RECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Rev. Sunil Chandy

"There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish...The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in deep darkness—on them, light has shined."

These words, spoken by the Prophet Isaiah, were a courageous statement of faith. The Prophet lived in dangerous times. In the eighth century BCE, eight hundred years before Christ, the once-powerful nation of Israel, the nation of kings such as David and Solomon, had in just a generation split into two kingdoms. The northern country of Israel and its sister country, the southern nation of Judah, were weak and isolated, prey to the advances of our other nations. Eventually, during the lifetime of Isaiah, both nations would be
conquered. Isaiah, an inhabitant of Judah, was witness to the forced exile of his people to Babylon.

In today's passage from Isaiah, Northern Israel doesn't exist, and Judah is about to be a memory. Although the Southern nation and its people faced a violent, protracted struggle, the Prophet eschewing despair reminds the people that God is always God. And their God will bring hope even through the challenges of their present moment. Indeed, God did bring the people of Israel through; about 70 years later, they returned, (or rather their descendants returned) to the Jewish homeland from all over the world. A generation of Israelites never saw their homeland again. But they weren't abandoned. God went with them into their exile. God was always their "refuge and strength, a very present help in the midst of trouble" at home and in foreign places.

Modern scholars believe that the exile, although initially viewed as a great tragedy in the Israelite history, might have proved to be the very challenge that helped keep the identity and religious faith of the Hebrew people alive today!

Isn't it true that the challenges we face can lead to despair, causing us to feel the meaninglessness of life? But isn't it also true that these challenges, if reframed through eyes of trust and hope, can give us a transformed meaning and a new purpose? Isaiah and his disciples reclaimed an ancient vision for the people of Israel. Isaiah understood God's faithfulness to his people and then reminded them that they were called not just to survive but rather to be a blessing for the world. Why else would
God call their ancient father Abraham out of the land of Babylon and lead him and his family to the Promised Land? Was it for survival? Yes, but on a more profound understanding, it was to be "A Light to the World," showing the world that God is faithful. For Isaiah, the suffering of his people did have meaning; it did have a purpose, not just for the survival of his people but for God's plan of salvation.

Eight hundred years later, as Jesus calls his first disciples on the banks of the Galilee, the context has changed slightly. In the years between Isaiah and Jesus, Israel became a nation again, and new conquerors came into being. In Jesus' time, the Roman Empire became the occupying force. Many things did change, but what really mattered did not change - God is faithful. Jesus calls his first disciples reclaiming the vision of Isaiah, the dream of God for Abraham and his children, the idea that God's light shines in the darkness of the world, a light that can provide hope for all people, a way out of violence into peace. This is the vision that Jesus died for on the cross; it is also the vision that disciples proclaimed after the resurrection of Jesus!

Christ Church, we have been given that vision. The vision reminds us that we are called not just to survive! The dream proclaims the struggles and challenges we faced in our past don't diminish us but are the source of our strength. The lessons we have learned about God's faithfulness, our resilience, our purpose, move us way past our limited desire to survive. Christ's vision reminds us that amid our challenges, God was and will always be present, encouraging us to be our better selves, encouraging us to be light for the world!

I have been your Rector now for five years. We encountered challenges and experienced times of worry and anxiety. Yet
through it all, we have recognized that God, Immanuel has always been with us. The year 2019 has been a year of **triumphs, transition, and sudden tragedies**, yet through all of this year, Christ Church has reflected the light of God, being a beacon for our community and the world.

Although there are many things we could mention, I would like to highlight a few things in my report to you. This year we were successful in our completion of our Capital Campaign of $1.5 million, thanks to the work of our Capital Campaign Committee led by chair Fred Allardyce. We started and completed the replacement of our Church roof. Thanks to your contributions, the hard work of Fred's team, the prayerful attitude of our Vestry, and most of all God's grace, we will not have to change that roof for at least another 125 years! We are at present working on getting bids for the AC project, which we hope will be installed later this year. The Capital Campaign success has also allowed us to start the refurbishment of three of our stained glass windows. Fred, along with our newly retiring Property chair, Doug Lawrence, will give us a report and answer any questions we might have.

Communication has been a key to our growth and continued success of our congregation. I am grateful to Caswell Cooke for his continued emphasis on communication, whether print media, social media, or simple word of mouth. Our budget for communications for the past two years was ten thousand dollars. Some may believe that amount is too high, but there was not a wasted penny! Friends, we are experiencing the cost of evangelism in our present day. If we want to have a thriving and active ministry, we must invest in our Church. Included in this year’s communication budget is maintenance of our website. I highlight this because in this
past year with the consultation of Caswell, Betsey Rice, Emily Mugge, the Vestry and the parish office staff, we committed to upgrading our website hiring Shane Belanger from Westerly Life. Because of their work and the work of our staff, we are putting relevant, correct information on the website. We are also using Facebook live and other social media platforms to get the message out about our Church and its ministries. So far, we are getting a lot of attention from the diocese and the broader community. People are noticing us. Again, this is due to our commitment to communication, which I believe is pivotal to our call to evangelism.

We also began the year of 2019 planning to undertake a different approach to our Sunday worshiping. Sunday service times changed from 9 am and 11 am to 8 am and 10 am last June. The rationale for the change was that it would have allowed us to have more enrichment programs after the 10 am service. And this has proven right. Presently on any given regular Sunday after the 10 am service, you will find education offered to children and adults in the form of Sunday School, Adult Forum and Rector’s Forum. We now have the choice to go to a poetry group session, a bible study, writer’s series, an educational program, or get involved in outreach activity. Our parishioners can also choose to partake in our fellowship time with each other, having conversations over a cup of coffee and pastry.

The past year also marked our Church's commitment to dig deeper into our Anglican/Episcopal heritage. In our services on Sunday morning or Saturday evening we are using a different Eucharistic prayer each week. Currently in addition to the Eucharistic services, we have been incorporating Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. In the
upcoming year, our worship committee is also looking to see how to include healing prayers at the 10am service. All of these wonderful additions will continue to help all of our parishioners to deepen their spiritual experience while strengthening our resolve to be God's agents of good change in the world!

I am grateful for our staff! They work so hard, and they keep all the balls in the air in our busy and active church. Jacquelyn has worked hard to keep the office flowing through many changes. This year we have hired Dorothy Adams as our part-time parish secretary. Stevi Blanchette is helping us with bookkeeping after the well-deserved retirement of Barbara Whitford. Stevi will continue to help us until we hire a permanent bookkeeper. We increased hours for Kristy Allardyce in 2019, because we all consider the nurture and sustenance of Christian Education for our young people as a priority for our Church.

This year was a particular challenge for our Music ministry. Late in the summer of this year, our beloved Choirmaster, George Kent fell ill, suffering from a heart condition. The grave situation was a cause of great anxiety and worry for all of us in leadership at our Church. George and the choir ministry is such an essential part of Christ Church. Beyond our self-interest, George is beloved among us.

Through the collective prayers of parishioners, family, and friends, George, by the grace of God, is recovering in a very miraculous way! Although he is not at this time able to come back to full time work leading the choir, we hope that he will get there soon. Help in the music ministry came from our own Pam Young, whose decades of experience with George and the Christ Church Choir made her a fitting substitute for George during his recovery. Although no one person can
truly replace the unique abilities of George Kent, Pam has, with great talent, dedication, leadership, and care, maintained the quality of music for which our Christ Church Choir has been renowned. The success of the choir is in no small part due to the commitment of each choir member. I know that each one of them has sacrificed much to make sure that the quality of music offered for the worship of God is superb! May God continue to bless our music ministry and all those who help it to be a success!

This year has also been a year of heartache for many of us. We have lost dear saints in this past year. Death is an inevitability of life. Our collective consolation lies in our faith that one day we will see these saints again! Until then, we have beautiful examples of their service to God, which inspires us to do our part in witness and service to that same God. Although we have mentioned our lost ones by name at the beginning of our Annual Meeting, I would like to make particular mention of Seth Tulman. Seth was on the search committee that hired me and was my first Jr. Warden at Christ Church. Seth's wry sense of humor, compassionate heart, commitment to Christ Church, and passion for God is something that I will always cherish. He died suddenly this year, and each week we are still finding out about things that Seth took care of for our parish.

We will miss Seth's physical presence at our Church, but we are faithfully aware of his presence with the other saints of lights of Christ Church. May we follow their great examples of faith.

What are some of the goals we are looking toward in this coming year?

1. We will continue to grow in attendance, in programs, in
helping people to grow in their relationship to Christ and one another.

2. We will finish the work of the Capital Campaign Committee, including finally getting air conditioning in our facility, finishing our stained glass window work, and establishing a fund for ministry, this has been the desire of all those who have contributed to the Campaign. We will not take our eyes off this ball.

3. The 2020 budget, you will see it outlines several staff-related updates. With Vestry approval, we are hiring Fr. Erik Larsen to be Assistant to the Rector. Erik has been supply to our congregation since July. All of us know Fr. Erik to be an excellent preacher, a fantastic listener, and a wise pastor. Erik will also help us with the ministry to our young people. Fr. Erik will be with us for 3 Sundays out of the month, sharing the ministry of celebration and be available to preach at some weekend and weekday services.

4. Fr. Erik will also work with me and Kristy Allardyce to provide leadership and support to our volunteers working with Young Adults, Young Parents, and College-age Young Adults. Fr. Erik has been with Kristy Allardyce, working to prepare 15 people for confirmation. You may have noticed that in this year's budget, we are increasing the hours for Kristy Allardyce; this is because this year, we hope, with Kristy's help, to make more significant inroads in our ministry to Young Adults and Young Parents. Kristy, as a staff person, will also be responsible for supporting and helping our volunteers in our Newcomer ministry. Both of these initiatives are crucial to the continual growth of our congregation.

5. We will continue to expand our outreach to the broader
community, engaging in projects to connect people to our church and, more importantly, to simply help. Examples of this are the St. Florian and St. Michael's Services, St. Francis animal blessing, Thanksgiving dinner, Lessons & Carols services, Living Supplies ministries, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday community services, etc.

6. We will seek to be a center for education, fellowship, and beautiful liturgy. One goal, this year, will be to have a well-known, insightful speaker provide a free presentation once a month before community pot luck fellowship dinners and our offering of a beautiful Compline service.

7. In this new year, with the help and approval of our Vestry, we will seek new ways to use our beautiful building to do good work in our community while also providing an income stream to help do the work of ministry. Emily Mugge is a chair of a task force that is already working on a few ideas.

Yes, the above goals are ambitious. They are not for a church that is afraid of the future. These goals are not for a church whose vision is only survival. These goals are for a church, which has faith in God's vision. A dream that calls us to be bold! A vision that reminds us that we have been given the gift of great light and of great hope. Friends, just as the people of Isaiah's time and Jesus' time had a choice, we too have a choice, the choice to believe and act on God's vision! Amen!

Sunil Chandy, Rector
Christ Church Westerly
During the month of January, the Altar Guild purchased two new cruets suitable for our 5PM and 8AM services. We also purchased a new oil stock (container) that will be used in the Tobin Chapel for healing prayers. For our “Ashes to Go” distributed on Ash Wednesday, we now have two new containers. Finally, we purchased a new Service Book and markers for the Tobin Chapel.

We are now in the season of Epiphany and making preparations for Lent. Ash Wednesday this year falls on February 26th. We would like to remind everyone that there are no flowers placed on the altar during Lent except for Mothering Sunday, March 22nd. This year, if you wish to order flowers during Lent, they will be placed on the windows on either side of the communion rail. Parishioners are still able to recognize special occasions and submit memorials by requesting the Sanctuary Light. Tributes, as always, will be printed in the bulletin.

During Lent, the church is less ornate. The crosses are draped in the Lenten color of purple, the candlesticks are simple. This year, after discussion with the Worship Committee, we will not be using the purple hangings. Our altar will be in full view and we can see and appreciate its beauty. The only exception will be on Mothering Sunday.

According to *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, historically this day was once observed as a day on which people would visit their ‘mother’ church, it has become an occasion for honoring the mothers of children and giving them presents. During the 16th century, people returned to their mother church or cathedral of the area, for a service to be held on Laudate Sunday. This was either the church where you were baptized, or the local parish church, or the nearest cathedral. Anyone who did this was commonly said to have gone ‘a-mothering’ .........Children and young people who were ‘in service’ (as household servants) were given a day off on that date so they could visit their families. The children would pick wild flowers along the way to place in the church or give to their mothers.

Mothering Sunday is now a day to honor mothers and other mother figures, such as grandmothers, stepmothers and mother-in-laws. An important part of Mothering Sunday is giving gifts (such as cakes and flowers) and cards.
On March 22nd, we will again be celebrating “Mothering Sunday” at Christ Church. We will once again offer an opportunity to honor our mothers or mother figures that are or have been a part of our lives and at the same time raise funds for additional chairs for our Parish Hall and, if funds permit, other items to be identified.

The Altar Guild will be offering pink roses for purchase through pre-order. The names of those being honored will be published in the bulletin. Roses will be available for pick up at all three services.

ALL profits raised will be given to support items needed by the church. In the past, we have installed railings behind the altar leading to the reredos, purchased items for the church school and bible school programs, purchased cinctures for the acolytes, refurbished the original brass torches, and paid for the purchase and installation of CO, Smoke and Gas Detectors throughout the Parish Hall. We are enclosing a copy of the order form in the Cornerstone and will have forms available in weekly bulletins. Orders will be due by March 8th in order to guarantee delivery of the roses. Forms can be placed in an envelope, dropped in the collection plate, mailed to or dropped off at the church office or be given to Cheryl Leong or Natalie Pukas. If paying by check, checks should be made out to Christ Church Altar Guild with a notation- ROSE ORDER.

We hope that all of you will consider purchasing one or more roses. However, if you prefer not to purchase any but would like to donate to this fundraiser, there is a space provided on the Order Form.

Thank you!
Natalie Pukas

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ROSE ORDER FORM
(Due by March 8th)

1 Rose @ $5.00 6 Roses @ $15.00 12 Roses @ $25.00

Name________________________________________

Number of Roses______________________________

Names(s) of Those Being Honored (Names will be published in the bulletin)________________________________________________________

Service You Attend __________________________________________

Checks should be made payable to Christ Church Altar Guild with a notation of "Rose Order"

I do not wish to purchase a rose(s) but would like to make a contribution to this project.

Amount Enclosed___________
It has been a great joy to work and worship together with you at Christ Church this last year and a half. This annual report is an opportunity to refresh your understanding of the role I play as a deacon at Christ Church.

Deacons do not bless, consecrate, or absolve, but we do assist in worship; administering the sacraments, proclaiming the Gospel, preaching God’s word and sending the faithful out to do God’s work in the world. The word “deacon” comes from the Greek, “diakonos,” meaning servant. Deacons are servant leaders with a particular focus on “the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely.”

In addition to parish ministry, deacons are concerned with the conditions and plight of those outside our church walls. In the past year Christ Church has engaged in several diaconal ministries:

· During Lent, 2019, Christ Church gave generously to the deacons’ diocesan outreach effort with an abundance of new underwear for the House of Hope’s Shower to Empower project.

· In October, 2019 The Pastoral Care Commission sponsored a forum on the opioid crisis as it exists in our area. In addition to the stories from a mother of an overdose victim and, and a victim who is successful in recovery, speakers included our police chief Shawn Lacey and our own pharmacy expert, Simi Chandy who contributed vital information and perspective.
ANNE'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

· On January 12 the church hosted another forum highlighting yet another problem close to home, the vaping epidemic. The presentation was well attended by both youth and parents and many questions answered about this most recent health crisis in our communities.

Deacons minister to those who are in need, whether they are hungry for food, in need of clothing, or are starving for a message of hope, a sign of peace, the love of Almighty God.

To that end, I am called to a ministry to the sick, fulfilling an oath to serve the needy. I am privileged to minister part time as a chaplain at the Westerly Nursing Home (Royal) and I work with the Pastoral Care Commission seeing to the spiritual needs of those with medical emergencies, and those parishioners who are no longer able to attend church because of age or infirmity.

I usually attend the Wednesday morning bible study, where I fulfill another ordination vow, to study scripture and incorporate it into my life. It is a rich and fun time.

Each week as I stand amongst you to proclaim the Gospel, I am deeply aware of where I am and whom I serve. Christ Church is a place where people “love and serve the Lord” with generosity and joy. There is much work to do. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Faithfully,

Rev. Dn. Anne B. Burke
Confirmation Class Trip to NYC
A message from Kristy Allardyce...

Christian Formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation.

Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraisers for NightWatch. The teens who were able to participate had a wonderful time at this Spirit filled experience. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC, is a majestical cathedral which surpassed everyone’s expectations. Walking around with the teens and listening to them discuss the various details in architecture and noting the various differences within the different chapels was so interesting. They were genuinely interested in learning! All of them are also more eager than ever to participate in our two night stay at ECC, the Episcopal Conference Center, early next month. That weekend will be an in-depth confirmation preparation weekend led by Reverend Meaghan Brower. We are grateful to Christ Church for sponsoring this trip for us. Ms. Janice, Ms. Kathleen and Ms. Jackie’s class, are having a drive for toiletries to support the Living Supplies Closet. Please do help support this ministry by bringing in toiletries and leaving them in the box by the office or as you walk into church, by February 2.

Thank you!

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas. Thank you for your support of this important ministry!

Kristy

FEBRUARY TRIVIA

"People and Events in February"

1. We start off with Feb. 2nd, often called "Candlemas". What is that?
2. Feb. 24th honors St. Matthias. Who was he?

Answers on page 18
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For more details, please navigate to: [https://www.christchurchwestery.org/events/calendar/](https://www.christchurchwestery.org/events/calendar/)

**February 2020**
1. Candlemas, also called The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple, observes a requirement of Jewish law. A period of 40 days was to be kept after the birth of a child, after which the mother would present herself to the priest for ritual purification. In the event that the first born child was male, then the child would also be dedicated to the Lord in the Temple, in memory of Israel's deliverance from Egypt at the time of the first Passover. Since Dec 25 had been chosen to be when Jesus's birth was observed, 40 days later takes us to Feb 2. This coincidentally is also half way through winter, when various predictions of how long winter would last were being developed in Europe and Britain, but that's another story you can look up on your own. The name "Candlemas" arose from the use of candles in a procession as people entered the church for a service to commemorate Christ's entrance in the Temple, and this practice became widespread by the 7th c. 2. As recorded in Acts chapter 1, during the time between Jesus's ascension and the Day of Pentecost, the apostles were gathered together in prayer, and Peter reminded them that someone needed to be chosen to replace Judas, who had gone off and hanged himself. They needed to choose someone well qualified, who had been with them the whole time and was a fellow witness to all the events that had occurred, and after prayer, Matthias was the one chosen. Nothing more is said about him, he just fades off into history, but the point is made that even though nothing more is known, he is still remembered for his faithfulness that enabled him to be chosen to be an apostle. The further point is that this can serve as an example of many throughout history who have served quietly, unnoticed perhaps, but are still counted among the faithful, and this can perhaps include you and me as well. Think about this as we enter once again into a new year, full of challenges, opportunities, and hope.

PRAYER LIST

Please help us keep our prayer list current! Please take a look and send any updates to the Christ-Church@verizon.net

Please also contact us if you would like to be placed on the Thanksgiving List of Healing.

Thank you, The Pastoral Care Commission.
Christ Church
Ash Wednesday

Please join us on February 26, 2020
to share in the beginning of Lent

Three Ash Wednesday Services
with imposition of the Ashes

7am, 12 noon and 7pm (with Choir)

“Ashes to Go”
will be available outside Mia’s Primetime Cafe
in Downtown Westerly/Pawcatuck
7:30 am & 12 noon

“Remember you are dust, and dust you shall return”
Genesis 3:19

A House of Prayer for All People

CHRIST CHURCH
7 Elm Street, Westerly, RI 02891
(401) 596-0197 • Fax: (401) 596-6529
Email: christ-church@verizon.net
ChristChurchWesterly.org
Pass the Guitar!

A Benefit for the W.A.R.M. Center

at Christ Church
February 16th
at 2pm

Saturday, February 22
6-8pm
Christ Church Parish Hall
All are welcome

A Taste of Poland

$27 Adult
$15 Kids
Under 12
Tickets on EventBrite.com
2020 Lenten Series

"SIGNS OF LIFE" WHY CHURCH MATTERS

SCHEDULE
Wednesday, March 4
"Light"
Wednesday, March 11
"Water"
Wednesday, March 18
"Food"
Wednesday, March 25
"Shelter"
Wednesday, April 1
"Community"

6:00PM - SIMPLE SOUP SUPPER
6:30PM - EVENING PRAYER
7:00PM - PROGRAM BEGINS

ALL WELCOME
FREE OF CHARGE

Christ Church
7 Elm Street, Westerly, RI
(888) 996 - 6197
email: christ-church@verizon.net
www.christchurchwesterly.org

RSVP to the office is recommended but not required.

Sunday, February 23

Christ Church Author Series

The Secret Gospel of Mark:
121 Devotions for the Church, Shop, Closet or Bed

Rev. Spencer Reece

5pm Potluck Supper & Book Discussion in the Parish Hall
6:30pm A service of Communion in the Church
All are welcome!

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SUNDAY, MARCH 22nd

Mothering Sunday Service

Rose Orders
1@$5, 6@$15 & 12 @$25

CHRIST CHURCH
7 ELM ST. WESTERLY

Peter Stoltzfus Berton
Organ Recital

Sunday, March 22, 2020 at 4 pm
Christ Church * 7 Elm Street * Westerly, RI
Presented by the Christ Church Arts Commission
Service Hours

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist spoken service
Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist spoken service
 Sunday 10:00 a.m.
Choral Eucharist
w/Children’s Chapel and Nursery Care
 Wednesday 7:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist
 Wednesday 10 a.m.
Holy Eucharist
 Wednesday 10:45 a.m.
Bible Study

Christ Episcopal Church

CLERGY
The Rev. Sunil Chandy, Christ Church Rector
The Rt. Rev. David Joslin, Rector Emeritus; Bishop in Residence
The Rev. Erik Larsen, Assistant to the Rector
The Rev. Sandra Haines-Murdocco, Priest Associate
The Rev. Deacon Anne Burke, Deacon

STAFF
George Kent, Organist & Choirmaster
Pamela Young, Interim Organist & Choirmaster
Jacquelyn Smith, Parish Administrator; Wedding Coordinator
Dorothy Adams, Office Assistant
Kristy Allardyce, Director of Christian Formation
Madeline Therrien and Sarah Poole, Childcare Coordinators

VESTRY
Betsey Rice, Senior Warden
Caswell Cooke, Jr., Junior Warden
Sarah Starkweather, Clerk
Stephanie Blanchette, Treasurer
Fred Allardyce
Barbara Capalbo
Mike Evering
Katherine Hoxsie
Lisa Kitchen
Paul Kuhn
Doug Lawrence
Emily Mugge
Natalie Pukas
Thomas Quarantella
Richard Roy
Molly Schonenberg

COME JOIN US!

7 Elm Street | Westerly, RI 02891
401-596-0197
christ-church@verizon.net

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