ST. CHRISTOPHER BY THE RIVER

DECEMBER 2025-JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

We continue to make good progress in the search for the next Rector. This endeavor is governed by canon law under the guidance and supervision of the Diocese. The search committee has completed its work in identifying a suitable candidate. The report of the search committee was submitted to the Vestry November 23, 2025 and the Vestry approved the report and recommendation of the search committee. That phase of the process typically, and in our case as well, takes the longest amount of time.

With a candidate approved by the Vestry, there are several more steps that must now be completed. First among those is the preparation and negotiation between St. Christopher by the River and the candidate of a Letter of Agreement, which constitutes an employment contract for the candidate to fill the position of Priest-in-Charge. The drafting and the negotiation with the candidate is ongoing right now. When the candidate and the Vestry have approved the agreement, it will then go to the Bishop for her approval.

The next step after that takes a couple of months in order to arrange for the necessary announcements related to the candidate's new calling, with sufficient time to advise the candidate's current parish of the new position and to give the candidate time to prepare for the candidate's new role.

As Priest-in-Charge the individual will assume all the responsibilities and functions of a Rector under an employment agreement that typically lasts between one and three years. This time as Priest-in-Charge, with the hope and intent that the individual ultimately will be named as Rector, gives all parties, the Priest-in-Charge and the Parish, as well as the Bishop, adequate time to determine if this relationship works well for all concerned. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, the individual will then be named as our Rector, a position that generally lasts for many, many years.

As you can see from the complexity of the process and the long-term commitments ultimately made by all parties, it takes many months to identify, select, and engage an individual to be the next Rector. Please express your thanks to the search committee and to the Vestry for all of the work that has been put forth so far to accomplish this most important mission.

John R. Lunn, M.D.

1 Danny Broome
4 Stephen Miscko
7 Presley Lammers
8 Avery Alatis
Rosalie Della Ratta
8 Victoria Vary
9 Irene McMullen
Luci Spring
11 Morrie Everett
14 Emily Morris
17 Keri Osolin
19 Neal Lee
20 Linda Ventimiglia
22 Clara Butler
Olivia Mlakar
23 Marilyn Fisher
25 JESUS 😊

3 Rik Bole
Griffin Butler
Tony Lammers
5 Margaret Douglas
7 Becky Everett
11 Jim Pender
15 Lucy Radis
22 Chandler Everett
23 Mary Wick Bole
25 Brian Murphy
30 Peggy Reda

Financial Overview and Pledge Discussions

- Rick Hamilton provides a financial update, noting that total revenue for September is under budget, with year-to-date revenue at $270,000.
- The budget for the year is $295,000, and current pledges total $185,585, with a budget for non-pledged income of $220,000.
- Rick discusses the timing of pledge receipts, noting that most come in the fourth quarter, and suggests adjusting the monthly budget to reflect this.
- Charlene Currutt suggests creating a scrapbook documenting her project expenses and contributions, which could be used to thank donors and explain the use of funds.

Project Updates and Contractor Discounts

- Charlene Currutt shares a story about an Amish contractor who provided significant discounts and additional materials for repairs at the rectory.
- The contractor used old wood from the rectory's rafters for repairs, demonstrating resourcefulness and cost-saving measures.
- Charlene also mentions a squirrel problem in a tree near the church, which needs to be addressed before winter to prevent damage.
- Rick Hamilton agrees to contact the Amish contractor about the tree issue and to provide his contact information to Charlene.

Basement Cleaning and Renovation

- Charlene Currutt describes the extensive cleaning and renovation work done in the church basement, including the removal of old concrete and river stone.
- The basement was cleaned using environmentally friendly products, and the walls were scrubbed by hand due to the risk of damaging the stone.
- Charlene mentions that the basement is now spotless and smells great, and she is waiting for a painter to finish some remaining tasks.
- The vestry discusses the possibility of sealing the river stone foundation to protect it from the elements.

Pension Plan and Employee Compensation

- Rick Hamilton explains the diocese's pension plan requirements, noting that the church's plan is non-conforming and may require back payments to employees.
- The vestry discusses the need to update job descriptions and compensation for employees, particularly for Mary Zup, who has been doing significant additional work.
- Judy Holmes suggests increasing Mary's hourly rate, and the vestry agrees to prioritize this issue after addressing the pension plan.
- The vestry also discusses the need to ensure employees are compensated fairly, especially those working more than 1000 hours per year.

Nominating Committee and Vestry Appointments

- The vestry discusses the need to appoint a nominating committee to fill an open class position and to nominate new vestry members for the upcoming annual meeting.
- Hayley Kosmatka, Kitty Thomas, and Charlene Currutt agree to serve on the nominating committee, with Hayley as the chair.
- The vestry considers appointing Linda Sylor and Brian Wright to fill the open class position, with the possibility of asking Richard Radis to step down.
- The vestry also discusses the need to prepare for the annual meeting, including updating the directory and ensuring all necessary documents are in order.

Internal Audit and Gift for Mary Murray

- Rick Hamilton explains the need for an internal audit to satisfy diocese requirements, and the vestry discusses potential volunteers for this task.
- The vestry agrees to find parishioners willing to help with the audit, which involves checking off a list of procedures and confirming compliance.
- The vestry also discusses the need to buy a gift card for Mary Murray to celebrate her 10 years of service, with a budget of $500.
- The vestry agrees to find a suitable gift, either a restaurant gift card or a gift card to the marble room, to thank Mary for her dedication.

Respectfully submitted, John R Irwin, M.D., Sr. Warden and Clerk.

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

Just about there! I think we're definitely ready for a new Rector. The sunporch has been completely painted, including all the window trim. Also new light fixtures in the upstairs hall. And finally, the rotten boards above the sun porch have been replaced!

Charlene Currutt, Junior Warden

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Thank you to all who participated in our St. Luke's Christmas Gift Ingathering. The sleigh is overflowing! Your generosity has provided warmth, comfort, and the love that is emblematic of the season to those who might otherwise not experience Christmas joy. Thank you for sharing!

FLOWER DEDICATIONS NOVEMBER 2025

In loving memory of:

- Howard & Helen Cadiou by Carolyn Miscko
- Beverly, Thomas and Barry Berlin by Betsy Berlin
- In Honor of Harold and Dorothy Oren by Daniel & Courtney Schmidt
- Flowers were given by John & Nancy Irwin in honor of their 22nd wedding Anniversary.

VESTRY NOMINATIONS

In accordance with our parish by-laws I have, with the Vestry's ratification, appointed a Nominating Committee to identify and nominate members of our parish to serve on the Vestry and as Parish Representatives to our Northeast Mission Area Council. Members of this year's Nominating Committee are:

Hayley Kosmatka (chair)	(216) 978-5458
Charlene Currutt	(440) 708-8835
Kitty Thomas	(216) 215-1317
Charley Marston	(216) 870-4533
Becky Everett	(216) 409-2370

The Nominating Committee is required to complete their work by the middle of January. Once I have received their report and slate of nominees, that information will be communicated to the entire parish and posted publicly until the date of our Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 1st, 2026. Thank you for taking your important part in discerning the leadership of our parish. *In Peace, John Irwin, Senior Warden*

VESTRY

Treasurer: Rick Hamilton

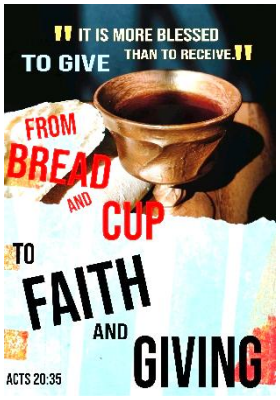
Class of 2025
Judy Holmes
Linda Sylor (replacement for L. Richmond)
Brian Wright (replacement for R. Radis)

Class of 2026
Charlene Currutt (Junior Warden)
John Irwin (Senior Warden/Clerk)
Ron Lee

Class of 2027
Bruce Long
Kitty Thomas
Hayley Kosmatka

NEMAC Representatives
Linda Sylor
Laura Cotton

2026 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN



THANK YOU to all of you who have heeded the call and returned your 2026 Annual Giving pledge cards!

You may cut out the giving card on the next page and send it in or drop it in the Sunday collection if you still would like to pledge.

Alatis, M. Stacey
Anderson, Rev. Mary Sterrett
Batcheller, Mr. Peter & Mrs. Sandra (Sandy)
Beeman, Mr. Richard E.
Bennett, Mr. Lawrence (Larry) & Mrs. Elise C.
Bixler, Mr, Charles F., IV (Chuck) & Mrs. Donna
Bixler, Mrs.Virginia
Blossom, Barbara
Bole, Mr. Richard (Rik) & Mrs. Mary Wick (Mary)
Brachna, Mr. Gabor (Gabe)
Brockett, Mr. Gary & Mrs. Michelle
Burgess, Dr. Margaret & Mr. Jeffrey
Butler, Mr. J. C. & Mrs. Helen Rankin
Cellura, Ms. Lisa
Collister, Mr. Daniel (Dan)
Conley, Ms. Sally K.
Cotton, Miss Laura
Currutt, Mr. Dennis & Mrs. Charlene
Davis, Ms. Barbara Ann
Dickenson, Mr. David, II & Mrs. Frances
Dolch, Mr. Douglas
Everett, Mr. Chandler H. & Mrs. Marsha
Everett, Mr. Chandler P. & Mrs. Rebecca (Becky)
Everett, Mr. Morris (Morrie) & Mrs. Diana
Everett, Ms. Virginia
Fisher, Ms. Marilyn
Gallagher, Mr. James & Mrs. Sara
Gallop, Ms. Susan
Gelbach, Robert
Hamilton, Mr. Richard (Rick) & Mrs. Maria
Holmes, Mr. Peter & Mrs. Judy
Hoyt, Mr. Douglas & Dr. Callum (Cally)
Ianni, Ms. Teri
Ilkanic, Ms. Ellen
Irwin, Dr. John & Mrs. Nancy C.
Kendrick, Ms. Eleanor (Ellie)
Klinginsmith, Michael (Mike) & Dr. Gretchen Fisher
Kosmatka, Dr. Hayley & Smith, Ms. Allison
Langmack, Mr. Clark
Lee, Mr. Ron & Mrs. Cornelia
Liljedahl, Mr. Kurt & Mrs. Mary Anne
Long, Dr. Bruce
Lowe, Ms. Annette
Lytle, Ms. Lucy
Manning, Dr. Robert & Mrs. Lisa Alpers
Marston, Mr. Charles S. (Charley) & Mrs. Susan C.
Marting, Mr. Michael & Mrs. Leslie
Mavec, Mr. Bruce & Mrs. Ellen
McMullen, Mr. Daniel J. & Mrs. Irene H.
Meyers, Mr. Edward (Ed)
Miller, Mrs. Barbara W. (Barb)
Miscko, Mrs. Carolyn E.
Mitchell, Mr. James A. & Mrs. Kathi J.
Morgan, Mr. Dixon, Jr. & Mrs. Claire
Pender, Mr. James (Jim) & Mrs. Katherine (Kathy)
Pesuit, Mr. Craig & Mrs. Barb
Podwoski, Ms. Mary
Rankin, Ms. Alison A.
Sarkisian, Mrs. Francine (Fran)
Schmidt, Mr. Daniel & Mrs. Courtney
Spring, Mr. Bill & Mrs. Luci (Schey)
Stafford, Mr. Jim
Sylor, Mr. Eric
Sylor, Mrs. Linda
Taylor, Mr. Henry & Ms. Hannah Adrian
Thatcher, Mr. Peter B.
Thomas, Mrs. Katherine W. (Kitty)
Van Hoek, Mr. Cornelius J. (CJ) & Mrs. Bradley T.
Ventimiglia, Ms. Linda
Vilas, Ms. Kathleen L. (Kathy)
Warren, Mr. Russell (Russ)
West, Mr. John & Mrs. Gail
Wolf, Mr. David & Mrs. Alison
Zup, Mrs. Mary

VOLUNTEEER OPORTUNITY

Dear St. Christopher's,

Once a year this parish gets together with St. Paul's Episcopal to provide & serve a Holiday dinner in the evening in place of serving lunch. This year the dinner is **Wednesday, December 10, 5:30-7:00**, arriving 15 minutes early to get set up. Good people, good music, and Spirit abound – please join us! There will be carpooling from the church. If you are interested in making a casserole or homemade cookies, please let Neal Lee or me know. *~Deacon Lydia Bailey*

DEACON LYDIA BAILEY HONORED WITH AWARD

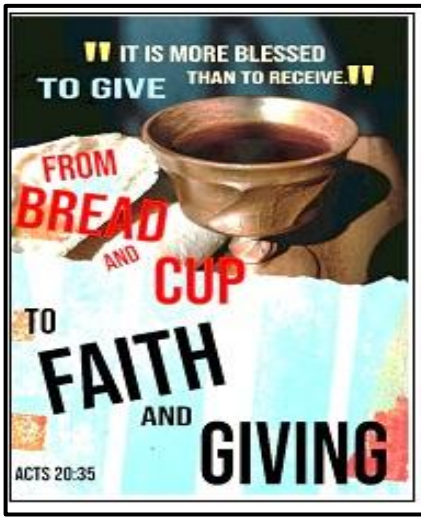
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry Volunteer Coordinator, and Episcopal Deacon, Lydia Bailey was selected as one of Greater Cleveland's High 5 winners of 2024-2025!

Lydia was honored at the annual Celebration of Human Services on November 21 on the campus of Case Western Reserve University. The High 5 Awards highlights contributions of excellence within Cuyahoga County health and social service organizations, recognizing the tireless efforts of those serving in either a staff or volunteer capacity. Celebrating with Lydia at the ceremony were the Episcopal Bishop of Ohio, Rt. Rev. Anne Jolly, as well as Archdeacon Bryan Gillooly.

Lydia is entering her 19th year with LMM and is a highly accomplished photographer along with her incredible work with LMM and never-ending dedication to those the organization serves. With this recognition, Lydia received an award emblem and a $500 prize in appreciation for her dedication.

"There is this deep stream of service, so alive and well at the shelter where I work and throughout Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry," said Lydia. "It's an energizing and humbling thing to be a part of, and I love drawing people from the wider community into this as volunteers. To have this recognized by Center for Community Solutions is gratifying."

Congratulations Lydia on this well-deserved honor!



St. Christopher by-the-River Episcopal Church

2026 Annual Giving Campaign

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." ACTS 20:35

NAME:_____

In support of the ministries at St. Christopher's, and in gratitude for God's gifts, in 2026, I/we plan to give $_____.

Address:_____

_____

Phone:_____

Email:_____

SUNDAY DECEMBER 7 – Fr. Richard Israel			MONDAY - 8	TUESDAY - 9	WEDNESDAY-10	THURSDAY-11	FRIDAY- 12	SATURDAY-13
	8 am Holy Eucharist	**10:15 am Holy Eucharist**						
EM:	Kitty Thomas	John Irwin		9:00 Staff				
LECTOR:	Teri Ianni	Cally Hoyt & Brian Wright						
ALTAR:	Sally Conley	Leslie Marting						
USHERS	NA	Brian Wright & Alison Wolf						
HOSTESSES		Lucy Lytle				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY DECEMBER 14 – Fr. Richard Israel			MONDAY - 15	TUESDAY - 16	WEDNESDAY-17	THURSDAY-18	FRIDAY- 19	SATURDAY-20
	8 am Holy Eucharist	**10:15 am Holy Eucharist**						
EM:	Kitty Thomas	Hayley Kosmatka		**OFFICE CLOSED**				
LECTOR:	Annette Lowe	Fran Sarkisian & Neal Lee						
ALTAR:	Teri Ianni	Linda & Eric Sylor						
USHERS	NA	Ron & Neal Lee						
HOSTESSES		Elise Bennett				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY DECEMBER 21 – Fr. Richard Israel			MONDAY - 22	TUESDAY - 23	WEDNESDAY-24	THURSDAY-25	FRIDAY- 26	SATURDAY-27
	8 am Holy Eucharist	**10:15 am Holy Eucharist**		**OFFICE CLOSED**				
EM:	Charley Marston	Brian Wright			**3:30 Family Vespers**			
LECTOR:	Annette Lowe	Eric Sylor & Chandler Everett			**8:30 Choir**			
ALTAR:	Sue Marston	Lucy Lytle			**9:00 Holy Eucharist**			
USHERS	NA	Leslie Marting & Judy Holmes						
HOSTESSES		Sue Marston				8:00 AA		

Vestry Mtg

SUNDAY DECEMBER 28 – Morning Prayer			MONDAY - 29	TUESDAY - 30	WEDNESDAY-31	THURSDAY-1	FRIDAY- 2	SATURDAY-3
	8 am	**10:15 am**		**OFFICE CLOSED**				
EM:	NO SERVICE	John Irwin						
LECTOR:	NO SERVICE	C. Everett Sr. & James Gallagher						
ALTAR:	Sally Conley	Renee Kolecki						
USHERS	NA	Charlene Currutt & Peter Thatcher						
HOSTESSES		Nancy Irwin				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY JANUARY 4 –			MONDAY - 5	TUESDAY - 6	WEDNESDAY-7	THURSDAY-8	FRIDAY- 9	SATURDAY-10
	8 am Holy Eucharist	**10:15 am Holy Eucharist**		9:00 Staff				
EM:	Kitty Thomas	John Irwin						
LECTOR:	Kathy Pender	Lucy Lytle & Neal Lee						
ALTAR:	Teri Ianni	Neal Lee						
USHERS	NA	Brian Wright & Charlene Currutt						
HOSTESSES		Kathy Pender				8:00 AA		**6-8 PM Fellowship Hall**

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVANTS:

3:30 Ushers : Nancy Irwin & Lucy Lytle
Presiding: John Irwin

Altar Guild: Sue Marston

9:00 Presiding: Canon Rosalind Hughes
EM: John Irwin
Lectors: Chandler Everett Sr., Lucy Lytle
Ushers: Nancy Irwin & Charley Marston

SUNDAY JANUARY 11 --	8 am Holy Eucharist	10:15 am Holy Eucharist	MONDAY - 13	TUESDAY - 14	WEDNESDAY-15	THURSDAY-16	FRIDAY- 17	SATURDAY-18
EM:	Kitty Thomas	Hayley Kosmatka		9:00 Staff				
LECTOR:		Cally Hoyt & Ron Lee						
ALTAR:	Sally Conley	Courtney Schmidt						
USHERS	NA	Ron & Neal Lee						
HOSTESSES		Elise Bennett				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY JANUARY 18 --	8 am Holy Eucharist	10:15 am Holy Eucharist	MONDAY - 20	TUESDAY - 21	WEDNESDAY-22	THURSDAY-23	FRIDAY- 24	SATURDAY-25
EM:		Brian Wright		9:00 Staff				
LECTOR:		Eric Sylor & Neal Lee						
ALTAR:	Sue Marston	Laura Cotton						
USHERS	NA	Leslie Marting & Judy Holmes						
HOSTESSES		Neal Lee				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY JANUARY 25 --	8 am Holy Eucharist	10:15 am Holy Eucharist	MONDAY - 26	TUESDAY - 27	WEDNESDAY-28	THURSDAY-29	FRIDAY- 30	SATURDAY-31
EM:	Charley Marston	James Gallagher		9:00 Staff				
LECTOR:	Kitty Thomas	Eric Sylor & Lucy Lytle						
ALTAR:	Sue Marston	Lucy Lytle						
USHERS	NA	Ron Lee & Peter Thatcher						
HOSTESSES		Nancy Irwin				8:00 AA		

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1 --	8 am Holy Eucharist	10:15 am Holy Eucharist	MONDAY - 2	TUESDAY - 3	WEDNESDAY-4	THURSDAY-5	FRIDAY- 6	SATURDAY-7
EM:		John Irwin		9:00 Staff				
LECTOR:								
ALTAR:								
USHERS	NA	Brian Wright & Charlene Currutt						
HOSTESSES						8:00 AA		

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Anyone interested in weekly offering envelopes, please contact Mary in the office. If you would like just a handful of undated offering envelopes, we would be happy to send them to you with your number / name written on them as this helps Mary in the office with processing checks from each Sunday.

Food Pantry

December

- Chocolate / Cookies
- Nuts
- Cake/brownie mix,
- Frosting
- Powdered milk,
- Graham crackers
- Pudding

January

Canned meats (ham, tuna, chicken, salmon, stew, chili), Beans, Jerky

2026 Calendars are now available for purchase in the Guild Room! They are $20 each and 100% of the purchase price goes to support Guild outreach projects. Please make checks out to St. Christopher's with Guild outreach in the memo. Thank you!

ST. CHRISTOPHER BY THE RIVER
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
www.stchrisbytheriver.org

7601 Old Mill Rd.
PO Box 519
Gates Mills OH 44040

Sunday Services
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:15 AM Holy Eucharistic Rite II
Childcare available at the 10:15 service.

Exceptions:
Dec 28th One Service, Morning Prayer

Find our weekly worship on YouTube.

Parish Office
Mary Zup
Staffed T-W-Th 8:30-2:30
440-423-4451
stchrisbytheriver@gmail.com

DECEMBER 2025 - JANUARY 2026 Newsletter

St. Christopher by the River

NO SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Dec 28th there will be one service of Morning Prayer at 10:15.

Save the date! We are working on our annual Twelfth Night Party.

Saturday, January 10, 2026
6:00pm-8:00pm

Children are MOST welcome.
Bring an Hors D'oeuvres to share.
Watch for more details and how to RSVP in the news and notes.

If you can help, please contact Ron Lee.