From the Desk of the Priest

This letter has been adapted from the Letter from the Rector included in the 2019 Annual Meeting Report.

Dear Christ Church family:

“Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with a cry of joy.” (Psalm 47)

What would it be like in our worship services if at certain points we decided to … clap? How do you think you’d react if you heard a particularly powerful hymn, or a sermon that resonated especially deeply within you, or a prayer that struck you in a new way … and felt led to put your hands together?

It’s an unusual thing to consider. Speaking only for me, clapping isn’t something that has traditionally been part of the Episcopal tradition I’ve experienced in my life. In some respects it’s like the instructions a judge gives to a courtroom full of people before a verdict is announced: there will be no outbursts allowed from those in attendance. No matter how good the service may be, don’t clap; that sort of thing just isn’t done.

Well, I’m here to tell you that we can and should clap; after all; it was mandated by the Psalmist. In fact, we’re called to clap and shout. (Yes, I’m even saying that it’s okay in our Sunday morning services.) If the Spirit moves you to live out the words of Psalm 47, then do it. But in this particular letter, I want to throw out some applause lines that I hope inspire you to clap and cry with joy.

- For the first time since the church was built in 1832, we have handicapped-accessible restrooms. It took us a long time to get to this point, with conversations on it having started many years before I arrived – but finally, they are here. We can now be more welcoming, especially to those for whom climbing the stairs into the tower or squeezing into the tiny restroom in the downstairs of the Parish House would be too difficult. We also can make ourselves available as a site for more events or as a place to which the community can turn when space is needed.

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Christ Church, Millwood—Cunningham Chapel Parish

Sunday Schedule:
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (no music)
9:00 a.m. Adult Forum, Parish House
10:30 a.m. Worship (with music)

   Holy Eucharist on 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays
   Morning Prayer on 2nd & 4th Sundays

Nursery is available each week during the
10:30 a.m. service.

We worship at Old Chapel at 6:00 a.m. on
Easter Day and at 10:30 a.m. on the second
Sunday in September.

Staff:
Rector                   The Very Rev. Matt Rhodes
Email: priest@cunninghamchapel.org
            (cell) 703-581-9500
Intern       Melanie Lewis
Organist     Carol Westervelt
Parish Administrator Juanita Smith
Sexton       Sylvester H. Brisco, Jr.

Parish Vestry (year term expires):
Linda Armbrust (2022)
Bob Cullen (2021)
Cathy Frederickson (2022)
Maisie Maguire (2020)
Amy Moore (2020)
Matt Peterson (2020)
Pat Robinson (2021)
Luke Wence (2021)
George Williams (2022)
Treasurer: Matt Peterson
Sacristan: Terry Chandler

Contact:
Christ Church, Millwood
809 Bishop Meade Rd., Millwood, VA 22646
Phone: (540) 837-1112
christchurch@cunninghamchapel.org
www.cunninghamchapel.org

Facebook: Christ Church Millwood
Twitter: @CCMillwoodVA
Instagram: @christchurchmillwood

Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 153
Millwood, VA 22646

Next Vestry Meeting
February 9
at 11:45 am

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

We are now well into winter, and as such it is a good time to remind everyone of our parish’s severe weather policy (applicable during this season and throughout the year). Should our area be exposed to severe weather at any point, notices about changes to the schedule of events at the church (weekly services, office hours, rehearsals, etc.) will be sent out by email and telephone, posted on our Facebook page and website, and recorded on the office answering machine. We will strive whenever possible to provide notice of schedule changes as far in advance as possible. Above all, please remember that even if the church is open during severe weather you are urged to exercise caution when making choices on whether to venture out on the roads.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW VESTRY MEMBERS!

At the annual parish meeting on Sunday, November 24 Linda Armbrust, Cathy Frederickson and George Williams were unanimously elected to three-year terms on the Vestry (class of 2022). We are grateful for their willingness to stand for election and desire to serve the church in these leadership roles.

We also wish to extend our deepest thanks to Senior Warden Chuck Roberts, Junior Warden Lisa Goshen, and Stephanie McKay, who completed their Vestry terms in December. Their insights, expertise, commitment and love have been extremely valuable to the care and work of this parish, and we are truly grateful for their work.
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY ADULT FORUMS

Our 2019-2020 adult forum series, “From Alpha to Omega,” continues in January and February with two intriguing offerings. We hope you will join us each Sunday morning at 9:00 in the Parish House for these always fascinating discussions!

The Challenge of Ethics (January 5-26)
Much of what we do is informed by our religious beliefs, but how do ethical beliefs factor into the decisions made by us and others? This four-week series will take a broad look at the topic of ethics and include discussions of basic case studies of religious and medical ethics as we explore this complex, important area.

The Dawn of the Church (February 2-23)
How did early Christians worship? What did liturgy in the 2nd and 3rd centuries look like in comparison to today’s services? These and other questions will be explored in this series on the look at the beginnings of the church and liturgical life in the first centuries following the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Dear Operation Christmas Child Project Leaders,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for your dedication to Operation Christmas Child and for a wonderful SEASON OF SHOE BOXES! This year the 2 tractor trailer trucks that were collecting our shoe boxes were not quite big enough to hold all of the cartons we had! Many of your churches and organizations increased your shoe box giving this year, and we had several new churches and community groups that participated for the first time - PRAISE GOD! There were 11,066 shoe boxes collected at our Loudoun Collection center! Remember, Samaritan's Purse estimates that each shoe box is a Gospel opportunity for about 7 people to hear the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS' LOVE. So, the boxes that came from our area of Virginia may reach over 77,000 people with gospel opportunities!

Thank you again for all of your hard work. Hope you have a Christmas that is blessed by the presence of Jesus in your own life.

Jennifer Colsey
Loudoun OCC Church Relations
Thanks to the support of a record number of wonderful and enthusiastic volunteers, the community meal we hosted at the Boyce Fire Hall on Tuesday, October 22 (our first!) was a tremendous success! While guest turnout was a bit lighter than the previous month (due perhaps to the weather as well as anticipation for game one of the World Series), the dinner was well received and everyone (our 58 guests and many volunteers alike) were very happy. This was yet another example of our church family extending the hands and heart of Christ to our neighbors, and we look forward to continuing this new tradition of service to the local community.
FOOD PANTRY CONCLUDES ANOTHER YEAR OF SERVICE

With the completion of our December food pantry service we ended another year as a welcoming place of support, love and encouragement for our neighbors. We are grateful to everyone who supported the pantry in 2019 through their gifts of time, food donations and financial support. The difference we continue to be able to make in the lives of our neighbors is enormous, and we look forward now to seeing what the New Year will enable us to do. How far will we go? Let’s find out!
CHRIST CHURCH WATTS NIGHT – SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

Christ Church is continuing its service to the wider community by again participating in the Berryville WATTS Week at the Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds. This year, our parish is signed up for the evening of Sunday, January 19, during which we will provide companionship and support for those transported from Winchester to stay that night. This year we are pleased to partner with our neighbors at Berryville Baptist Church in providing this important support on our assigned night.

We are thankful for the many volunteers who have already signed up to assist that evening, but more are always most welcomed! For our shift, we can use your help with the following tasks:

- Preparation of the dinner and next day’s breakfast, including fixings for bag lunches, snacks and desserts
- Serving dinner, cleaning up and other help as needed (6:00-8:30 p.m.)
  - Guest intake, registration and greeting (6:30-8:00)
- Social activities, and snacks (8:00-10:00 p.m.)
- Serving breakfast and cleanup Monday morning (5:30-7:30 a.m.)

WATTS is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides a safe, temporary, overnight, cold-weather shelter for homeless guests at host sites in Winchester, Frederick and Clarke Counties. It is one of our church’s most important outreach opportunities, and you are encouraged to consider signing up for one of these volunteer responsibilities.

For more information or to volunteer for a particular slot, please email Matt+ at priest@cunninghamchapel.org.

CHRIST CHURCH: IMPACTING LIVES AROUND THE WORLD

A tremendous “thank you” goes to everyone who supported Waves of Health during our recent drive to provide them with gently-used shoes. As you’ll recall, Luke Wence first notified us about this program after learning of it from his cousin, who works with the organization. The Waves team visits developing communities in the Dominican Republic and Uganda to provide free medical and pharmacy care to those in need. During their work overseas, they discovered that a majority of those seeking care walk unbelievable distances, often going barefoot or wearing very old and worn shoes. As a sign of your tremendous generosity, Luke has informed us that he had to empty the large box that had been placed in the narthex four times – and that’s not including other bags that had been dropped off as well. Once again you are making a tremendous difference in the lives of others!
CLARKE COUNTY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION
2020 PULPIT SWAP

Continuing a long tradition, the member churches of the Clarke County Ministerial Association – including Christ Church – are again holding their annual pulpit swap. This year’s swap will take place on Sunday, January 26. On that day, Matt+ will serve as guest preacher at the 11:15 a.m. service at Crums United Methodist Church and Pastor Delbert Pope from St. Luke’s Baptist Church will be our guest preacher at the 10:30 a.m. service. The Sunday service schedule will be unchanged; Matt+ will celebrate and preach at the 8:00 a.m. Eucharist, and the later service will be the regularly-scheduled time of Morning Prayer. Following the morning services, the community is invited to gather at the John Enders Fire Hall in Berryville at 12:30 p.m. for a pot-luck luncheon and time of fellowship with our friends and neighbors from throughout the county.

The pulpit swap is a wonderful ecumenical tradition, and it allows parishes throughout the county to learn a bit about their church neighbors and their faith traditions through the preaching of guest ministers. Mark your calendars now and come out to hear the Word proclaimed by one of our area’s outstanding ministers.

POWHATAN AND THE PANTRY

On Wednesday morning, December 18 nearly 25 fifth grade students from Powhatan School along with members of the faculty and staff arrived at the front door of the food pantry to deliver a carload of items for our shelves. In the continuation of a long tradition, the fifth grade each year conducts a food drive in the autumn and dedicates it to the support of our clients and neighbors. The energy and enthusiasm displayed in their delivering the food by “human chain” from car to shelves was infectious, and they listened carefully and asked thoughtful questions as they learned just how important their contributions are in supporting those in need. The next time you see a member of the staff from Powhatan or one of their students, give them a big “thank you!”
A Perspective on the Annual Convention

I had the good fortune of joining Matt Rhodes and Melanie Lewis as your delegate to the Diocese of Virginia’s 225th Annual Convention several weeks ago in Arlington. Matt asked that I share a few observations with you.

As you may have read in a recent diocesan summary of the meeting, about 450 priests, deacons and lay members attended. With 190 parishes, our diocese is the largest in the nation.

Bishop Susan Goff announced that the election of the 14th Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia will take place in 2020. She plans to retire in 2023.

The convention had plenary and breakout sessions. Some were quite lively including elections to diocesan committees. Most had large slates of candidates and required multiple ballots. There was also vigorous debate over the budget and discussion of additional projects the Diocese could pursue if more churches tithed. Christ Church Millwood gives 8.1% of our revenue to the Diocese.

The Annual Convention was not all business. There were evening social affairs where delegates from all over the Diocese renewed friendships. The convention took time out from its large agenda for the attendees to join one another in a lovely celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

At the breaks between sessions, refreshments were available in the vendor area where small booths sold moderately priced goods. There were clothing, simple jewelry, quilts and Christmas ornaments made by parishioners in Africa and Mexico. Traditional clerical collars, shirts and robes were displayed by Almy. Colorful stoles, some handmade, were available from a variety of sources. The new St. Phoebe School for Deacons, Shrine Mont, and other Episcopal organizations introduced themselves and handed out literature at their booths.

The most intriguing part of the Annual Convention, however, was the introduction of our new Assistant Bishop, Jennifer Brooke-Davidson. She was outgoing and enthusiastic. With her charisma and self-effacing humor she soon owned the room. Bishop Jennifer came to us from the Diocese of West Texas where she was its first woman Bishop Suffragan. According to the West Texas Diocese website, for her ordination as Bishop Suffragan by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, she requested that the reception be “the best church picnic ever”.

(Continued on page 9)
Musical Notes for the New Year

Thank you to all the musicians who shared their talents this past Advent and Christmas seasons. Thank you to the choir and the handbell choir - you all worked hard for many hours preparing. Thank you to Russ McKelway for the wonderful piano music on Christmas Eve. Enjoy our brief rest before we begin preparing for Lent and Easter!

The 2020 Concert Series will include a performance by Moon Music, a trio led by Jim Moon, a musician I met last summer at Church Music Institute last summer. Their business card lists: "original arrangements; piano, guitar and percussion; 3-part harmonies smooth as silk." We are still working on finalizing a date for this performance, but this should be a most enjoyable way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

Broken record time - there is still room for YOU in either or both choirs. No audition required. We will welcome you with open arms! The hand bell choir rehearses after the late service each Sunday (no extra trip to church) and the singing choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:30. Try us. You'll like us.

Carol Westervelt
Organist/Handbell Choir Director
A CHRISTMAS ALBUM

Some pictures from around the church taken during the week of Christmas...

May you have a blessed and healthy 2020!
Our nursery has become an important part of our Sunday morning worship, with several families using it during the weekly 10:30 service. I'm grateful that our youngest parishioners have a place to call their own during the first part of worship and are still able to join their families at the altar rail during the Eucharist.

We have continued strong attendance at our Sunday adult forums. Regardless of the topic of discussion, book being read, or scripture being studied, the desire to learn and share in this time is incredible and solid.

Our outreach continues to be strong, with many neighbors in our community served through the generosity of many and with the help of many members of this congregation and other friends in the area. It was another strong year for the Christ Church Cares Pantry, we’re continuing to provide snacks for students at Boyce Elementary School, and the inaugural year of our shoes for schoolchildren program ensured that 52 boys and girls had new shoes when they went back to school.

New faces continue to join us on Sunday mornings. From people seeking a new church home to those simply passing through and wanting to join us for a single service, people are walking through the doors of the church. I have no doubt that while it’s curiosity that brings them through the door, it’s your tremendous love of neighbor and the warm welcome you offer that keeps them coming back.

What started as a simple experiment to see whether it would work – using Facebook to live-stream Morning Prayer during a snowstorm at the beginning of the year – has led to a regular Friday evening service when folks come together to share 10 minutes or so praying Compline. It has become a regular worship event for a number of people and allows friends of Christ Church who live far away to still be part of our worship life.

We continue to be drawn to this sacred place to celebrate life in all its liturgical forms and in its many seasons. This community draws together to celebrate the moments of joy, and our members sustain one another and provide strength in the moments of sorrow.

There are many other things that have taken place during the past year. I think the biggest applause line, though, is rooted in one thing: you are here! God is the basis of our faith and Jesus is the foundation of the Church, but things can only continue to work because you are here … and involved … and enthusiastic … and creative. The list of names of all those who do so much here – in worship, and music, and outreach, and operations, and prayer, and in being a beacon for the world – is joyfully long. For that, I am thankful and the community is blessed.

There are many moving parts to keeping our worship, outreach and basic operations going, and none of them would move if you weren’t here and committed to this beautiful, sacred and important place. So I’ll end with that as my applause line for you. Whenever two or three are gathered together, Jesus tells us, he will be in the midst of them. As your Rector, I’m honored to see that whenever two or three are gathered together, great things can be (and are … and will be!) accomplished.

And for that, I will clap my hands and shout to God!

Blessings,
Matt+

Thank you to those who generously shared the photographs included in this newsletter: Bre Bogert; Connie Cermak; Wendy Clatterbuck; Deanna Johnson; The Very Rev. Matt Rhodes.
Love is patient. Love is kind.
It does not envy. It does not boast.
It does not dishonor others.
It is not self-seeking.
It is not easily angered.
It keeps no record of wrongs.
Love does not delight in evil.
But rejoices with the truth.
It always protects. Always trusts. Always hopes. Always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7