

Christ Church

Good News and Notes

*** Please note that all new items for this edition are in red**

In Celebration of Smallness

"With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

What seems obvious to me, more and more, is that God really loves to surprise us. It appears that one of God's favorite activities is to take what is small and seemingly inconsequential to the world and do big and marvelous things with them.

I find this to be very good news in a world that does not always value smallness. In a world that demands so much bigness, we can sometimes find ourselves feeling very, very small. The world in which we live today has some extremely large problems that can seem overwhelming. Feeling small in such a big universe can be quite disheartening.

How can we, in our seeming insignificance, offer anything to a world in need of love and hope?

Well, this is the very same question that confronts Jesus' early followers. Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God coming near, but if we read those ancient Roman headlines, I doubt that they would have been trumpeting the success of God's justice and mercy.

People were hungry and oppressed, economic enslavement was the order of the day, and only those of power and wealth seem to have any say in how the world would run. Does any of that sound familiar?

But here is Jesus telling us that then and there as well as in the here and now---God's reality is truly very different.

"With what can we compare the kingdom of God? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

This is Jesus' delightful surprise for us! We are reminded that what is often seen as small and insignificant in the world's eyes is seen as nothing less than hidden "greatness" by God. I think that if we begin to look at the world through God's eyes we see evidence of this all around us.

When we align ourselves with God, we are never too small or insignificant to change the world. God can transform our tiniest move toward grace and hope into something magnificent. This is God's way, you see, and this is Jesus' great word to us this coming Sunday. In the kingdom of God, great things like justice, mercy, and redemption grow from the smallest of seeds.

I, for one, find myself relieved to know that no matter how big the problems of our big world are, God shows us that the way to hope and freedom can be found in our smallness.

With God's help, our small acts of faith, small acts of kindness, small moments of hope, and tiny little graces can win the day.

The world's bigness can be overwhelming, but all we have to do is remember that our world was made and is being redeemed by a God whose grace exceeds our wildest imaginings.¹ God lavishes his gifts of life and growth upon us and constantly does so in the most surprising ways.

After all, Jesus was perhaps the smallest seed and greatest surprise of all. To the casual observer he was just an unimportant man with a small life coming from a small town in a small country.

But now we know that the gift of his seemingly insignificant life grew into nothing less than new hope and new life in God—for all. We are just a small parish, in a small town, with great hope. Our smallness is nothing to fear. With God, we can be a large unstoppable force for love in everything we do. In our worship, fellowship, how we care for one another—we are a small but mighty church that through the power of the Holy Spirit can do big things.

Grace and Peace,

Stephanie+

¹ Lectionary Blog

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**SAVE THE DATE:
You're Invited to a "Newcomer" Gathering
on Saturday, June 30th!**

We are blessed to have new worshippers join us on a regular basis, and we want to welcome you and give you a chance to ask any questions you have

as well as gather for a great meal and have an opportunity to get to know more about life and ministry at Christ Church.

"Newcomer" is in parentheses because some of you have been here for a while, but we have not yet had the opportunity to celebrate you. So, if you have joined us and not yet been to such an event, you are invited! Even if you have been worshipping with us since Stephanie's arrival, you are invited!

The event will be at the Seckel's barn on 404 Vestal Rd., off the parkway. We will gather at 5:00 pm and enjoy a time of joyful fellowship and orientation.

Look for more information coming soon!

Your Church Growth Ministry Team

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20/20 Challenge!

A big "THANK YOU" for your rapid and generous response thus far to our 20/20 Challenge! To date, we have received \$15,000 and we can't wait to see that total rise! We are *very* thankful for your generosity, and we are excited that, as you always do, you are meeting the promise to help us look forward to another twenty years and more.

We will have a special day of celebration of the 20 years since we became a mission of the Diocese of Western North Carolina on June 24th, which is when we will recognize the first fruits of our Challenge efforts. You are welcome to mail your card in at any time and to think and pray on your participation beyond the June 24th celebration. Our deepest goal is to shine with that Christ Church "can do" spirit and offer everyone a chance to get us on the road to the next 20 years!

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Mountain Soul presents Jewell's Harp on Sunday, June 24th at 6:00 pm!



"Jewell's Harp" is a band located in Statesville, NC that consists of married couple, Chuck and Jewell Waldrup and Kevin Fox. Chuck and Kevin have been playing music together for many years, and Jewell joined in about 9 years ago. On the 24th, we'll be fortunate to also have the Chuck's 13 year old son, Layton Waldrup playing drums, and Zach Justice will be sitting in on Bass.

Jewell's Harp is an eclectic blend of soulful, folk, bluegrass, gospel, country, rock, and blues; all the music that sprouted from American roots.

Chuck is an extraordinarily talented harmonica player; his talent is the inspiration for the name "Jewell's Harp". Jewell's voice will touch your soul, and ranges from low-blues to high-tenor bluegrass. And Kevin Fox can take you on a musical journey as you listen to his wonderful guitar playing and he has truly been a blessing to our music.

Together, they create a unique harmony that you won't soon forget. Mark your calendar and plan to attend!

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Bits and Pieces

As summer finally comes to the mountains, it is a great time to renew some general information about communication, Vestry proceedings and Pastoral Care.

Communication: The best way to stay abreast of the many happenings at Christ Church is to read the Good News and Notes, the Sunday bulletin and checking the webpage for new pictures and other information that is available there. If you want to communicate with me directly, you are invited to email anytime at revsteph@skybest.com and Tuesday-Sunday, call at 336-363-4141. Please respect Monday as my Sabbath unless you have an emergency and in that case, please call me immediately!

I also want to renew the invitation to know that unless you have heard something from me directly in writing or in person, you have not heard from me at all. I invite you at anytime to speak with me directly. I am always happy to hear how you are doing, about the goings on in your lives---in good times and in challenging times, and I am especially open to hearing your concerns.

If you have a pastoral care need, please contact me directly. Clergy are often the last to hear about hospitalizations, illnesses, etc. I always want to hear from you if you desire a visit and the only way to insure that is to speak with me directly. I would love to hear from you! Long-term pastoral care is a ministry for the entire congregation. Show your love for our members by visiting, writing, or calling those who are no longer able to be with us on a regular basis.

Vestry: So many exciting things are happening in Vestry! You are always invited to attend Vestry meetings and in lieu of that, read the Vestry minutes as they are posted. Note that the previous month's Vestry minutes are not approved until the following month's meeting, but it is still a good way to keep your finger on the pulse. Another important note is to know what Vestry minutes contain. While 99.9% of the Vestry meetings are about creating relationship and community leadership, our minutes are something required by state and federal law and are instrumental when we require action with our banking institutions and other official matters. As such they report transactions of motions and codified decisions. There is sometimes report of discussion, but in general, as official documents, they are the least suited to verbatim accounts of every activity. A perfect place to hear expanded news of the community is in the Good News and Notes. If you do not have a computer, but would like to receive the Good News and Notes, please notify us and we will mail a hard copy to you.

Another exciting happening in Vestry is that we have adopted the Diocesan and Episcopal Church Foundations meeting format. As such, we devote time in Vestry to Church Leadership Training, visioning strategies, and other matters that help us motivate our community of faith in vitality and joyous health.

These are but a few topics of interest. While there are some aspects of my work as priest that are sensitive and necessarily confidential, I am always open to your questions. Please let me know if there are any other "behind the scenes" activities that you would find of interest. I always stand ready and excited to share news about Christ Church and my life within it.

May God Bless and Keep You All,

Stephanie+

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Ladies' Lunch Out scheduled for NEXT Tuesday, June 19th!

The June Ladies' Lunch Out is scheduled for **NEXT Tuesday, June 19 at 12:00** noon at the newly-opened Muddy Creek Café located on Main St. Mark your calendars and put your name on the sign-up sheet located on the Information Table. Marybeth Lentz will be your host. If you have any questions, please contact Marybeth at mlentz@skybest.com or 336.657.7088.

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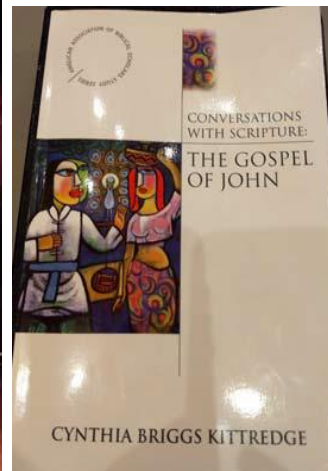
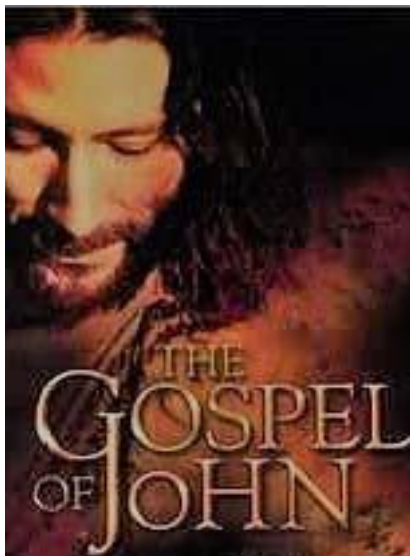
Saving Jesus: Adult Forum resumes THIS Sunday, June 17

Jesus is not just a historical figure relegated to the pages of Scripture and stories that happened long ago. The invitation to follow Jesus is always before us and Jesus' teachings and life call us into a transformational way of seeing and living in the world here and now.

Join us in Adult Forum Sundays @ 9:15 for Saving Jesus, a 12-part exploration of who Jesus was in his context, time and culture as well as how we can follow Jesus today. A host of experts from many denominations and faith traditions help us to have conversations about the relevance of Jesus for the 21st century.

Come and Join the Conversation!

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Bible Study at the Seckel's Barn on Vestal Road

Bible Study on The Gospel of John continues. It's never too late to join this Bible study! Bring your favorite version of the Bible and come join us. Please note that the Seckel's will be away for a few weeks but the bible study will continue at their barn on Vestal Road. Bring a snack to share (if you wish) and your favorite drink. **Our next study will be TONIGHT, Thursday, June 14 at 6 pm.** Martha will open the barn around 5:30. Bring a friend to share this journey into John.

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Prayer List

Intercessions: Ben, Denise H., Ed & Jean, Fred P., Gina D., Jessica, Julie O., Laura D., Lisa D., Mark & Julee W., Martha H., and Ray V.

Departed:

Birthdays: Gary Medley (June 22)

Wedding Anniversaries: Geoff & Shelley Jones (June 17)

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The Food & Fellowship Person of the Month for June is: **Eleanor Plummer.**
She can be reached at shpd311@skybest.com or 336-372-7214.

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Schedule

Thursday, June 14

6:00 pm – Bible Study at the Seckel Barn

Sunday, June 17 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

9:15 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, June 19

12:00 pm – Ladies' Lunch Out at Muddy Creek Cafe

Wednesday, June 20

10:00 am – Holy Eucharist

Sunday, June 24 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

9:15 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

6:00 pm – Mountain Soul presents Jewell's Harp

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If you have any questions regarding anything building or grounds related, please contact Phil Donaldson with your concern.

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For Urgent Prayer Request – Contact Gary Medley. Please be sure to get permission to share any details for the Prayers. Also, if you like to be listed as an Urgent Prayer Partner, please let Gary know.

Great thanks & peace, Gary Medley

gapdweller@gmail.com

336.372.7464

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Please continue to recycle your prescription bottles (with lids) and with the labels pulled off. The recycling box for the bottles is on the floor between the mail slots and the Information table.

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Outside Our Walls...

Hospice Volunteers Needed!

Do you have a little extra time? Enjoy helping others? Hospice is a great way...

- * Meet new people and make new friends;
- * Share the Gift of Time and Compassion;
- * Provide a much needed break for a Caregiver.

Making a Difference in someone's life is so rewarding! Call today and see how you can join our team. For more information or to become a volunteer, contact: Jennifer Richardson, Volunteer Coordinator at Medi Home Health & Hospice at 336-372-8018 or email: jrichardson@msa-corp.com.

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Prayer requests from the staff and prisoners at River North Correctional Center, Independence, VA

Pray for the POTUS as he heads to Singapore for this meeting with N. Korea. Pray for those that are serving our country. Thank You Lord for giving me a forgiving heart.-SS

Pray to fix friendships and to walk in peace, love, and righteousness and to maximize each moment that God has made.-MC

I pray to God to bring me and my daughter closer.-LC

Pray for my family.

All prayers go out to everyone. Give thanks for all things.-DF

Pray for my brother and me. Pray for my friends and the sick and the homeless. Thank you.-JS

Thank You Lord for being the author and finisher of my faith. I pray that You will to keep Your hedge of protection around me and my family.-VM

I would like to thank God for allowing God's peace to flow like a river of living water. I would like a river for all of the guys who have to make some hard decisions in their life and their journey. -RJ

Pray for Israel always and the Jewish people.-JJ

God is good. I thank God for being here today because with God I would not be. Amen.

Pray for me and my family to be in the Word of God with love and understanding of the love that God has for us.

Pray for the enlightenment of the mind and heart of all people whom are called children of God. Pray for the Holy Ghost to be present in our hearts and less of self and its worldly will.

Thank You Lord for Your love. Amen. -TF

Bless those around me. Bless them first. Then if I am worthy bless me. Amen.

Pray for the RN family of believers that we may continue to grow in faith and spread it to others. Pray for the many ministries around the world that they may receive all they need to continue to do God's work.-NW

Pray for all the kids who attend the schools around the world and protect them as they educate themselves. Pray for the soldiers all over. Protect them as they fight for our safety and protection. Pray for all our families and the well-being of all people.-JH

Pray for my finance that she remain strong in faith and the world as we face trials and tribulations. Pray for peace in everyone's hearts that everyone know the Lord's greatness as I have found. God bless.-BB

I ask for prayer for my family and friends in my life and I ask for a broken heart to heal. Bless all the brothers and sisters in Christ here at RN.-MB

Thank you church for praying for my family and friends. Keep me in prayer and to stay focus. Thank you.-RH

Pray for the called to fulfill their calling and for me to stay focused. Pray for my brothers physical healing along with my mothers and mine.-MO

Thanks for all the volunteers. Can you pray for my aunts and uncles, all who have health problems? Thanks. God bless. -GT

Thank God for prayer warriors. I need them today. My brother asked me and the church to pray for him this morning.-CT

Pray for my brothers at Bible study that they know that I love them.-H

Pray for my sister for healing and comfort. Pray for all who are suffering do to the weather in all places that destroy lives and home. Pray for our government and leadership in all departments and especially for our president and his administration.-HD

Pray for my children, my family, friends, my brothers and sister in Christ, the ones who are lost and not saved. I pray and ask God to open the door God keeps showing me. Pray for me.-DR

Pray for all the lives that are lost and do not understand. Thank you. God bless you.

Pray for my needs.-HR

Pray for all those both inside and outside prison with Your guidance can face their worst fears and challenges in this life as they prepare to live in Your mansion in heaven one day.

O Lord, bring about the manifestation of the blessing for my early release. Praise be for healing my pops and touching the health of my cousin. Amen.-JS

Pray for our sister in Christ because she is having a lot of tribulations, but I know that in God everything is possible. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.-OA

Lord I just ask that You continue to watch over me and my family. Keep my kids on a righteous path. Bless everyone here at RN. In Jesus' name. Amen.-LW

Keep my family safe and strong in the Holy One. Praise God and let God keep me strong in the faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.-JM

Pray for unity in Christ from each and everyone of us. Pray we continue to be about Christ and God's work. May we continue to praise God no matter what we are going through. God bless our volunteers and our church here at RN. Glory to God.-KD

Praise God. Pray for all here at RN, for our families and friends on the outside. Pray for all the visitors that come and worship with us.

Continue to help me run my race.-MP

Pray God will bless us here at RN.

Thank You God almighty for allowing us to come and be in fellowship in Your name. Continue to bless RN. Amen.-PP

Pray for me, my family, and all the people in RN.

Today I pray that God continue to keep God's hand in our lives.

Pray for my family and children. Pray for the church. Guide me to be a better person.-KS

My wife is losing her battle with stage four cancer. Keep her in prayer that she does not suffer.-DJ

I first want to thank God for continuing to do for me what I ask of God. I ask that I continue to get prayer for the way that I think and act.-MD

I pray for my family and friends and the church.

Remember me and my family in prayer and all the people at RN.

Pray for my families and friend and my country and for my people that are now sad but with God's help they are going to be blest. Thank You. Bless you all.

Thank You God for everything You do for us. Thank You for the peace, tranquility, and love you provide in my life. My comfort zone was my home and family and now that is gone. I dedicate my living to You God because You are it. Forgive our sins, lighten our hearts and make us better. In Your loving name. Amen.

Continue prayers for all those who keep us in their prayers. Pray for comfort and peace within me while I go through my court litigations. Peace and love of our Lord be upon all of you.

Pray for me.

Pray for me, my mom with cancer, my family, friends, and for my habeas corpus to go through.-JO

Lord, thank You for giving me another chance to be made a new man to serve You in my new ministry with my future wife to help those in need. Amen.-AR

Lord, thank You for our church and I ask that You be in us by Your comforter, Your Holy Spirit. We seek Your face and bow on our knees with lifted up hands and confess, sing, thank, praise, intercede and pray to You for one hour everyday faithfully.

Oracion por toda mi familia y tambien mi hijos y que Dios abra la puerta para que puedo testficar cuan grandee s Dios con los que le aman. Amen.-O

Oracion por toda my familia y para los necesitado gracias.

Dios melos bendigo.

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- Church office hours are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm through June; returning to 8:30 am to 1:30 pm on July 2nd.

- The *Good News & Notes* is updated/reviewed/finalized on Wednesdays prior to being emailed on Thursdays. If you have a submission, please make sure you email it to Mary **no later than Wednesday at noon.**