

# The Courier

Volume 58, Issue 4

April 2005

## GOOD NEWS

### Inside This Issue

<b>Good News continued</b>	2
<b>Vestry</b>	3
<b>Adult Forum/Music Notes/ Courier Deadline</b>	4
<b>Practice</b>	5
<b>Playground</b>	6
<b>Food Donations</b>	7
<b>Pot Luck</b>	8
<b>Treasurer/A Note from God</b>	9
<b>Advertisements</b>	10
<b>Calendar</b>	11

The good news of God in Christ is about transformation. It is about the peace of God that comes when we move beyond our doubts and fears. This is an important message of the resurrection of Christ at Easter. The whole season is about waiting, being transformed and experiencing wonder. The gospel this morning has two separate stories that show how fears and doubts become the peace of God.

The first is a story about the community of the disciples. It is easy to skip over the first appearance of Jesus to the disciples and see this part of the story only as a prelude to Thomas's story. The disciples (or most of them) have gathered together. I can only see them as terrified. The authorities both Roman and Jewish just had their leader and teacher crucified. The man they have followed for three years was taken by the authorities and brutally murdered. The disciples thought that they knew where they were going. Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom of God. This man that Peter called the Messiah was leading them on to a new life. Maybe they did not always understand how they were going to get there or where it was. But Jesus dying on a cross had nothing to do with it. Instead, all that they believed in was a failure – of no consequence.

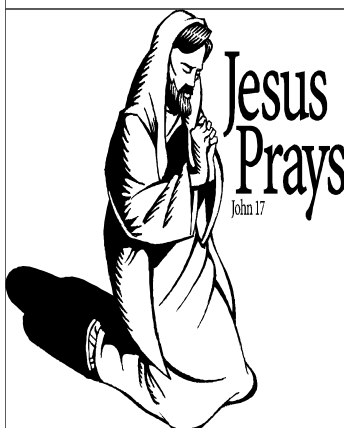
This is a crushing blow. They are left with absolutely nothing. They left their homes and families. They left their jobs and professions to follow this man. This is a more wrenching overturn of the normal order of things than we imagine today. In Roman times you did what your father did. Unless you joined the army you stayed in the same village for your entire life. To leave all of this behind was a BIG DEAL.

But that vision is empty. All of that now seems overturned by the cold brutality of the Roman Governor. Indeed the disciples could well have been worried about their own death or torture at the hands of the same people. If the leaders of the Jews turned Jesus over to the Romans maybe the same fate awaits all of them. Unknown to themselves they are in the waiting time.

Then there are these troubling rumors from the tomb. In John's gospel, the rock of the tomb has been rolled back and no one is inside. Mary says that she has seen Jesus. How can this be? I suspect questions about this are what bring them together that first night. To be able to find out what the others have seen and to ask what does it all mean.

If Jesus lives – what does that really mean? Each of them deserted Jesus as he went through his Passion. If Jesus is alive that means having to see him face to face again. It is hard to not to imagine how scary that would be. Jesus was turned over to be killed, to go through the Passion. Where were the disciples? Each and every one of them fled. Peter stayed for a while, but even he denied Christ. Under these circumstances how much do you think that they wanted to see him face to face? To realize that you have let down a person whom you have known and loved – how much do you really think they wanted to see Christ?

So they come together huddled behind a locked door scared that Jesus is dead – scared that he might come and find them. It is a time of waiting – an in between time when we wrestle with who we are and what are the consequences of what we have done.



Then Jesus appears among them. What happens next is the amazing part. He says, "Peace be with you." That simple sentence brings about a complete transformation. There are no words of reproach – no scolding – just "peace be with you." There is forgiveness for what has been done. Acceptance of who the disciples are. In that transformation the disciples experience the wonder of God in Christ. Jesus gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This first appearance narrative is John's version of Pentecost. In experiencing the wonder of God's forgiveness, the disciples go and spread the good news throughout the world. The Disciples become Apostles which literally means "those who are sent."

As a parish we are also standing in an in between time. As the Disciples were waiting, we are now waiting. What was before no longer exists. We toiled and prayed with a leader who is no longer with us. Our community of faith seems lost and without direction. Now we feel lost and bereft.

Last Sunday really brought that home to me. It has been a blessing and a delight to have Richard Witt to lead our services for Lent and Easter. We were able to put aside some of our fears. But we have not yet been transformed – we are just trying to avoid what lies ahead. How much easier it is to stay huddled in the room. Not venturing forth. It seems to be a familiar place.

Many of us asked why not just ask Richard to become our Rector. How much easier it would be to just have Richard stay. Then we can put aside the uncertainty and not spend the time waiting. Each of us is worried about who will take care of us. Who will lead us forward. Where are we going. We are worried that if something were to happen to me who would be there for me? I don't know how things are going to turn out. I need someone to show me the way. I have so many doubts.

Doubts of the kind that Thomas must have had. Thomas blurting out what any normal person would have said when told of Jesus' reappearance. How can this possibly be? Thomas at this moment reminds me of Peter at other times. Blurting out what is obvious but no one else is willing to say. What we need to remember in time of doubt. What becomes important in moments of doubt is not that we have doubt. All of us have doubts. No one has complete assurance of what is to come. It is what we do when we face our doubts that shows when we are ready to be transformed.

Look at what Thomas does with his doubt. He could have run away from the rest of the disciples. He could have written them off as delusional. Thomas though sticks it out. He spends time with the other disciples even though he does not believe what they are telling him. He is present the next week with the rest of them when Jesus appears again. Thomas's doubt is totally transformed in the presence of the resurrected Christ. From a man who says he cannot be convinced without touching the side of Jesus, he becomes the first to state our faith. My King and my God. The other disciples are glad to see Jesus – Thomas cries out my King and my God. Not Messiah, not Son of Man, not One sent by the Father, not Son of God, nor any other title used in the gospels but my King and my God. For all that he is known as the doubter, Thomas is the first to articulate our faith that Christ is God.

As we move forward to set the direction that Christ Church will take, it is to Thomas and the disciples that we need to look for an example. We are waiting with doubts and fears that are normal. Pretending that they are not there will not make them go away. We must acknowledge our doubts and fears. Only then can they be transformed.

God is calling us on – calling us to participate in the creation of a new life a new way of being. We need to listen and pay attention. Our job right now is to find what it is that God is calling us to do both as a community of faith and as individuals.

The road is scary and we are uncertain about all the things that can go wrong – but the Spirit is calling us forward into new life. We, like Thomas, need to acknowledge our doubts and not be frozen by them. Only then can we move beyond our waiting time, become transformed and experience the wonder of the new life that God is offering us.

Michael Wood

"*The Courier*" is a monthly publication of Christ Episcopal Church, Poughkeepsie, New York. Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Sunday mornings at 8:00 (Rite I) and 10:00 (Rite II), and in the afternoon at 1:00 in Spanish.

Deadline for submission of material for "*The Courier*" is the **third Sunday** of the month. Photographs are welcome with articles for the newsletter, and to be best reproduced should be developed on a CD.

The Rev. Arnulfo Arámbulo, Latino Ministry

Laura Russell, Music Director

John Sullivan, Organist

John Colclough, Sr. Warden

Marge Bliss, Jr. Warden,

Michele Haynes, Parish Secretary

J. Peter Pelton, Property Steward

Richmond Notoe Hodge, Sexton

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**Mission Statement for Christ Church:** Christ Church provides a spiritual home for a diverse community of people united in the Eucharist, respectful of history and tradition, and actively engaged in Christ's ministry for today's world.

## A REPORT FROM THE VESTRY

Our Vestry is redefining itself to embrace the additional work it is required to do, in the interim period, between Michael's departure and the arrival of the Rector who is to be our new spiritual leader. As you may have noted from last month's Courier we are fourteen people intent on being as inclusive as we can, soliciting your help and informing you of the actions we take on your behalf. If you have any concerns about what is going on please don't wonder or worry, speak to a member of our Vestry.

Despite Mother Nature's attempts to bury us in snow, causing three Vestry meetings to be rescheduled, we have made some good progress. In our February meeting we introduced a set of goals to keep ourselves on track, we didn't vote on them immediately. Additional goals were added and we considered them and thought about the priorities. In our March meeting we passed the amended set of goals:

1. Form a Search Committee to seek a new Rector
2. Develop a New Parish Profile and effectively deploy our Web Site to complement our Search Process
3. Church Growth – enlarging our congregation
4. Support the Center of the Square through developing a more effective link to Christ Church
5. Appoint an Interim Priest

Educate our Vestry on all aspects of the Financial Resources of Christ Church

Goal number six did not make it onto our list during the meeting but a resolution to form a committee to do this work was passed.

The first three goals are related and are the most critical tasks we have to engage in. Work on the first goal is proceeding very well. Your response to an appeal for names was very good. Fifty-one names were presented, some people offering to serve and others being "volunteered" by the congregation. The Vestry asked the Wardens to call each person to describe to them what was involved and to particularly emphasize the considerable amount of time this type of process requires. Twenty people, initially, were willing to do this work but some of those, after further consideration, have withdrawn. At the March meeting the Wardens recommended, and the Vestry appointed, Carlie Graves as Chair. The Vestry then appointed a committee including the Chair to form the rest of the Search Committee.

Work is in progress on the second and third goals. We need a Profile, we need to establish where we are as a church, we need to know what qualities we want our Rector to have, we need to expand our congregation and it will be to our advantage if we can utilize our website to promote both our identity and our mission. In the March meeting we revisited individual Vestry assignments and we have established a new Growth/Welcoming Committee so that these first three goals can be coordinated, all three are crucial if we are to succeed. A lot of work is still to be done but we are on our way. With respect to the fourth goal, a member of the Vestry is very willing to act on our behalf with the Center of the Square and, although there are scheduling difficulties at the moment, we remain committed to forming an effective link.

The fifth goal is still a work in progress. We have had just one name from the Diocese, a very well qualified candidate that the Vestry considered favorably. Our concerns were partly due to the distance between her home in Yonkers and Christ Church, but mostly due to the fact that the her required compensation package plus the cost of the Search Process could not be contained within the budget. The candidate, after prayerful consideration, withdrew.

The sixth goal, not officially a goal yet, is to have each member of the Vestry understand the different elements of our financial structure and the various interactions between them. A central part of this is, of course, our operating budget, our pledging does not produce sufficient income to meet our commitments and so a portion of our portfolio is drawn each year to plug the gap. The vestry has, in the past, made investment decisions without consulting the Investment Committee, causing the Investment Committee to formally write to the Vestry and remind them of the Investment Policy that is followed. Michael Phillips was instrumental in obtaining the offer of a grant of \$250,000 toward repairs to our tower. This grant, however, requires a one-to-one match and Michael, very early in the campaign before any really major expenses had occurred, told the Vestry that the Capital Campaign assignment for the tower of \$150,000 (initially this was \$162,500) would need to be guaranteed: one of the last things Michael did at his farewell dinner was to urge us to take care of the tower. Thus the Tower Committee has written to our Vestry asking it to honor the previous commitment of funds from the Capital Campaign. Clearly, there are difficult decisions to be made and they will need the earnest deliberations of an informed Vestry for a successful outcome.

John Colclough

## ADULT FORUM

**APRIL 10 & 17** Hard Sayings of Jesus: What You Wish  
Jesus Hadn't Said. The Rev. Robert Fortna

**APRIL 24** Earth Day: The Ethics of Ecology, Thomas Berry  
and the Hudson Valley

## MUSIC NOTES

Did you know that the local AGO chapter maintains a web site containing just about everything that is happening in organ and church music plus a whole lot more? Visit us at [CHVAGO.org](http://CHVAGO.org) and discover for yourself.



The **DEADLINE** for input in the May issue of "The Courier" is Sunday, April 17. Please be sure to have all information to Michele Haynes (452-8220 or [christchurch@mindspring.com](mailto:christchurch@mindspring.com)) by that date. Any form of input is gratefully received. You don't have to be experienced in writing to submit anything. I will make it work for you! Thank you.

## PRACTICE MAKES IT PERFECT

Don't make your prayer a job. It's a gift. Don't make it a grim and costly ticket you must buy in order to gain admittance to the divine love — you're already there.

When you begin to exercise it's hard. You don't feel well. You don't like to sweat. Moving hurts. Everyone else is stronger and faster and looks better. You know that years of not moving have been bad for you, and now you feel like you're being punished for it. But you keep going.

And soon you begin to feel different. Wonderful. Soon you love to move, even love to sweat, soon your body loves it — it's what your body's made to do. Soon you feel strong. Soon you don't care what other people look like. Soon you don't feel guilty any more — you're doing good things for the body God gave you, and you're being blessed every time you do them.

Spiritual discipline is just like that. It can be hard at first. You can feel guilty and inadequate at first. I should have been praying and reading scripture already, you think. I don't do this right. Other people do it better.

But prayer's what you're created to do. You are naturally good at it — God made you that way. Soon you don't care what other people do, how long they've been doing it, whether they're better at it than you are. Soon you just love it for its own sake. Soon you hardly remember what made you feel guilty about it.

If you have trouble with the word “discipline,” you won't later on — not after you get going in a routine that blesses you. In the meantime, use the word “practice.” It's the same thing.

*Today's eMo is the introduction to Volume III of Let Us Bless the Lord: Meditations on the Daily Office, Advent to Holy Week, which will be published by Morehouse in time for the first Sunday in Advent. Volumes I and II which provide a meditation for every day until then, are available now from [www.geraniumfarm.org](http://www.geraniumfarm.org)*

## CAROLE ANN WALLEY MEMORIAL PLAYGROUND

Carole Ann Walley, whose remains are in the Christ Church Columbarium, was a Junior High School teacher in Newburgh, New York. Her affiliation with Christ Church is that she was the sister to our parishioner, Cynthia Lee and mother to our previous Camp Director, Tory Walley. She had a love for all children, the Christ Church Summer Camp, and the outdoors. With this in mind her husband, Paul Walley, has donated the new playground equipment in Carole's memory.

The Playground Committee wishes to report that the Community Installation of the playground will take place over three consecutive days beginning Friday June 3, 2005, with no rain dates planned. The goals for each day are as follows:

**Friday, June 3** – Stake out the area, drill post holes and sort the playground parts using 5 people to stake out area, and 15 to 20 people to sort parts and drill holes for posts.

**Saturday, June 4**- Install play area, pour concrete before dark and install playground surfacing using two shifts of 35 to 40 people each.

**Sunday, June 5**- Contingency day in case there is any unfinished work to be completed using 4 to 5 people.

We are forming the three following 2 person committees to make this a successful installation.

### **Volunteers**

This committee will solicit and organize all the required volunteer workers (each bringing a ratchet, rake & shovel) from multiple sources for each day. Tasks will include scheduling their time and balancing the two work shifts for the main installation on Saturday.

### **Food**

Organize the food and food volunteers; obtain donations of lunch food as well as snacks for morning and afternoon work shifts. Set up eating & snack tables, and any tarp/tenting required.

### **Security, Tools & Equipment**

Solicit donated construction materials. Obtain equipment (Bobcats & Backhoe); assure services such as water, power and restroom facilities, builder's transit, awnings, tents and tables for other two committees. Organize volunteer suppliers of basic tools from church membership. Assure safety supplies such as cell phone, first aid kit, caution flagging, etc are on site. Security is important to restrict use of the new playground before the following Wednesday.

The executive committee is pursuing grant money to fund everything except the volunteer labor force. We are also entertaining many exciting ideas such as dedication by the Mayor of Poughkeepsie, live broadcast by a local radio station and plant sale fund raising during the Saturday installation!

This promises to be the biggest event of 2005 at Christ Church! Wouldn't you like to play a part in this event? Please contact either Jim Bliss, 462-4566, [jebliss@aol.com](mailto:jebliss@aol.com), or Cynthia Lee, 691-8062, [leel@newpaltz.edu](mailto:leel@newpaltz.edu).

For the Playground Committee,  
Jim Bliss

**PLEASE DONATE FOR THE  
PLAYGROUND INSTALLATION  
ON SAT. JUNE 4TH**

**(Donation box is in the Lay Ministry Room)**

**paper goods—cups, silverware, plates, napkins  
ketchup, mustard, relish  
mayonnaise  
jars of pickles  
bags of chips  
boxes of tea  
containers of coffee  
sugar  
peanut butter, jam  
bottles or cans of soda  
containers of water  
popped popcorn  
raisin packs  
cheese crackers  
power bars  
jars of peanuts**

**TO FEED THE HUNGRY VOLUNTEERS**

**When you shop, think of the playground, and buy one extra item to donate.  
In two months, we will have enough to help feed our workers.**

# **SPRING ALL-PARISH POT LUCK**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 22, at 6:30 pm  
In the Newton Community Room**

**Bring a dish to share and join us for fellowship and fun  
as we welcome Spring.**

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**We are beginning our preparation for our Fall Stewardship Campaign early this year so that we can insure a very successful outcome in these critical financial times. We will start by evaluating what we've done in the past and exploring new possibilities, including packaged stewardship programs like the Living Stewardship and the Pony Express which we've previously used to meet our goals. It is imperative that we have lots of help at all in phases of this process. Please, please, if you can offer your time and talent for this ministry, get in touch with Phyllis George at 473-1726 or [pmgeorge@worldnet.att.net](mailto:pmgeorge@worldnet.att.net). Thank you.**

## A MODEST CONTEST FROM YOUR TREASURER

A vestry member wrote the following to the Vestry in the past. Can you tell me what the date was?

“Our Church maintenance problems may be considered as much a problem of too small a congregation for the size of the building as it is too large a church for the size of the congregations. Programs to increase our congregation whether they be by church mergers or by the less dramatic week by week, year by year, efforts to attract more people should receive our constant attention. I believe some of our programs are now beginning to show results.

“If our parish family does not grow, I think we may well consider the advantage of joining with another church to share a building.

“My basic point here is that we should either use and maintain the Church properties or else dispose of them.”

The first prize? Permission to donate \$100 to the Reserve Fund. Second prize? Permission to donate \$200 to the Reserve Fund.

Yours in Christ, Loyd Lee

## A NOTE FROM GOD

April 3	Psalm 111	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	I Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
April 10	Psalm 116:10-17	Acts 2:14a, 36-47	I Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
April 17	Psalm 23	Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60	I Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
April 24	Psalm 66:1-11	Acts 17:1-15	I Peter 2:1-10	John 14:1-14



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# APRIL 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Noon AA/NCR  SCA Dance 8-10PM/NCR	2  AA/7PM/CR
3 8AM/HE 9AM Parish Break- fast/HE/10AM 1PM Santa Misa  7PM AA/NCR	4 Noon AA/NCR  Capella Festiva Rehearsal/NCR	5 10AM/MP Noon AA/NCR  7:30 PM Dance Rehearsal/NCR	6  Lindy Hoop 7- 9:30PM/NCR  AA/7PM/PH	7 Noon AA/NCR Choir 7:30pm/ NCR	8 Noon AA/NCR SCA Dance 8-10PM/NCR	9  AA 7PM/NCR
10 8AM/HE 10AM/HE1PM Santa Misa Fiesta de Guadalupe  7PM AA/NCR	11 Noon AA/ NCR  7:30pm-Property Com. Mtg./LMR  Capella Festiva Rehearsal/NCR	12 10AM/MP Noon AA/NCR  7:30PM Vestry/ LMR  7:30 PM Dance Rehearsal/NCR	13  Lindy Hoop 7- 9:30PM/NCR  AA/7PM/PH	14 Noon AA/ NCR Choir 7:30pm/ NCR	15 Noon AA/NCR  SCA Dance 8-10PM/NCR	16  Vocal Concert 8PM  AA 7PM/CR
17 8AM/HE- 10AM/HE 1pm Santa Misa  "The Courier" Deadline  AA7PM/NCR	18 Noon AA/NCR  Capella Festiva Rehearsal/NCR	19 10AM/ MP Noon AA/NCR  7:30 PM Dance Rehearsal/NCR	20  Lindy Hoop 7- 9:30PM/NCR	21 Noon AA/ NCR  7PM	22 Noon AA/NCR  SCA Dance 8-10PM/NCR	23  AA 7PM/NCR
24 8AM/HE 10AM/HE 1PM Santa Misa  AA -7PM/NCR	25 Noon AA/NCR  Capella Festiva Rehearsal/NCR	26 10AM/MP Noon AA/NCR  7:30 PM Dance Rehearsal/NCR	27  Lindy Hoop 7- 9:30PM/NCR  AA/7PM/PH	28 Noon AA/NCR  Choir 7:30pm/ NCR	29 Noon AA/NCR  3:30pm-7pm Recital/Rathbun  SCA Dance 8-10PM/NCR	30  AA 7PM/NCR

**HE—Holy Eucharist**  
**MP—Morning Prayer**  
**LMR- Lay Ministry Room**  
**NCR - Newton Community Room**  
**PH—Parish House**

## **Christ Episcopal Church**

We provide a spiritual home for a diverse community of people, united in the Eucharist, respectful of history and tradition, and actively engaged in Christ's ministry for today's world. We invite you to join us!

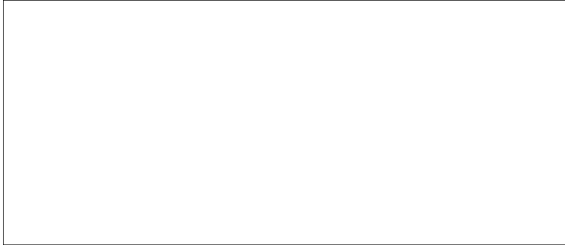
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**April Prayer Cycle**

In order to give emphasis to our ministry to one another, we have a Parish Prayer Cycle. Each parishioner or family is prayed for on a particular day. Here is the list of names to be kept in our prayers for each day during the month of April.

1. Michael & Karla Friedle and Alice
2. Elizabeth Frost
3. Laura Gamache and Logan & Weaver
4. Gail Gardner
5. Emogene Gates
6. Michael & Phyllis George
7. Pres & Shari Gifford
8. Regina Givler
9. Lillian Goldsbury
10. George & Sandra Goloway
11. H. Turner Graham
12. Jeffrey & Elizabeth Graham
13. Michael & Clare Graham
14. Hal & Dcn. Mary Gregorius and Adam & Jason

15. Mark & Nancy Griffin
16. Doris Kest
17. Anthony & Jennifer Hammond-King and Emily, Ryan, & David
18. Peggy Kraft and Johanna
19. Bill Lang
20. Ann Lawson
21. Loyd & Cynthia Lee
22. Leonard & Dorothy Lewis
23. Steve & Patricia Lichtenberg
24. Ruth Little
25. Mary Lou Logan
26. Betty Long
27. David Lumb
28. Robert Lumb

29. Ed & Carol Lundergan
  30. Larry & May Mamiya
- Almighty God, look with favor on our brothers and sisters of this parish, especially (names). Strengthen them in their journey of faith, fill them with compassion for one another, and give them an awareness of your loving care, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*