



The Dove

Church of the Holy Spirit - 3 Haytown Road - Lebanon, NJ - churchholyspirit.org

OUR MISSION: *to become like Christ as we serve others, proclaim God's love, and grow in the Spirit*



mikewilliamsphotography.com

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Dear Friends,

At the January Vestry meeting, I shared my plan to conclude, on June 30, 2024, a thirty-seven-year vocation as Rector of Church of the Holy Spirit. I have been in conversation with family and colleagues, diocesan personnel, and a few past senior wardens for discernment about this decision. It has not come easily, quickly, nor without a bit of quaking in my soul.

Please know that there is no precipitating event nor any crisis that prompts this decision. There is nothing by way of family or health that has brought me to this moment, and certainly nothing in the life of the parish that moves me to conclude my leadership role. In fact, things are improving in our community. While it has been a slow recovery out of the pandemic, there is a lovely return of more parishioners to more active engagement. The solid footing of our community leaves all of us more positive about moving into a transition.

The gratitude and deep respect for the love, commitment, and gracious life we have all shared have me in some soulful heaviness as I consider the months ahead. There is no small joy and wonder for the ways Christ has been made known among us and such memories also bring a sigh of sadness. And I hasten to add, "But I'm not dying!"

My plans for a reorganized life (I disavow any mention of "retirement"), are fluid. It will take a good time to sort through books and papers. I know plans for our parish will come together in a grace-filled way (see the accompanying letter from the Wardens). Our Bishop Sally French met with the Vestry this past Sunday afternoon, including both incoming and outgoing members. Her care, support, wisdom and encouragement were superlative. Ask anyone at that meeting how impressive she was by way of offering wisdom and guidance while empowering the Vestry for discernment and action. You are all well led by a fabulous Vestry and Bishop and diocesan staff. It was quite a relief to experience such solid leadership.

I have no intention of getting in the way or providing a distraction to the development of a trusted relationship with your new Rector. That will mean a certain time apart, but as we will remain in our lovely home in Whitehouse Station, you will see me around and remain in friendship with you all. My only role in this transition is as cheerleader. I'm practicing high kicks and handsprings, as well as responding to anyone curious about my opinion on new leadership with: "Why are you talking to me about that . . .?" In time, any place or role for me beyond that will be best decided by others. The Holy Spirit will guide you to a fabulous person who will be called to join you and your mission: To become like Christ as we serve others, proclaim God's love, and grow in the Spirit.

People have complimented me using such metaphors as big shoes and long shadows. While that's kind, it misses the point. What too many here underestimate is the massive grace and power of this community, its uniqueness and integrity. So few congregations across the country enact worship and mission as CHS does every week. One of the not-so-subtle blessings of changing our seating in the church according to the themes of the liturgical year is that you are experienced and open to change. You have no idea how rare that is. That wholeness and openness will be most attractive to the highest quality of candidates for the position of leadership in this community. This is a moment of addition and gain, not loss. No one is losing anything. We are all gaining new blessings and friendships.

What could be better?

Faithfully,

The Very Rev. Philip Bohdan Carr-Jones, Rector



January 28, 2024

Dear Fellow Parishioner,

At the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Holy Spirit held on January 28, 2024, our beloved Rector, Philip Carr-Jones, announced that he will be stepping down as Rector on June 30, 2024. Father Phil has written a personal letter to the Parish that accompanies this letter.

We have been so fortunate to have had Fr. Phil as our Rector for 37 years. The Church of the Holy Spirit is a dynamic and thriving Parish because of his leadership. Importantly, during his tenure he has encouraged and welcomed members of the Parish to take leadership roles in every aspect of the life of the Parish. Such a strong participation by the parishioners should make the position of Rector very attractive to potential candidates.

The Wardens and Vestry members have met with Bishop Sally French and she has given us valuable guidance. She has also promised that she and her staff will support us in this process.

We will begin the transition process shortly. The first step in this process will be to create a Parish profile. We will seek input from the members of the Parish so that the profile presents a full picture of the Parish. The Vestry will soon select a committee that will conduct the search for a new Rector when Fr. Phil steps down. We intend that the composition of the committee will be reflective of the diverse elements that make up the membership of the Parish. The committee will conduct the search and will present one or more recommended candidates to the Vestry, which will select the new Rector. It is difficult to set forth a timetable at this time, but be assured that the committee and the Vestry will be working to make the process as expeditious as possible while ensuring that we are seeing the best candidates. We will be updating the parishioners on a regular basis as to the status of the search.

As we move forward with excitement to a new era for our church, we will also celebrate Fr. Phil and thank him for all that he has done for us. We will be announcing plans for a celebration that will take place in June.

Finally, we know that you all will join us in wishing Fr. Phil and his family joy in whatever new adventures await him.

Sincerely,

John T. Andrews, Jr, Senior Warden

Diane Hrozencik, Junior Warden

CHS Annual Meeting: September 28, 2024

As you will have read in the preceding two pages (if you were not able to attend in person), one of the first items of business last Sunday was for Father Phil and John Andrews—having been voted in as the new Senior Warden—to read letters to the congregation. The Warden’s letter was signed by John and the newly-elected Junior Warden, Diane Hrozencik. It was understood that many folks attempting to listen online were having difficulties because this part of the 9:00 am Sunday service was being held in Dove Hall and the technology there is not ideal.

Needless to say this news was not easy to hear — or now to read. It will have come as a surprise to some, but not to all, since we are often reminded that change is inevitable. Father Philip has spent 37 productive years with Church of the Holy Spirit and over the next five months there will be challenges to be faced and overcome.

That said, may God grant His ministers at CHS, and as Father Philip so often reminds us, that is all of us, patience, understanding, love and orderly direction. — Ed.

Most of the entries in the annual report were voted on by title. It is a very complete, very well structured synopsis and we are in debt to Marge Keller for assembling the many pieces into a cohesive whole. Copies were made available to all attendees and are available on the website or by emailing the office: admin@churchholyspirit.net

Several of the report’s authors did speak to their entries, among them:

- ◆ Jane Paradiso spoke about the second Sunday breakfasts and how unfortunate it is when they cannot be held as planned because no-one volunteers to coordinate them. She emphasized that we need not be experienced chefs. It’s the camaraderie that is critical, not the menu. The schedule for the first part of the year is as follows, assuming we can put some goodies on the table:

February 11 (spoken for — thank you!)

March (Easter is early; no breakfast planned)

April 14

May 12 (Mother’s Day) — I believe the dads rose to the occasion last year?

June 9 (not Father’s Day — that’s a week earlier)

- ◆ Diane Bendahmane and her committee received warm applause for their careful work revising the bylaws, which were approved by the Vestry at its January meeting. Copies were distributed on Sunday and can be accessed on the website or by emailing the office.
- ◆ Sally Bird reported on the 2023 Good Friday Service Day, and we learned that our new Diocesan Bishop, Sally French, intends to be with us for part of the morning this year (March 30).

Other news announcements from Sunday to note :

- Congratulations to Liz Cannizzaro and Susan Kane, co-recipients of the third annual Holy Spirit Service Award. I’ll bet we can all agree on the choice! Unfortunately Susan was not able to be with us in person; Liz represented them both for their faithful guidance of the We Care ministry.
- Welcome to our new vestry members and kudos to those who have served so well and faithfully. The newly constituted Vestry is listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Other Happenings in January:

Music

Thank you to Tricia Simpson-Curtain for her lovely piano playing while Alexei was away. And to Meg McKenna for her beautiful flute accompaniment at other services, including the annual meeting just held!



Charitable Giving Statements for 2023

The statements were mailed to all pertinent households on January 8, 2024. If you have any concerns or find any discrepancies, please email eva@churchholyspirit.net as soon as possible. *And a reminder that if you meant to submit a pledge for this calendar year, it isn't too late to help Sally Bird and the finance committee create the most accurate budget possible. They do a wonderful job of projecting each year, but the more pledges they receive, the better they can be at it. — Ed.*

Looking Forward

Communion Classes

The last classes will be held on consecutive Sundays February 4, 11, and 18 at 11:30 am in the St. Nicholas room, culminating in a ceremony on February 25. Sign up on the CHS website if you aren't already enrolled.



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 13th is the date. 5-7 pm is the time. The Youth Group is hosting. Mark your calendar for the deliciousness.

Ecumenical Soup and Study Series in Lent

Wednesday, February 21st, and continuing each Wednesday throughout the Lenten season, a local church will host a Soup and Study Supper. The Study portion will focus on the book *Meeting Jesus at the Table: A Lenten Study*, by Cynthia M. Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr. Zion Lutheran Church in Oldwick — <https://zionoldwick.com/> — will host on the first evening. Their website has driving directions prominently displayed. Or on your GPS: 56 Old Turnpike Road [Route 517], Oldwick / Lebanon.

“All Good Gifts Around Us Are Sent From Heav’n Above”**

** Matthias Claudius, 1782

Little Free Library



As some of you may know, a few years ago I installed a Little Free Library at the entrance to Hunts Mill Park. Unfortunately, this past year weather damaged it to the point where it could no longer be repaired. As part of my commitment to Clinton, New Jersey and my passion for book reading, over the past several weeks I constructed a new Little Free Library to replace the existing one. With the help of my wife Andra Stam Taylor and mother-in-law Liga Stam (a lifelong librarian), the new library was installed for everyone's usage and enjoyment. Hope it brings you lots of great reading pleasure! Stay tuned, coming soon will be a Little Free Library for Kids! Also, thanks to Deegan Brothers Roofing & Siding for the roofing materials, King's Crossing and vicinity, Hunterdon County News #reading #literature, Town of Clinton, NJ Community Bulletin Board.

Patrick Taylor

Narthex Table

When you come in and out of church you may have noticed the beautiful Narthex table with its inlaid cross that is positioned to the right of the main door. It was placed there last year.

Now there is a complementary shelf on that table, installed in January specifically to hold colorful prayer shawls, completed with love by the many needleworkers at CHS.

These beautiful pieces of wood were painstakingly crafted by Kevin Hallstrom to bless our ministries — and they are a ministry in themselves.

While we are on the subject of the Hallstroms, most of you know that Kevin's wife Wendy is also an artist — in paint, pen and gold leaf. She submitted the two paintings below for an installation called *Draw the Line on War*. Artists were asked to interpret war and peace as part of a Garden State Watercolor Society exhibit held last fall. Among her many other talents, Wendy teaches at The Center for Contemporary Art in Bedminster, is responsible for the beautiful calligraphy that graces our Baptismal certificates, and has written some of the icons that adorn the Sanctuary.



Photos:

Top: Andra Taylor

Center: Marge Keller

“All Good Gifts” (continued)

A Skilled Photographer

During the month of February, June Filipski will be exhibiting her photographs in a solo show, *A Time for Every Season*, at the Flemington Public Library. Please stop in to view some of the results of June’s talented eye in depicting the change from icy, cold Winter to the inevitable new life that bursts forth in Spring. The library is located at 118 Main Street in the Borough.



No Matter What

It's just impossible.
And no.
We can't imagine
what it has been.
But we can, maybe,
though, just a little.
That is, to understand
just a little of it.
And that's enough
for a heart to break.
But no matter what,
your friends are around you.
Small as that may feel,
but it's a promise made
and will be a promise kept.
No matter what.

+Philip June 10, 2023



Vicki,

I was looking at a recent *Dove*, and am sending you a copy of the pastel painting I made, along with the photo I took of that beautiful spot at Round Valley Reservoir.

I thought it might be fun to see where the idea came from.

Roberta Maas

[Speaking of talents! — Ed.]



Fourth Sunday after Pentecost: June 25, 2023

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in Heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace, but a sword.” — from Matthew 10: 24-39

Today’s Gospel is one that some priests avoid – asking the Deacon to preach on it instead. I, personally, struggled with this one. And I don’t mean struggling to interpret the truth of the gospel. I mean struggling with that truth in **my** life, struggling with what that truth reveals about us and our country, and struggling with what that truth is asking of us.

I want to be true to the truth but I also don’t want to be inconvenienced and uncomfortable, challenged to change, or risk disapproval and being criticized, personally or as someone who occasionally preaches. And I suspect you feel the same as a hearer of the gospel.

Don’t you sometimes just want an easy, feel good, gospel? I do. Sometimes I want a gospel that affirms our life as it is and leaves us alone. I want a gospel that’s easy to preach, easy to hear, and easy to live.

None of that, however, is likely to happen today. Jesus has taken his sword and drawn a line in the sand.

The line Jesus draws is a line between acknowledging him before others and denying him before others. And I am not talking about whether we read the Bible, go to church, say the creed, or post Jesusy kind of stuff on our social media. I am talking about how we live, what we say and don’t say, what we do and don’t do, the policies we enact or support, and the ideas behind them. I am talking about where and with whom we make our stand today.

There are, however, other lines in the sand. Jesus isn’t the only one who draws lines. Some we have drawn for ourselves and some have been drawn for us by others. They’re not hard to see.

Look at the lines that have been drawn about racism, Black Lives Matter, and the place of confederate monuments in our country. Think about who is and who isn’t welcome in America and why. Lines run through poverty, violence, and injustice. And they run through the lack of equality, education, and healthcare. Recently, there was even a line running through decisions to wear a mask in public and keep social distance.

What does the line that Jesus draws have to do with these situations or other situations where we see lines being drawn? What do those situations look like when we acknowledge Jesus in them or when we deny him in them?

It wouldn’t be a surprise if right about now some of you feel that I have crossed a line, that I’ve gone from preaching to meddling, that I have left behind the gospel for politics. I wish it were that easy to avoid the gospel but it’s not.

If Jesus can say, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;" might he not also say, "Whoever loves Mr. Trump and the Republican party more than me is not worthy of me, whoever loves Mr. Biden and the Democratic party more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves his or her own position, opinion, or agenda more than me is not worthy of me?"

The line Jesus draws with his sword intersects every one of the issues raised and more. It intersects the lines you and I see being drawn in our country today. It runs through your life and my life. It runs through our country. It runs through our thoughts, words, and deeds.

For Jesus there is only one line that matters. That was my struggle with today's gospel. It holds before us a set of values, a way of being, a truth that we either acknowledge or deny. We cannot straddle that line – one foot here, the other there. There is no middle ground on which to stand. And we can't gerrymander the line to make our life easier.

Jesus' sword cuts through everything. The line he draws runs through every single grain of sand in our life. That line reveals and calls us into a greater priority, a higher authority, a truer identity. Where we stand in relation to that line will determine who we are, the values we hold, and how, or even if, we love our neighbor.

What line is Jesus drawing in the sands of our life today? What is being revealed to us? And what is being asked of us? Are we acknowledging Jesus? Or are we denying him?

We all need to ask ourselves those questions every day of our life because we all stand somewhere. We all take a stand by our actions and inactions, by our words and our silence, by our thoughts and intentions.

When we look at the line Jesus has drawn in our life today:

Where **do** we stand? For what **do** we stand? With whom **do** we stand?

In the Jewish tradition there's a collection of ethical teachings. One of them goes like this: "It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but neither are you free to step away from it."

The line has been drawn.

Deacon Dot Hospador



Summer Reading Recommendations [Great for Winter Too, Right?]

As many of you know, I read a LOT during my healing from last year's surgery. I have three sisters and we frequently swap lists of books we enjoyed. I wrote up this summary and sent it to them.

***West With Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge**

The main character came off to me as a real country bumpkin in the first chapter and I was about to set the book aside, but kept at it. I am SO glad I did. This bumpkin and a rough Old Man are transporting 2 giraffes from Newark harbor to the San Diego Zoo. Fiction based on fact. And tons of life lessons/philosophy hidden in the details.

***The Nurse's Secret* by Amanda Skenandore**

Several chapters into this intriguing plot, I'm thinking, wait – it's supposed to be about a nurse? It got there eventually. And even if it hadn't gotten around to fulfilling the title, this book is so well written I would have read it to the end. Historically-set fiction.

***The Saints of Swallow Hill* by Donna Everhart**

Set in the depression era, a coming of age-ish story, taking place around the industry of pine trees tapped for the substances from which turpentine is made. Doesn't get too much into the weeds about the process (as Moby Dick devotes many chapters to details of whales none of us really has any interest in). Such well-developed characters that I wonder what some of them are up to now.

***The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett**

A great book for Audible, as Tom Hanks is the reader – and who couldn't use more Tom Hanks in their life? I read it in hard copy, but the first few chapters I was hearing in Tom Hanks' voice reading it to me. The inanimate house of the title becomes almost a character in the book itself – not in a fantasy way – the book is entirely realistic. But the characters are a bit obsessed with the house.

***The Royal Governess* by Wendy Holden**

Very historical fiction about princesses Elizabeth and Margaret and their governess's work to educate them in the non-royal life. Turns out it's based on the non-fiction book *The Little Princesses*, written by the real governess.

***The Overstory* by Richard Powers**

The novel begins with short stories about a dozen people, or so, and the part trees play in their lives. Which sounds like a REALLY stupid premise. I'm trying not to say too much because you have to read it to get it. Sags a bit at the end, but the author wanted to tie up loose ends, I think. Which I understand. And I read it to the end because after 350-ish pages, I wasn't going to bale on the last 150 or so.

The Dutch House is 100% fiction. *West With Giraffes* and *The Royal Governess* are fiction based on actual events.

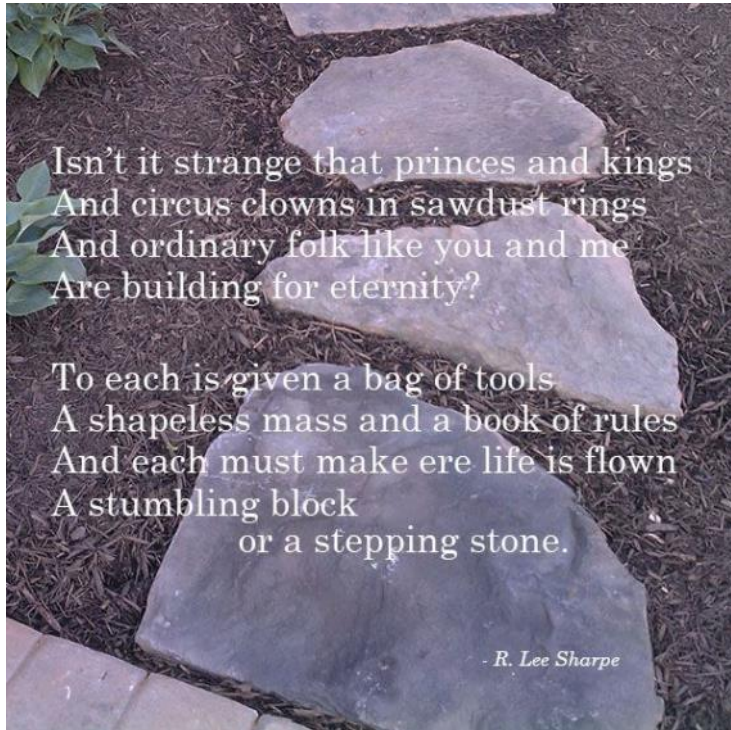
The Nurse's Secret is fiction set around the development of the first actual nursing training school – around the time of Lister – when women became science-trained medical people, not just nanny-clean-up employees. *Overstory* and *Swallow Hill* are historically set about the types of people who would have lived through the eras explained above.

Meg McKenna



John Rollins photo. If you have a Facebook account, check out his many expert photos of wife Jan Paxton's beautiful garden in all seasons.

Seen on Facebook Recently:



Thanks to Fr. John Rollins

A Prayer for Peace

For those who are fleeing: sanctuary

For those who are staying: safety

For those who are fighting: peace

For those whose hearts are breaking: comfort

For those who see no future: hope



Don't recall, but I found the prayer very timely — Ed.



*Fr. Phil Carr-Jones Photo (CHS page)
 Bountiful Harvest 2023 Service Auction*

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT — WHO'S WHO

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The Rev. Michelleslie Maltese-Nehrbass, Deacon

www.churchholyspirit.org

Check out CHS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/churchholyspirit>

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[all phone numbers 908 area code unless otherwise listed]

*Do you have a great idea for enriching our community? Want to find out who's who? Notice something that needs fixing? Contact any vestry member, or **just show up at a monthly meeting**. The Vestry generally meets on the third Thursday of each month in the St. Julian Room (7pm). Check the online calendar for confirmation.*

The list above is incomplete, given that our current Vestry was voted in at the annual meeting last Sunday and will be reviewing some positions at their retreat on February 2-3, 2024. — Ed. (1/31/24)