

AUGUST 2025

CROSSROADS

The Newsletter of Christ Church, St. Peter's Parish



CHRIST CHURCH
EASTON

A Message from Patrick Collins, Interim Priest

Dear Christ Church Family,

Here we are in the “dog days of summer.” It is that time of year when the meteorologists refer to “air you can wear” and when we see powerful thunderstorms in the late afternoons and evenings. It is also that time of year when many of us are enjoying vacations or taking advantage of the ‘longer days’ to engage in leisurely activities.

It is a wonderful time of the year in which we can partake of the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Warm weather, sunshine, family, loved-ones, friends...

As we are enjoying the gifts and blessings of God, I ask that you take a moment and think about those whose lives are more challenged. Recent changes in our federal government have resulted in diminished grants and assistance to local support agencies such as the Neighborhood Service Center (NSC). This is only one of many organizations in our community that work to reduce the suffering of so many of our neighbors.

Recently, one of our members has led two separate drives to assist the NSC. One of these drives was for diapers and the other was for paper goods. The amount of donations

that came in was heart-warming and deeply touching. Thank you to everyone who participated in those efforts.

In our parish office, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of individuals who are reaching out and looking for help. As a result, we have had to adjust the way that appointments are made so that we can more easily and effectively assist people. Please be assured that the money you raised during the Waterfowl Festival continues to assist people in need in our local community – it is simply that the needs in our community are increasing.

While our youth were in NC for a regional mission trip experience this year, last year they conducted a mission experience here in Easton, reaching out to and assisting various non-profit organizations.



In addition to the things above, we also have a cooking ministry where people in challenging situations are given frozen meals. And let's not forget our Stephen Ministers who quietly provide emotional and spiritual assistance.

It is an honor and a privilege to minister in a congregation with deep connections to its community and to be in a congregation that responds generously when a need arises.



Please be assured that there are ways that you can help minister to the world here at Christ Church. The first is through your prayers. Praying shapes the way we see God and how we interact in and with the world. Another way that you can help is through donations. When announcements come asking for donations, please continue to be generous. You will never know how much a small donation, or a simple act of kindness might deeply impact the life of someone else. And don't forget to donate your time and talents. We have so many ministries here at Christ Church, and we need you. Never forget the ideal contained

in our Rite I liturgy: "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee..."

Grant, Gracious Lord, that we, answering your call to loving service and action, may be an answer to someone's prayers.

May we be blessed by God and may we be a blessing to others – now and always.

Peace,
Patrick





Mission Update

Faith Walstrum

07/15/2025

Wilmington, NC Mission Newsletter

I feel beyond blessed to have been exposed to the beauty of mission since 2018, as each one has allowed me to grow my faith in ways that are unique to the experiences within a new community or my team. My time in Wilmington this past week keeps my previous statement alive because there were shining God moments that moved my soul. My identity in Christ has many roots, but mission might just be the largest and strongest of them all.

Something that really stood out to me and my service team while working with First Fruit Ministries, was the immense amount of services they had to offer the community. Scott, the site coordinator, has such a big heart and love for Christ. He welcomed our group with open arms and was eager to share what First Fruits was about. A few examples include hosting the food pantry three times a week, providing hot meals to designated locations around town, having laundry, showers and clothing available, creating a safe space for women's recovery, and having church services every week. Having confidence that the community members I met have a space to feel seen and supported while surrounded by the love of Jesus makes my heart so happy.



With this mission, my role as a participant changed. A good majority of our group from the Diocese of Easton were embarking on their very first mission, and I had the



pleasure of being a leader and older sister for them. As my relationships within the group grew stronger, I began to see the mission through their eyes as they shared their experiences of God. This was so special to me because in a way, I was transported back in time to my first mission in Niagara, NY. Having grown up going on missions, it felt like I was watering the seeds of the Lord's work within the hearts of the younger members of my team.

A very important aspect of our mission trips is the feet-washing activity on our last service day. To me, it has become a tangible symbol of the power of human connection grounded in God's love. This past week, I was given the opportunity to show the power of prayer in this way. As I washed the feet of two young ladies, it was hard not to think about the times that I was in their place. Just as I was shown the power of prayer as a young girl, all I hoped was that I could reciprocate a similar message to the girls I was praying over. I've always thought that prayer is our main line to the Lord and I believe everyone in the room that night could feel the Spirit moving.

Another piece of our trip was the chances our team had to bond. Whether this looked like playing cards at 7am or praising the Lord at 10pm, we were a lively bunch! Teaching each other different games or riddles and belting songs as we danced wherever we stepped foot, created an unbreakable family atmosphere. Mission requires a type of flexibility and energy that everyday life doesn't demand, causing us to lean on each other for support. We learned that there is a comfort in being uncomfortable together.

What a blessing it has been to walk the walk with my family in the communities we serve over the years. Throughout these trips, we all experience different ways of service where



we are exposed to different sides of the communities. Because of this, we reflected for days upon returning home about the connections we formed and the memories that made our time fruitful as individuals. My sister, Lili, worked within community members' homes; my mother, Amy, spent her days entertaining children. While my father, Scott, did heavy loads of outdoor physical work; and I worked alongside other volunteers at a local food pantry. With our varying experiences, came our eagerness to share the ways God presented himself to us.

As I reflect on the Wilmington Mission of 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the deepened connections on the foundation of God's grace, the deepened roots of faith, and the profound reminder that through service, we are all able to spread the dust of Jesus Christ.

Rector Search Update: Sharing in the Work

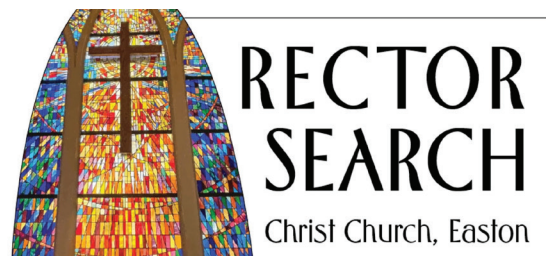
By Matt Boyce
*Search Committee Chair
 Youth Group Leader
 Wilmington, NC, Missioner*

For those of you that were not able to attend one of this weekend's services, Father Patrick was gracious enough give me the sermon both to update the congregation and to share a bit of testimony. I appreciate the opportunity and hope the message was well received.

Last week's gospel message had a recurring theme about needs being met when you ask. From bread being given away, to doors being opened, it said if you ask, knock, pray, etc., then it will be provided, even if it requires some persistence in asking. Reading it, I kept wondering, who is going to open the doors, bake the bread, etc.?

We recently heard from some of our missioners about their experience in Wilmington, NC. They told us how powerful the experience was and how it brought them closer to God. Spoiler alert, what you didn't hear was that everyone was tired, sweaty, and mentally exhausted. We didn't hear that because, as we all know, there is more joy in serving and giving of oneself. This is especially true when surrounded by like-minded people who are joyfully sharing in the work.

As I have seen repeatedly since joining this church, we are a congregation that feels called to action. Those of you who saw me speak at the annual meeting may remember, we said these things in the survey! Recall, we said very clearly that we believe Jesus calls parishioners (not just the clergy) to be the change agents in the world. Not just by inviting people into our family, but by being servants to the world. In answer to my earlier question, we believe it is us who will be providing for those in need!



The Rector search is entering the final phase, and we have wrapped up interviews and visits with several amazing candidates. We feel strongly one will be our next Rector; this is a truly exciting time! However, please remember that when a choice is made, it will still be some time before our next Rector joins us as they will be giving notice at their current parish.

It's also important to remember that change, even exciting or desired change, is often uncomfortable. We will be saying goodbye to Father Patrick, who has done a phenomenal job leading us through this period of transition. Not to mention, our new Rector will have their own vision for Christ Church, which will require changes. However, I hope you will agree that the times we grow and learn the most are often uncomfortable.

The candidates all spoke at length about their earnest belief that every member of the church will play a role in the future growth, outreach, and mission of this church. When the time is right, I'm sure you will all join in welcoming our new Rector. In the meantime, I know that we will continue to put "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" into action.



Traditional Choir News – Carnegie Hall! And a Return to Rehearsals



Five choir members participated in a glorious concert at Carnegie Hall on Saturday, July 12. Fern Brooks, Ruth Heltne, Elizabeth Kelly, and Debra Smith accompanied Carolyn Cutler to New York City to perform with a 240+ voice choir and a full orchestra. The first half of the program was a collection of anthems composed and conducted by Mark Hayes, who is well-known among church musicians.



The second half of the program was a world premiere of the musical, “Amazing Grace! from Blind to Free,” composed and conducted by Lloyd Larson who also is a prolific writer of choral anthems. It was a thrill for these choir members to sing under the direction of the composers themselves and to hear some of the background on their compositions. It was a pretty grueling schedule of rehearsals, but very enjoyable to work with both of these great conductors.

In addition to the choir experience, the ladies were privileged to attend the musical, “Wesley, the Musical” (based on the book, Wesley, the Owl), which starred our own Daniel Sanchez as Wesley. Daniel was the tenor section leader in our choir for the past two years while he studied voice at Peabody Institute. Christ Church was blessed with his talents and now that he will be returning to his home in California, he will be greatly missed. What fun to see him perform in this off-Broadway show!

The group returned from their Carnegie Hall debut exhausted but exhilarated. It was a great time of making music and bonding! Thank you to everyone who supported our variety show a couple months ago and helped to underwrite this once in a lifetime experience.

Looking forward – Choir rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, August 27 at 7:00 pm for the Fall and Advent season. The Christ Church choir is a welcoming community of musicians. Come, give it a try. You’ll be glad you did, and who knows, maybe you’ll make it to Carnegie Hall!



Parishioner Profile: Mark and Tiffany Powell

Mark and Tiffany Powell have been members of Christ Church since 2002, shortly after they married. Sadie, their 21-year-old daughter, was baptized at Christ Church by Father Bill Ort. Mark has led the Maryland Department of Agriculture's marketing programs for the last 20 years. That has included connecting farmers and agriculture and seafood businesses with buyers and promotions of local food.

After working in the photography department at the Baltimore Sun for a number of years, Tiffany became a teacher. She is retired from a career as a teacher at both independent and public schools, including time spent at Christ Church's former Day School.

The Powells lived in Baltimore for a number of years attending church there. "But, we always considered Christ Church our home," Tiffany said. They moved back to Easton last year.

Mark and Tiffany's spiritual journey is varied. He was brought up as a Baptist, attended Protestant Chapel on the Air Force bases he grew up on, was baptized as a Methodist and then found the Episcopal Church when he worked at a small liberal arts college in North Carolina. "I was attracted to the open and inclusive nature of the local Episcopal church," he said. That was in 1987. "I've been Episcopal ever since." Tiffany



considered herself Christian but never had a real church home until Christ Church. Both attended Rev. Carol Callaghan's class introducing newcomers to the Episcopal faith and developed a deep love for the community at Christ Church.

What sparked your interest?

We love being connected to the community at Christ Church. We're now reading Desmond and Mpho Tutu's *The Book of Forgiving*. There is a line in there that resonates when we think about Christ



Church: "In South Africa, Ubuntu is our way of making sense of the world. The word literally means humanity. It is the philosophy and belief that a person is only a person through other people." We need the loving, sharing community that is Christ Church.

What motivated you to be more involved?

We both want to help the church and our community how we can. We have been helped by the Food Ministry, in fact. As Tiffany has been on a cancer journey for years now, there have been times we had thoughtfully and lovingly prepared meals delivered. It was

just what we needed. The food was great. But the love behind it was better.

Why support our Church?

We pledge and try to give as much as we can to Christ Church. It costs money to keep this wonderful community provided with the physical church we all love and need. And we need our clergy to be supported. We hope everyone gives what they can.

Hopes and desires for the future? We are hopeful for a community of faith that projects Jesus's love.

Meet Our New Parish Secretary, Leigh Lebkicker

I was born in Annapolis, MD, where I lived all of my life until I moved to Centreville seven years ago with my family. I've been happily married to my husband, Kevin, for almost 26 years. We have two daughters, Casey (24) and Madison (20) and a cat named Daisy. I enjoy spending all my time with my family. Both of my girls keep me busy by going on all kinds of adventures. Casey is a recent grad student and a musician(violist), and I love going to her performances. She has already had the opportunity to play here at Christ Church. Madison is a junior in college and is a competitive swimmer and I enjoy going to her swim meets. Summer is my favorite season. I love the beach and relaxing by the pool.

I've worked in childcare for most of my life taking care of children. When my girls got older, I worked as an office assistant at a counseling center for six years and then I was a receptionist at a hair salon. I went back to being a nanny for six years, as I really missed taking care of children.



Now it's time for another chapter and I am happy to have found Christ Church and finally not have to commute over the Bay bridge anymore. I am happy to be here working in the church with such friendly people. I look forward to meeting and getting to know the congregation.



June 2025 Financial Summary

Here we are enjoying the lazy days of Summer! Not so lazy, many things are happening and much to be thankful for! Our church continues to be a wonderful place to come and worship as well as enjoy each other's company. There is so much to look forward to as we move through this year. Keep those e-newsletters read as well as the monthly *CrossRoads*. Stay informed!

Now for an overview of our financial position through the six months ending June 2025:

- Pledges and Offerings were \$400,376 versus the prior year at \$368,296, an increase of \$32,080. Thank you for your continued support. We are hopeful that this trend continues for the year.
- As stated last quarter, worship expenses were closely reviewed at budget time, especially the contemporary music budget for 2025. We are seeing a positive result with less expenses but still great traditional and contemporary music.
- As stated last quarter, compensation and benefits need some explanation. As you recall, Father Patrick was hired in March 2024, so we did not have a rector salary and respective benefits incurred. In turn clergy compensation is low for the first quarter of 2024. As we all know Kelsey and Michael were ordained in September 2024 as Deacons. Their respective compensation in 2024 was part of the staff compensation. Then in 2025 their respective compensation is now categorized as part of clergy compensation as well as their benefits. So, as you review the compensation piece for 2025, please keep this major

change in mind. All in all, total wages and benefits at six months for both were \$251,639 for 2025 and \$255,211 for 2024. A slight decrease overall.

- Buildings and Grounds have had normal repairs. I do want to thank our "Lay Weeders Group" for the awesome job in cleaning up the grounds as well as securing grant funds of \$6,630 that paid for some new shrubbery around the Parish Office. The property looks fantastic!
- The year-to-date bottom line shows a deficit of \$13,630 but we are dramatically in a better position this year versus last year at six months that showed a deficit of \$80,770. This is the joint effort of the parishioner's support and Vestry /Staff oversight of expenses.
- Investment and Endowment returns have inched slightly ahead through June. We show an increase in funds of \$164,283. Our Unrestricted Endowment accounts on June 30, 2025, were \$4,474,526 and the Restricted Endowment accounts were \$1,585,560.

We continue to "thank you" for your support to Christ Church and making this our church to worship, pray and to be inspired. The Vestry continues to closely monitor our financial position for the best interests of the church. We have a beautiful church and it's a pleasure to call this church our home.

Blessings,

John Itell, Treasurer



Christ Church Financial Summary

For The Six Months Ended June 30, 2025

	Budget	Current Year	Prior Year
Income			
Pledges and Offerings	\$365,250	\$400,376	\$368,296
Other Income	3,537	7,550	7,115
Total Income	\$367,787	\$407,926	\$375,411
Expenses			
Worship	\$79,320	\$58,541	\$93,058
Outreach	12,400	9,827	5,888
Education & Fellowship	33,186	23,078	28,913
Clergy Compensation/Benefits	174,145	147,658	51,134
Staff Compensation/Benefits	134,520	103,981	204,077
Buildings & Grounds	85,013	86,307	74,818
Office	32,417	33,971	39,939
Other	750	0	0
Total Operating Expenses	551,751	463,363	497,829
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(183,964)	(55,437)	(122,418)
Diocesan Pledge	(78,264)	(78,264)	(79,626)
5% Endowment Transfer	120,071	120,071	121,274
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$(142,157)	\$(13,630)	\$(80,770)





Parish Treasurer Ledger Notes

The summer months are upon us and generally the months of July and August are the lowest months for contributions for the Parish. However, our weekly services continue as well as the normal operating expenses. In turn these are usually deficit months. Please keep your church in mind as you enjoy your summer months.

Just to keep all informed, we are doing some needed building improvements because of water leaks in the Parish Hall. The flat roof above the Children's Sunday School Room is being replaced. The cost

of the replacement is \$15,000. We will also be doing roof repairs to the slate roof on the Parish Hall. The good news is that we are fortunate enough that we do not need to do a full roof replacement but can repair certain sections of that roof. The cost of this will be \$50,000. If we had to replace the full slate roof it would have been very expensive.

Just keeping you informed as to what is happening here at the church.

John Itell, Treasurer

Dates to Remember

Sunday, September 7 at 10:00am

One Worship Service for the Weekend:

To bring people together for fellowship at the end of the summer/beginning of fall, there will be one combined contemporary/traditional music service for the weekend at 10:00am, followed by fellowship and refreshments.

September 13-14

Return to our Fall/Winter/Spring Worship Schedule & Ministry Fair: This weekend we will return to our fall/winter/spring Sunday worship schedule of 8:00am Rite I, 9:15am contemporary music, and 11:00am traditional music services. This is also our Ministry Fair weekend, stop into the Parish Hall after each service to learn more about the various ministries and programs at Christ Church!

Saturday, September 27 at 11:00am

Ordination to the Priesthood: Transitional Deacons Kelsey Spiker and Michael Valliant will be ordained to the priesthood

here at Christ Church, with a combined contemporary and traditional music service. There will not be an Alive @ 5 service that evening.

Saturday, November 1 at 10:00am

Women's Day Retreat: Join us for a day-long Women's Retreat, "Living Free and Fruitfully" on Saturday, November 1 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Share the day in conversation with Retreat Directors Linda Mastro and Gerri Leder, as they explore the graces of growing older and the joys of going deeper in our faith and relationship with God. Enrollment cost of \$50 includes lunch and all materials.

November 7-9

Waterfowl Festival Weekend: Our biggest fundraiser of the year, selling crab cakes, oyster fritters, cream of crab soup, and more all to benefit our outreach ministries.





Christ Church Picture Contest

Below is a series of pictures taken by Randy Bachand. These pictures show scenes from our lovely Christ Church campus.

To Play:

Simply identify what the picture is showing and tell us where on campus it can be found. Then send an email to Shelley Williams, our parish Connect Secretary, using this email address: connect@christchurcheaston.org. In your email, please use the heading Picture Contest and use the letters that label each picture.

The winner will be the person who gets the most correct answers. In the case of a tiebreaker, the winner will be determined by the date and timestamp of the entries ("The early bird gets the worm.") Contest entry deadline is 12 noon on Wednesday August 20th.

First Place Prize – a handcrafted fused glass, glow in the dark, star paperweight.

Bonus Contest:

Name the Rabbit

Prize – a handcrafted fused glass, glow in the dark, cross necklace with satin cording.



Submit your most creative name for the rabbit shown in the picture below. Names and variations of "Roger" and "Peter" will not be counted. Send your email entry, using Rabbit Contest as the heading, to Shelley Williams to connect@christchurcheaston.org. Contest entry deadline is 12noon on Wednesday August 20th.

Photo #1



Photo #2





Photo #3

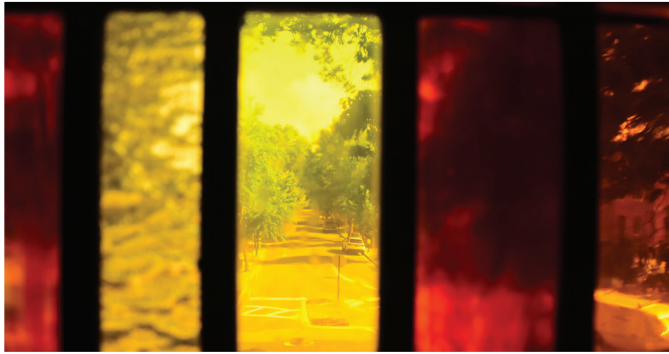


Photo #4



Photo #5



Photo #6

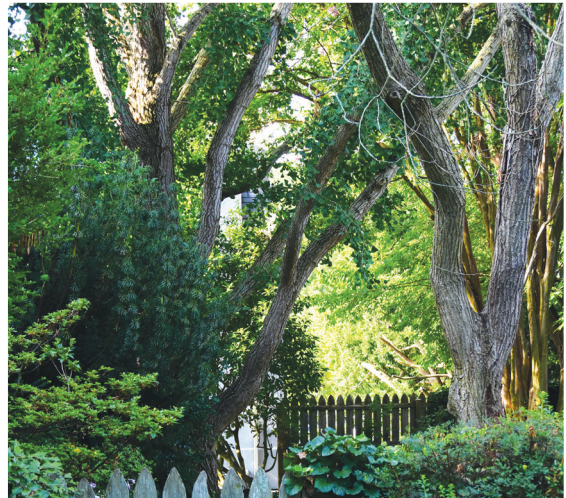


Photo #8



Photo #7





CHRIST CHURCH

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