



June 2021

The Harvest

The Effects of the Pandemic and the Cherokee Legend of the Two Wolves

Finally! Finally, it is spring and soon to be summer; the dark days of winter are gone. We can be outside without heavy winter apparel. And the deadly Covid-19 virus is seemingly in retreat, but not gone – at least not yet.

It was a very long year. For the very first time, Tom and I had Thanksgiving Dinner alone. For Christmas Dinner we risked going to my sister-in-law's house and had dinner together: a total of 5 family members.

As the buds began to appear and the days lengthened in daylight, we went out a little more because we were now both totally vaccinated. It seemed very different. Instead of joy and relaxation what we encountered was a simmering anger and resentment which sometimes without warning boiled over into road rage, and outrage. Clearly, the venomous political speech and conspiracy theories only seemed to foment the palpable unrest in society.

We might say we are at a crisis. The word for crisis in Chinese is composed of two characters, one representing danger and the other, opportunity. It reminded me of the passage in Deuteronomy (30:19):

"Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"

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To Connect to Christ Church

<https://christlockport.info/>

Compline – Thursdays 7:00 pm

Sunday Service Details

Donate with PayPal

2nd Sat Food Drives

The next food drive will be on **June 12th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm**. We continue to replenish the Lockport Blessing Boxes regularly and the need is great. This month we are looking for **a balance of protein-rich meals, fruits and veggies, cereals, and non-alcoholic drinks for the hot weather ahead**. We appreciate the on-going support of church members and the community.

Backpack School Supplies Needed

Again this year we will be contributing to the Backpack Program at Youth Mentoring. This group supplies backpacks and school supplies to those who need them throughout Niagara County. Please bring your school supplies to the **2nd Saturday Food Drive on June 12th 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**. **They especially need wide-ruled notebook paper this year**, but all school supplies will gladly be accepted. Our young people are having a particularly difficult time with the pandemic, so let's do what we can to support their educations and get them back to track with their lives. Thanks for your support.



We may not be able to control life or the virus, but **we can control our response to it!** It may not be easy or make the situation less frustrating. But it does put us in the driver's seat. There is a Native American legend that I think I have shared with you before. I think it might be useful to revisit it.

An old grandfather said to his grandson, who came to him with anger at a friend who had done him an injustice, "let me tell you a story.

I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those who have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do.

But hate wears you down and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times." He continued, "it is as if there are two wolves within me. One is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him, and does not take offense when no offense was intended. He only fights when it is right to do so, and in the right sway.

But the other wolf, ah! He is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is helpless anger, for his anger will change nothing.

Sometimes, it is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit."

The boy looked intently into his grandfather's eyes and asked, "which one wins, grandfather?"

The grandfather smiled and quietly said, "the one I feed."

As the summer heats up in more ways than one, let us remember that we are followers of the Christ who commanded us to love one another. We should feed the 'good' wolf within us – especially when we want to be the other wolf. **May we choose Life, and Live!!**

Bessings for a wonderful summer. Stay well, be safe, and love.

Fr. Thomas

Growing in Trust

Three weeks ago I planted a plot of new grass in the backyard. I prepared the winter-weary soil, threw seed onto the soil, gently raked it into the soil, and then added more soil on top. Mother Nature decided that the next 10 days would be cold and mostly rainy. While I'm sure the seed appreciated the watering, the cold air was motivation for the seed to stay in the somewhat warm earth. I expected the seed to sprout 7 to 10 days after planting, but

allowed for a delay due to the conditions. The temperatures began warming, the sun shined, and at about Day 12 the tender sprouts began to pop up. I faithfully watered twice daily and watched the grass grow taller and stronger. Now I can see from the kitchen window a patch of green where just a few weeks ago there was dry, dusty soil.

Growth comes in fits and starts. It is affected by uncontrollable conditions, yet our response to those conditions is a choice we make. As gardeners, we care for the tender vegetation. How about as faithful travelers journeying in this “in-between” time? What do we choose? Do we get vaccinated or not? Do we wear a mask or not? Do we sing or not? Do we hug or not? Do we TRUST one another or not? Ahhhhh... **TRUST!** Above all else, this requires our consideration before the masks, singing and hugs – and – before discerning who we are as a community of faith and what gifts we have to offer after the trauma of the pandemic (which is still with us).

Trust is not magical, wishful thinking. Trust requires a solid foundation in order to grow. It is a lengthy process that includes honest communication in an atmosphere of complete confidentiality and respect. Where do we start? *Psalm 148:8* reminds us: “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” A good beginning would be to learn the loving and faithful skill (some might call it an art) of “intentional” listening, putting aside any distractions or “shopping lists” running through our heads and giving our full attention to what another is sharing with us. “You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness.” (*James 1:19-20*) The most important aspect of learning to listen is our **awareness of the presence of God within and among us** as we recognize that when we truly listen to one another, we are also listening to God.

The time will arrive, hopefully sooner rather than later, for us to gather again in conversation as a faith community. No doubt the experience of the past 15 months has changed us as individuals and as a faith community. As our conversations begin, let us be mindful of practicing intentional listening in all our relationships. Let us give thought to learning together (in person) how to listen, to drop our “defenses”, to see another’s perspective, to build confidentiality and respect in our conversation circles so that we may have a solid foundation of trust upon which to move forward as a faith community.

“That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built.” (*Luke 6:48*)

Peace be with you in this season of Pentecost,

Robin Kozlowski

Aspirant for Ordination to the Diaconate



Birthdays

- 1 Todd Shears
- 2 Kevin Wager
- 7 Lydia Winter
- 9 Chris Goodman
Jonathan Steen
John Taylor, Jr.
- 11 Joanne Conley
- 12 William Ott
- 14 Bob Nelson
- 15 Greg Buchanan
- 16 Millie Dominguez
- 21 Fr. Thomas Mitchell
- 22 Veronica Ramirez
- 25 June Witte
- 27 Marilyn Freeman
- 29 Brenda Glaser
- 30 Mat Heschke

Anniversaries

- 20 Carl & Janice
Beitelshees
- 21 Hutch & Gloriann
Hutchins
- 29 Wally & Chris
Goodman

Educational Achievement

We never stop learning as we travel through life and on May 23rd we recognized members who have achieved an educational goal:

- Robin Kozlowski has completed the EFM (Education for Ministry) program.
- Laura Baker completed her Master of Education.
- Mat Heschke will be graduating from high school in June and starting ECC in the fall.
- Jonathan Steen moved from Jr. High to High school a year ago, but we were preoccupied with COVID and didn't celebrate.
- Mikayla Bronschidle is moving up to the Jr. High.
- Samantha Rucci is moving from Elementary to Intermediate school.

Congratulations to these students who have reached another goal – well done!

Altar Flowers

Would you like to give (and take home or donate) the flowers on the altar for one Sunday? No one has claimed July 11th. If you would like more information, please call Betsey Ersing (call the office at 434-9229 if you need her number).

The Journey Continues

Since my last update in the January, 2021 Harvest, my Diaconate formation journey has continued “virtually” and surprisingly that has been a good experience. The Spring Aspirants’ retreat was held via Zoom on April 16 & 17. Our focus of discussion was “vulnerability, shame, connection and leadership” based on two TED talks by Brene Brown that we watched in advance. Our discussions were honest and open, and I learned much from the sharing by the Aspirants who are further along in the process.

My post-retreat letter from the Commission on Ministry (“COM”) was positive and encouraging, and I learned that my next step is the COM Discernment Committee process. I and two other Aspirants will travel through the next six weeks meeting with the Discernment Committee via Zoom every Tuesday evening. The outlines of the first two sessions indicate that this will be an intense experience involving much reflection on my Call, Baptismal Vows, and for whom and how I feel called to serve. I am familiar with the “old” discernment program that was held at the parish level because I was honored to be among the members of Deacon Martha’s discernment group. Imagine doing in the next six weeks what we did together with Martha over the course of a year!

In September I will begin my academic studies through the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California. No, I won't be in Berkeley, tempting as that sounds! The online “CALL” program is designed for both Deacon and Local Priest Aspirants. I will take two courses per term, with three terms per year, over the course of two years. I am looking forward to beginning my studies.

What I ask of all of you is to please continue to keep me in your prayers (especially over the next six weeks of discernment), to be my companions on this journey with love and encouragement. I am grateful for all of you at Christ Church, my sponsoring faith community!

Peace,
Robin Kozlowski
Aspirant for Ordination to the Diaconate

Southern Fried Chicken Dinner?

That sounds yummy, and St. Andrews in Burt will be serving it drive thru on Wednesday, July 14th. The dinner consists of half a chicken, fries, cornbread, mac salad garnished with Louisiana pickle slaw and watermelon for dessert. Get all the details at StAndrewsBurt.com or their Facebook page. Pre-sale tickets only.

Reopening Christ Church

Are you wondering what we are doing these days as we gather for worship? The uncertainty we all feel isn't surprising when you consider all the changes we have experienced in the last 15 months. We were shut down completely, then we worshipped in the parking lot even when we were freezing, next we had drive-in church with services online, on April 18th we gathered for our first in-person worship. We continue to gather and we continue to stream the services to YouTube, but the way we gather continues to change as the CDC, NY State and Diocesan guidelines evolve based on the current COVID situation.

What are we doing now?

- We no longer need to pre-register (thanks to Pat Few for taking care of the registrations for us when it was necessary).
- We still need to maintain a list of those who are present each week in case it should be necessary to do COVID tracing, so please come in through the red doors (or stop by the narthex on the way to your seat) and sign the attendance sheet. The bulletins are available in the narthex also.
- From here it gets more complicated: we need to provide a safe environment for everyone, vaccinated and unvaccinated alike.
 - For anyone who is **not completely vaccinated** (i.e. it is at least two weeks after your second Moderna or Pfizer shot or two weeks after your single Johnson & Johnson shot), please sit on the right side of the church as you face the altar. The guidelines state that unvaccinated must wear their masks at all times and maintain at least six-foot distances from all those who are not in your household. Please do not sit in the pews that are marked with "Not this row" tags on the arms of the pew – they are there to help maintain safe distancing. Fully vaccinated people may also sit on the right as long as they maintain safe distancing.
 - If you are **fully vaccinated** and you wish to, you may sit on the left side of the church facing the altar. Fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask except when singing and safe distancing is not a requirement as the CDC no longer feels it is necessary when with other fully vaccinated people.

Please follow the above guidelines so we can

safely gather for worship. Thank you.

Laypeople Invited to Meet with Bishop Sean

6/9/2021 6-7:00 pm

As the congregations of the partnership dioceses begin to emerge from the pandemic, lay people are invited to join Bishop Sean for a discussion of congregations needs and priorities. The bishop will offer a brief update about the partnership and participants will have an opportunity to share what they are observing in their communities.

The following questions may be useful in preparing for this conversation with Bishop Sean:

- How can the partnership provide opportunities and foster relationships among church leaders and congregations?
- What support do congregations need most as they emerge from the pandemic?
- What is a conversation you wish congregations could have regarding race, justice, equity and/or inclusion?
- What is something you hope our churches can offer to the communities they serve?
- What do you envision for the future of the diocesan partnership and a new transformed church in our region?

[Register online to join Bishop Sean on June 9th at 6:00 pm](#)



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2nd Saturday Food Drive & School Supplies

Saturday, June 12, 2021

11:00 am - :00 pm

Food: we especially need a variety of protein-rich meals, canned fruits and veggies, cereal, and juice/water for the hot days ahead. Remember kids will be home from school.

School Supplies: special need for wide-ruled notebook paper

All non-perishable food and school supplies are needed and welcomed. Thank you.



Christ Episcopal Church
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