be different. We can use this time to anticipate how our lives might be better, more genuine, with greater integrity and compassion. Maybe we will emerge with a new zest for life making sure our interactions with one another count and are opportunities to breathe God's Spirit into our relationships. Maybe, or not.

It would be sad to just return to the same old ways when there is opportunity to live fuller, more dynamic lives. Rather than look back and try to reconstruct our old familiar existence, we have an invitation to try something new, something dynamic, something exhilarating: God is coming; God is here, even at the door. He is waiting for us to enter into a new tomorrow, a new day, a new way of living. So be on guard, stay alert, watch for his coming!!

Happy Advent!!

Fr. Thomas +

A Christmas to Remember

Most of us have never experienced an Advent and Christmas season when we haven't come together as a parish family to celebrate this special time of year. As I write this article, our parish church *building* is closed, while our parish *community* is open! Most of us will not be able to join our younger family members indoors for Christmas this year, nor travel to wherever our families may be. Christmas shopping may be a challenge as well. I suspect my adult sons realize this, as they told me there was no need for Christmas presents for them this year.

Ahhhh, but I have an idea I would like to share with you! How about gifting our loved ones by donating a farm animal, fruit tree, clean water, disaster relief kit, Covid-19 relief kit or bicycle through **Episcopal Relief and Development**? How about gifting our loved ones by donating a cot, propane stove, audio Bible, sewing machine, school supplies or medical supplies through **Food for the Poor**? There are items available in all price ranges, and it would be easy to select a gift that would mean a great deal to our loved ones. I think my sons will appreciate their gifts!

Here are the websites for each organization. Also included are their phone numbers if you would like to have a hard copy of the Christmas Gift Catalog sent to your home.

Episcopal Relief and Development:
episcopalrelief.org/gifts
 (855) 312-4325

Food for the Poor:
FoodForThePoor.org/gift
 (800) 487-1158

Happy Shopping!

Blessings,
 Robin Kozlowski
 ERD Parish Coordinator

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Advent is upon us. Will we recognize it this year? How will we celebrate Advent in our homes and with our families? A bit different without the church building being open for in-person services. We might sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" as we worship online. If we have Advent Wreaths in our homes, those may be lit with a special prayer each Sunday. An easy way to create an Advent Wreath is to place four candles in the center of a table, placing some greenery or other decorations around them.

Despite our current circumstances, Advent will still be celebrated as a time of waiting with anticipation, hope and joy. Our minds and hearts may be elsewhere this year, waiting and hoping for relief from the pandemic, waiting and hoping for the schools to be fully reopened, waiting and hoping for ease of travel, waiting and hoping for a long-overdue hug. As our patience wears thin, let us place ourselves in the dwelling place of Mary and Joseph as they awaited the arrival of their beloved child. Let us "tap into" all of the emotions they likely felt...waiting with anticipation, hope and joy. Let us find hope and joy in the love and compassion around us. Let us remember that although we are in a season of anticipation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, that Jesus the Christ is already with us, always has been and always will be.

Let us celebrate Advent as we wait with anticipation, remain hopeful, and experience joy as Mary did long ago: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (Luke 1:45)

Advent blessings,
 Robin Kozlowski
 Aspirant for Ordination to the Diaconate



Birthdays

- 2 Johnny Bisher
- Lorraine Ott
- 4 Jack Taylor
- 6 Fay Mrowczynski
- 7 John Urtel
- 9 Betty Stevenson
- 15 Gretchen Lang
- Joan Winter
- 20 Courtney Taylor
- 26 The Rev. Joseph Kozlowski
- 29 Richard Truesdell
- 30 Bill Muscato

Anniversaries

- 1 Todd & Paula Shears
- 27 Tom & Maggie Lupo

Focus on Outreach

Warm up for Winter (10/31/2020) and the 2nd Saturday Food Drive (11/14/2020); some of the nonperishable food goes to the Blessing Boxes around Lockport. Note: cat litter boxes are sturdy so used for collecting food.



Food Drive 11/14/2020



Sorting Warm Up for Winter Donations



Blessing Boxes filled with Items from Christ Church

2021 Offering Envelopes

For those who would like offering envelopes, they will be available at Church on Saturday, December 12th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. This is the same time as the 2nd Saturday Food Drive, so please be sure to pick up your envelopes when you drop your non-perishable food. If you are unable to make it on the 12th between 11:00 and 1:00, please call the Church (434-9229) to make other arrangements. Note: We are not worshipping in the church for the rest of this year, and the staff is working from home so there is no one around most of the time.

Mail Issues

Some people have had mail for Christ Church returned with a sticker saying the mail couldn't be forwarded or the business is unknown. I had asked the Post Office to forward church mail to my home (we are working from home). They did it last time, but for some reason it was a problem this time. I cancelled that request and submitted a new forwarding request, so please try again, which appears to be working – please send returned mail to the church (7145 Fieldcrest Drive) again. Thanks.

Christmas at Christ Church

This year our Christmas services will be a bit different. We just purchased a small FM transmitter, and we will be doing drive-in church (just like a drive-in movie) in the parking lot. We have most of the technology, but we are waiting for a mic. Fr. Thomas will be doing the service in the Parish Hall by the west windows. Cars will be parked for viewing the service and listening on the car radio.

Some logistics to think about: Warm your car up before you get to church so you stay warm with the engine off (no carbon monoxide poisonings please). More people in the car will keep it warm longer. Dress warmly. Bulletins will be available for download and some paper copies will be available. Come with people you live with – you'll be able to sing and respond in your own safe little "car bubble". Communion (wafer only) will be available.

This is new technology, and although we have planned and thought it all through, it probably won't be perfect the first couple times. We hope to start with Sunday services as soon as possible so we get all the kinks out before Christmas Eve. If you don't want to be part of the debugging process, please wait until Christmas Eve (or until you hear it is working smoothly), then come and enjoy worshipping with your church family. If you choose to come the first few Sundays, please be patient as we learn to use this technology.

As we go, there will be more information in the Sunday emails (which are sent out each Saturday), so watch for further details as they become available.

Christmas Eve

December 24th 5:00 pm

Christmas Morning

December 25th 10:00 am



Christ Church Family Praying Together

Wouldn't it be nice to pray with the Christ Church family? Well now you can. And if you need prayers, please know that you are being prayed for by your Church family. We have designated **9:00 – 10:00 am and 7:00 – 8:00 pm daily** as the times we will pray together. Just take a moment to focus yourself on God and as you go about your regular activities be in prayer for whatever you need to pray for. You might be shopping and praying for those on our prayer list, or cleaning and giving thanks or working on a computer and asking God to give you strength to face your challenges. Please join us for these special times of prayer and also feel free to pray anytime as you need/wish to.

Calls to Christ Church

If you have a question or need to talk to Fr. Thomas Mitchell or someone else at Christ Church, you can call the church phone (434-9229) or call Sue Bauer (727-8776). While we are working from home, the church phone is forwarded to Sue's cell phone and is answered 24x7 as much as possible. Please call when you need something – we are here for you.



Christ Episcopal Church

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(716) 433-9229

office@ChristLockport.info

<https://www.christlockport.org/>

www.facebook.com/CECLockportNY

Christmas Services at Christ Church

We will be doing drive-in church (see details on page 5)

Christmas Eve

December 24th 5:00 pm

Christmas Morning

December 25th 10:00 am.



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Lockport, NY 14094C