



THE MISSION OF CHRIST CHURCH is to bring all persons to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through Word, Sacraments, and instruction, as taught through the Episcopal tradition, that all may know the joy and grace of faith, and to share that grace through outreach.

# *The Chronicler*

January 2017

Spotsylvania, VA

## The Year without a Christmas Pageant

This is not the year, obviously, since we just had our Christmas Eve services and we had our traditional children's pageant led by Jill Bates, but it is not that difficult to foresee a day, and probably sooner than any of us would like to think, when we will not be able to put on a pageant unless the adults get into costumes and play angels and shepherds. There were seven children who could potentially participate in the pageant this year. I don't know how many will actually take part, as I am writing this before Christmas Eve. The point however is clear: the children at Christ Church are not only precious, they are a precious few.

### The Situation

There have been Sundays when I had prepared a children's sermon only to deliver it in a modified form because there were no children present. How we got into this situation is worth looking at briefly. For one thing, our children have grown up. We have a number of young people in college at the moment, a bunch in high school, and an active youth group of mostly middle school students. So why haven't we been able to replace our younger children as they grew up? Two demographic realities come into play. First, millennials—those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s—tend not to be interested in church. You have heard of those who are "spiritual, but not religious." That describes the generation of young parents now. And the second trend is that those who do go to church these days are much more interested in attending large churches that have strong programs for their kids to participate in.

Recognizing these trends in 2009, we ran a capital campaign, the 20/20 campaign, in which one of the three goals was to finance a full-time family ministry position for three years. This was a successful campaign. We actually had a full-time staff person for four years, then another year of part-time. Unfortunately, the intended effect of growing our congregation with young families did not materialize. At the present time, we do not have a chair for our Christian Education commission or a head for our Sunday School.

### The Challenge

With so few children to take part in our children's program, and the reality that busy families do not always make it to church every Sunday, it is not unusual for one of our Sunday School teachers to prepare a lesson only to discover no children present to be taught. Our teachers are basically the moms of the children in the school. One of our teachers described the situation like this, "I think right now the young families are in their own little bubble and maybe other members of the church don't realize the situation." These few families are stretched to their limits. They want excellent children's programming and are willing to put in the work to make it happen, but they are burning out fast and need help.

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## JANUARY 2017 LAY MINISTERS SCHEDULE

Lector	Chalice Bearer	Acolytes	Ushers	Altar Guild	Nursery
<b><u>Jan 1 (MP)</u></b> Noon Beth Goshin Roy Smith	<b><u>Officiant:</u></b> Deacon Margaret		Robert Truslow	<b>Magin Team</b>	Closed
<b><u>Jan 8</u></b> 8:00 Joseph Ilk	Deacon Margaret		Marv Pixton	<b>Wieland Team</b>	
10:30 Martha Clark	Steve Clifford Linda Rooney	Emma Ayres-Brown Jack DiFilippo Hannah Clifford	Werner Wieland Frank Carosella		Amanda Watts
<b><u>Jan 15</u></b> 8:00 Thom Smelter	Tricia Smelter		Barbara Deal	<b>Williams Team</b>	
10:30 Marilyn Greene	Tim Watts Joe Junod	Aaron Packard Hunter Clifford Colby Clifford	Cecil Jarman Missie Jarman		Erin Senters
<b><u>Jan 22</u></b> 8:00 Calib Garland	Deacon Margaret		Joseph L. Ilk	<b>Magin Team</b>	
10:30 Beverly McNeill	Kristi Gross Stephanie Smith	Alli Ayres-Brown Aaron DiFilippo Drew DiFilippo	Tim Watts Hank Mausolf		Lindsey Bates
<b><u>Jan 29</u></b> 8:00 Dana Houck	Edd Houck		Calib Garland	<b>Wieland Team</b>	
10:30 Judi O'Neill	Jeff Massey Penny Knepp	Ian Gibson Justin Phillips Ethan Goldberg	Bob Massey Ron Magin		Karen Watts

**You are responsible for finding your own replacement in the event that you cannot serve when scheduled. If you are unable to find a Lector/Chalice replacement, please contact Penny Knepp at [pnypitstop@aol.com](mailto:pnypitstop@aol.com) or 891-6299 and she will assist you. Notify parish office of replacement(s).**