

News From The Good Shepherd



For my article this month, I am sharing a recent message from The Most Rev. Sean Rowe, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church -- Fr. Lance

Dear people of God in The Episcopal Church:

Like Jesus, we live in frightening times. His earthly ministry began . . . when John the Baptist was imprisoned by authorities who wanted to silence his preaching and prophesying. Jesus knew what happens when earthly powers persuade human beings to fear one another, regard one another as strangers, and believe that there is not enough to go around. In Jesus' time, the power of these divisions motivated John's beheading and Jesus' own death on the cross at the hands of Roman authorities. In our time, the deadly power of those divisions is on display on the streets of Minneapolis, in other places across the United States, and in other countries around the world. As has too often been the case throughout history, the most vulnerable among us are bearing the burden, shouldering the greatest share of risk and loss, and enduring the violation of their very humanity.

But we do not grieve without hope. The Christian story is full of people who lived in frightening and brutal times, and who followed Jesus' call. . . . His proclamation turns us away from the fear born of sin and death and toward the kingdom of God, toward Christ's ministry of justice, reconciliation, and love. "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view," the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 5:16), exhorting them to reject the divisions of their time in favor of being ambassadors for Christ.

This is God's call to The Episcopal Church now, and it is not an easy one. In the United States, we no longer live in a time when we can expect to practice our faith without risk, and we are confronting what vulnerable communities of faith have experienced for generations. Our right to worship freely as one church, committed to the dignity of every human being, has been curtailed by the fear that too many immigrant Christians face when they leave their homes. Peaceful protests, a right long enshrined in the Constitution, are now made deadly. Carrying out the simple commands of Jesus—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, making peace—now involves risks for the church and grave danger for those we serve. As Christians, we must acknowledge that this chaos and division is not of God, and we must commit ourselves to paying whatever price our witness requires of us.

In the coming years, our church will continue to be tested in every conceivable way as we insist that death and despair do not have the last word, and as we stand with immigrants and the most vulnerable among us who reside at the heart of God. We will be required to hold fast to God's promise to make all things new, because our call to follow God's law surpasses any earthly power or principality that might seek to silence our witness.

To those of you who are in the center of the storm, please know that I am praying for you as you embody the love of Christ in your ministries and communities. To those of you who are watching with concern and fear, I ask you to pray for those who have died in protests and detention, for those who witnessed their deaths, and for everyone who bears authority and responsibility in this moment, that they may exercise wisdom, restraint, and courage. Pray too, especially in the days to come, for the witness of our church in these times and for a hedge of protection around all the beloved children of God who live in fear this day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Rowe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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GOOD SHEPHERD VESTRY

By John Trompeter, Senior Warden

The annual Good Shepherd Vestry meeting was held on Sunday January 18 following the 10:15 service.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

Opening Prayer – Fr. Lance

Welcome – Parish Attendees

Review of December Minutes

Old Business

New Business – Election of New Vestry Members, Vestry Secretary, Delegate to Convention

Sexton Report – Fr. Lance

Finance Report – Dick Robinson

Meeting adjourned by closing prayer

Minutes:

Minutes from December were reviewed. Kris M. moved that the Vestry accept the minutes Dawn seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.

Sexton's Report for 2025 was reviewed and accepted with thanks to Chris Nuccelli and Tom Yourch. Copies of this report were available to parish members attending the annual meeting. Copy of this report will be included with the minutes.

Finance Report for 2025 was reviewed by Dick Robinson and copies of this report were made available to all attendees and a copy of this report is included with the minutes. Dick and the Vestry reviewed a number of questions from parish members that included how to access funds for a particular committee function, the purpose of Outreach and how money is spent for Outreach. Additionally, questions regarding raises for parish staff was also discussed. All questions were reviewed by Dick and other Vestry members. The budget for 2026 is essentially the same as last year however significant increases in utilities, health insurance has occurred. In summary the money pledged for 2026 did not allow for pay raises this year. People are encouraged to pledge even a small amount as it can make a difference.

Election of New Vestry Members and delegate to convention:

Fa Lance presented to the parish new Vestry members for 2026 to include the following individuals: Beth Wisley, Gary Gailor, Gary Richardson, Ed Kushall. Dawn Wilkins will serve as Junior Warden and John Trompeter as Senior Warden for 2026. Maggie Markham as clerk.

Election of delegate to the convention: Jeannie Coonan agreed to be a delegate.

Fr. Lance presented Kathy Stokes with a gift from the parish for her devotion to the parish and her outstanding leadership as Senior Warden. A special thanks to Annie Bishop, Kris Murray, Tom Yourch who have served on Vestry for the past 3 years. Meeting was adjourned by Fr. Lance with a closing prayer.

As Senior Warden I look forward to 2026 as we all celebrate the gifts of each other each week at Good Shepherd. Stay warm.

The Blizzard of 2026 at Meal & More

by Debra Nelson



Chef Julie Zapata and her daughter Ysabel went to work early on Saturday January 24 – a whole day early – to prepare the bagged lunches and takeout meals for Meal & More, Inc. to serve during the blizzard on January 25th.

I am thrilled to share that we had another fantastic meal service at Meal & More! Despite the frigid temperatures and the blowing blizzard, we managed to feed and warm up 34 guests during the blizzard on January 25. What a heartwarming achievement!

A big shoutout to Julie and Ysabel Zapata for preparing a delicious spaghetti and meatball meal along with 15 bagged lunches on Saturday in preparation for the blizzard hitting Rochester the following day. President Chris Nuccitelli had sent an email for volunteers to use “their discretion” in traveling into the city to serve our guests. Chris recommended we watch the weather carefully to decide if we should close or not despite the fact historically we had closed only once in 47 years! Wisely, some volunteers stayed home – safe and sound. But others, living both near and far, that felt comfortable traveling stepped up to meet the challenge.

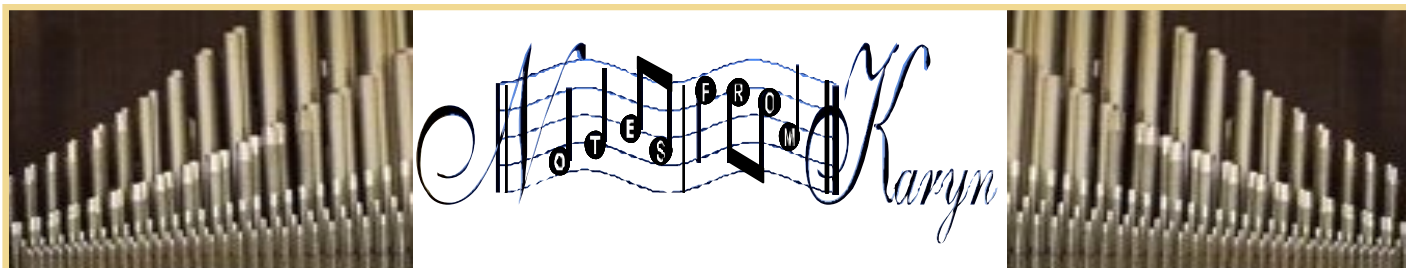
Sunday, Cordero Rivera did an excellent job boxing up 34 meals! Jeff Sommers, Diane Babcock, Rob Ferris, and our dedicated Group Leader and Board Member Bill Soleim served all the meals with great care. Brad Hurst contributed by greeting and directing our guests to today’s change in routine, handing out the 15 bagged lunches, ensuring everyone had plenty to take away. It was wonderful to see our guests enjoying their takeout meals in the dining room, accompanied by hot coffee to keep them warm. Betty tackled the dishes and managed to get them all done, even though the hot water heater was slow to heat up.

I’m pleased to report that everyone made it home safely, with Jeff driving the farthest distance to Canandaigua. Jeff mentioned it was a “slow go on snow-covered roads,” but it turns out his school district gets a snow day tomorrow – what a silver lining! The commitment of Meal & More’s Staff and Volunteers ensures that we continue to make a positive impact on our community.



An Invitation to a Holy Lent

Our Good Shepherd/ Zion book group resumes next Thursday at 7pm as we begin our joint Lenten study. Fr. Lance has copies of the book for anyone interested in joining us. This year’s study is called Living Well Through Lent and features short, daily reflections accompanied by some reflection questions. We will gather every Thursday during Lent at 7pm. Here is the zoom link:



*“Manifest on mountain height, shining in resplendent light.
Where disciples filled with awe thy transfigured glory saw”
Hymn 135 v. 3*

We enter February in the middle of the Epiphany season. On February 15th we celebrate Transfiguration Sunday. Jesus took some of the disciples to a mountain top where they beheld His glory. We will add brass to the hymn singing that day. The ladies of the choir will sing “Alleluia” based on a canon by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It’s the last Sunday we sing alleluias until Easter morning.

The Wednesday after Transfiguration Sunday is Ash Wednesday. We begin our season of Lent. The choir is preparing a beautiful anthem for Lent simply called “Lenten Mediation.” The text begins:

*“Jesus Christ, my Savior lived for me and died.
Source of my salvation yet was crucified.*

*Peace that knows no measure; this by faith I see.
Love that knows no ending; Jesus died for me.”*

Another anthem for Lent is called “Into the Quiet” by Liam Lawton. Its text is:

*“Into the quiet, God calls you,
Calls you each by name.
Into the quiet, God calls you.
Enter God’s dwelling
God’s love foretelling
On this day of days.”*

May the Forty Days of Lent be a time of meditation and blessing for you. And may the lyrics of our hymns and anthems help you ponder the meaning of these days.

*“Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis”
(Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.)*

MEAL & MORE NEEDS HELP GETTING FREE FOOD

By Debra Nelson

We have some exciting news from Meal & More, Inc.! Our organization receives the food it serves from a variety of generous resources, and we would love some extra help with receiving this free food. If you have any free time early on Wednesdays (long before Bible Study begins! And even for the early risers go into work!), this might be the perfect opportunity for you to get involved to help the food insecure in the city of Rochester (and beyond).

Here's how we get our food, all on Wednesdays:

FOODLINK delivers to Christ Church (Lawn Street entrance) one Wednesday a month, based on the needs of the kitchen. The delivery usually arrives around 9:30 AM, but the schedule is flexible. You would receive a call from our Chef, Julie, by the end of the week before, to set up the time.

WEGMANS (Caulkins Rd.) has volunteers who pick up all our bread and desserts for every week. This happens between 6:00 and 7:00 AM, with delivery to Christ Church immediately thereafter. We already have four volunteers signed up, but we occasionally need substitutes (usually with advance warning). Your name & phone number would be given to them so they can call you to take their place.

SAMARITAN HEART has one dedicated volunteer who goes there every Wednesday to pick up whatever free food they have available. The food is then delivered to Christ Church immediately after pickup. He has missed one day – the day before Thanksgiving this year – because he was traveling. God-willing, it will be a infrequent in the days to come.

HARVEST also provides food on Wednesdays. I need to look into this more! Our Chef, Julie, usually goes because we have to pay \$.40/pound but she could use your help. I would like to give her your name & number so she has a friend to go with her.

If you are interested in any of this positions, please text Debra at 585-261-9570 for more information. These task takes about an hour and a half, starting at 7:00 AM (or earlier) and ending at M&M at Christ Church. It's only once a month and perfect for early birds who want to help M&M. You can complete it before work or before meeting your retired friends for breakfast!

MEAL & MORE WISH LIST

By Debra Nelson

Meal & More has a "Wish List" of items we need – things we use frequently but have no other places providing for us. Please help us by dropping these off in the Narthex. One of our volunteers will bring them to Meal & More for you.

- **Sanitizing wipes**
- **Gift cards**
- **Soup spoons (plastic)**
- **Olive Oil**
- **Apple sauce**
- **Canola Oil**
- **Fruit cups**
- **Onion salt (Trader Joe's)**
- **Shelf-stable yogurt**
- **Apple juice**
- **Andes candies chocolate**
- **Capri Sun (any juice packs)**

Please continue to bring these items from the grocery list to the Narthex at Good Shepherd. If you would like to visit or volunteer at Meal & More on a Wednesday or Sunday, please let me know. We can accommodate a group with some people to volunteer and/or some to enjoy visiting with the guests and having lunch (like Bible Study or any other group of friends). Thank you for all your contributions each week to the pantry; they make a big difference!

Looking forward to seeing you and working together to serve our community.





Invite • Welcome • Connect

*A Prayer for Welcoming Hearts
Submitted by Dawn Wilkins*

Gracious and Loving God

***You have welcomed each of us with mercy, with patience, and with joy.
Open our hearts so that we may extend that same welcome to all who enter this place.***

Remove from us any spirit of hesitation or judgment.

***Give us eyes to see strangers as neighbors,
Ears to listen with compassion,
And voices that speak warmth and encouragement.***

Fill this community with a spirit of hospitality -

***Not only at our doors, but in our conversations,
Our ministries, and the quiet moments when one kind gesture
Can change a life.***

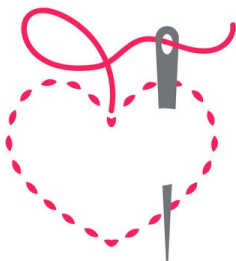
May every visitor feel seen, valued, and embraced.

***May our fellowship reflect the boundless love of Christ,
Who calls us to make room at the table for all.***

***Guide us to be a church where welcome is not just spoken,
But lived - boldly, joyfully, and generously.***

Amen.

Sound familiar? It may as it is now being prayed as part of the Prayers of the People most weeks. Our thanks to our deacon, Roch Whitman, for writing this lovely prayer. Why this prayer? Good question! It is a reminder to each and every one of us that God has called ALL to be that welcoming presence. Several have noted and reflected on how these words have touched them. May they touch all of us. They could even become a part of our daily prayer life. Personally, I am trying to replace the plural pronouns with singular and pray how "I" can do better each day as I go about my day.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD STITCHERS

by Maggie Markham

We will meet the 2nd and 3rd Thursdays. Feb. 12th and 19th. We are currently making shirt savers for nursing home patients and finishing fleece blankets for Bivona, the children's advocacy home. I have been busy making Prayer pockets. If anyone is interested in helping with this project I would love to have your help.

A Special Day at Meal & More, Inc.

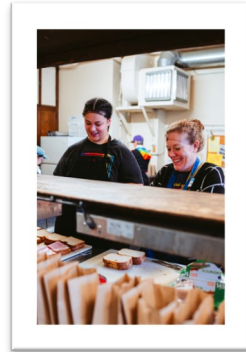
by Debra Nelson

It is always a special day at Meal & More, Inc. but January 14th was extra special, when our volunteer team was the Diocesan Staff! The dedicated staff that serves our diocese was supporting our Bishop with community outreach on this special day. Missing in any photo is Sarah Butler Herzog who is the Diocesan Executive Administrator and the photographer that took all these wonderful pictures!



As you approach Christ Church, off Lawn Street, Rochester, you will see this sign! You have arrived at Meal & More, Inc.

This is Rev. Annie Jones, Director of Formation, with Ysabel Zapata. They are preparing sandwiches for bagged lunches. We make about 25 sandwiches every day.



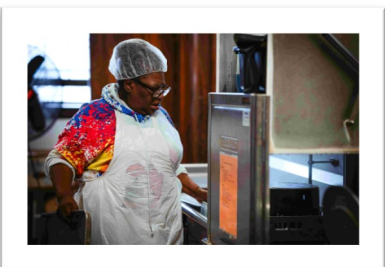
25 bag lunches are given to the working poor, so they have something to eat during their lunch break.

Chef Julie Zapata, Bishop Kara, and Steve Richards (in the background) are wrapping the burritos that will be served for dinner in the dining room. Also, 30 takeout lunches including burritos, cookies, fruit or yogurt and a drink will be boxed and bagged for those who pick up their meal and take it home.



Three Board members to help the Diocesan staff master our M&M routine: Debra Buttler Nelson, Carolyn Mok, and Andrea Stridiron. We also learned what a great sense of humor Steve Richards (Director of Community Engagement) brings with him wherever he goes!

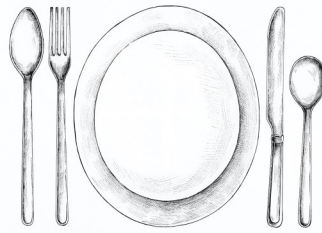
Rev. Julianne Buenting, Acting Director of Ministry, and previous interim rector at Christ Church, was instrumental in rallying the troops to help us on January 14th – and in encouraging the Episcopal Church Women (a nationwide organization) to donate \$1000 to our ministry in October.



This is Betty Rivers, who lives right in the Christ Church neighborhood, and serves as our Dishwasher.

This is the whole gang! In the back row, on the far left side, is Will Ingle who is the Director of Finance and Administration for the Diocese, and Brad Hurst, M&M Security Officer, far right.





MEAL MINISTRY

by Debra Nelson

In the last year or so, most of our parish family members who have fallen ill, needed surgery, or have lost a loved one that provided meals and life skill help, have found other resources to fulfill their needs. For example, Wegmans has almost-home-cooked meals, Restaurants and Door Dash deliver, Uber services and WASP provide rides, and friends within or outside our church have been fantastic resources. We have several friends who drive friends to our parish meetings, church services, and ministries. I purposely left out “family members” because I know how over-taxed some of them are – they cannot do everything – they are providing the framework for life to continue as close to normal as possible – and many juggling jobs, kids, etc. at the same time. We understand that completely. Meal Ministry has traditionally served meals on a short-term basis or sporadic basis when that is needed. They still do. We refer our friends to Meals on Wheels or any on-line meal programs that suit their needs if they need help for four weeks or more. But please remember we are here to help you “in the meantime” between life changes. Call Debra at (585) 261-9570 and I will call my FANTASTIC COOKS to help you cover that bridge between emergency and a new lifestyle.

Anna Robbins
Nancy Zurell
Chris Nuccitelli
Chris Ensign
Susan Marren
Marie Cline-Lynam
Barbara Fornalik
Ralph Hill
Bev Strohm
Tom Wawrzycki
Cheryl White
Peter Marr
Cathy Switzer
Paul Maier
Carol Wawrzycki
Kylie Dennison
Sadie Ensign
Raelin Lorenzo
Mary Ann Packer
Debra Semmler
Peter Mason

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