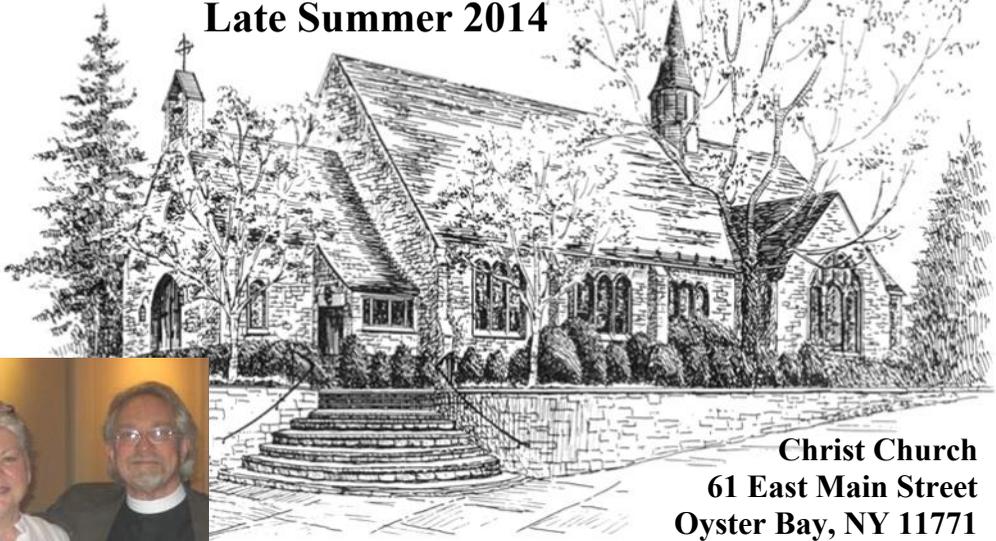


The mpass

Late Summer 2014



Christ Church
61 East Main Street
Oyster Bay, NY 11771

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Dear Reader,

The last days of summer are approaching. When autumn touches this seaside hamlet, the Casparians will be in Texas, starting a new chapter of their lives. We at Christ Church will be able to look back on this past decade with a sense of joy and accomplishment. As we enter this transition period, we are not alone, and are in good hands. We will use the coming months to look for strength within ourselves, and this time next year, a new shepherd will be welcomed to our church.

Joseph LoBianco
Editor



Abigail Jones Feder



1962 - 2014

Rest Eternal, Good and Faithful Servant

Homily Preached by Fr. Peter at Abigail's Funeral on June 27

It was 5:30 last Sunday morning on the 16th floor on First Avenue. A wall of windows facing east as the earth turned toward a new sun rising.

Gathered around Abigail's bedside in a golden light filled room...
Her brother and sister
Her daughter and son
Her husband and priest

The Compass is the official newsletter of Christ Church.

Submissions should be directed to the editor, Joseph LoBianco, by e-mail: joseph_lobianco@hotmail.com. Hard copy submissions may be left in the *Compass* mailbox in the Parish Hall. Please clearly indicate the source of any material that is not original. Submissions from the internet will not be used if they cannot be cited or are not clearly in the public domain.

Tug boats flowing south on the East River sailing off to some destination yet unknown.

What banquet table was waiting her on the new shore?
Who was gathering there to welcome her now in love?

I prayed:

*Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world;
In the Name of God the Father Almighty who created you;
In the Name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you;
In the Name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you.
May your rest be this day in peace,
and your dwelling place in the Paradise of God.*

Abigail expected that her family and banquets and boats would all be part of that Paradise of God.

And when they all came together she was the happiest she ever was!
The only exception to the rule might be to replace “boats” with the added bonus of Christmas Day. Then she would have all in all!

My family and I were very blessed. We spent every Christmas Day for the past 10 years with the Feders. It was Abigail’s mother’s idea. Patty thought that a priest and his family should have some warm and welcoming place to go after the marathon of Advent through mid-night mass. After all... Andrew would do most of the cooking. The fatted calf was roasting and there would be plenty of good wine. And there were plenty of other friends invited to sit at the long, long table that extended through two rooms. And to say how thankful we were to be together. For another year.

And all this is to explain that the hymn on the back of this bulletin is

not a mistake! “Christmas Day by the River” is actually Abigail’s favorite hymn although it’s never sung *anywhere* except Christ Church Oyster Bay on Christmas Eve!

I confess to you that the closest that Abigail and I ever got to a real fight was about 9 years ago when I suggested that we replace “It is Christmas Day by the River” with a more familiar and singable carol...

We had a summit meeting in St. Hilda’s Room to discuss the whole pageant and my suggested changes. And when I brought up my suggestion, she gave me one of those Abigail looks.

“You’re about to get into real trouble now, my friend. No one is going to mess with Baby Jesus on this song.”

And of course, we will forever be singing it at the end of the Christmas pageant...

And we will sing it at the end of the incredible pageant of love and friendship and service that was Abigail’s life and witness to all of us.

We gather by the Bay to bid Abigail a good and holy journey.

Where family will welcome her to a new shore.

Where the banquet table now is set.

Where there is no pain or suffering or tears anymore.

*“... the ships still move in the silence O’er the ocean far away.
But the sailor’s heart, it is cheery, And says “It is Christmas Day”;
The wind and the waves may be dreary, They are happy far away.”*

The Reverend Peter F. Casparian, Christ Church Oyster Bay



From the Editor

As I write this, boxes fill the Rectory, and it is finally evident to me that the Casparians are leaving. I tried to put that thought out of my mind ever since Peter announced his future plans for retirement two years ago. From that point on however, I often had a goodbye speech prepared in my mind, usually after I had attended a church service or function.

Those were my happiest moments, (and still are) to feel a true sense of belonging and a connection to others, and I knew Peter and Marguerite were largely responsible for that. This is the type of church that they created. That's why I wanted to rehearse the perfect speech, because I was always afraid I would never get to say exactly how I felt, and what they really meant to me.

I am amazed at how Peter and Marguerite made themselves available and real and present in peoples' lives. Like the altar candle that shines a perpetual light into the darkness, a light has always been on at the Rectory. I look back on the many

times they have taken people into their home and into their hearts. Peter and Marguerite opened their door to us, and that generosity has allowed parishioners to join in worship and fellowship over the years, on a deeply personal level. I will never forget the many gatherings around their dining room table—the sharing of meals, the exchange of ideas, the beginning of friendships. I will always remember how they surrounded themselves with books, art, antiques, and the many memories of their travels.

Peter is blessed with the gift of bringing people closer to God and to each other. He is a true shepherd. I saw the many times he sought out newcomers and helped them find their place in the Church. I also saw how Peter reached out to complete strangers.

Peter and Marguerite's circle of influence extends far beyond the walls of Christ Church and the boundaries of this small town. They have shown us what is possible when people gather together around God's table, and will always be a part of Christ Church.

Joseph LoBianco
Editor

Peter and Marguerite's new address in Texas:

705 Snyder Hill Road
San Marcos, TX 78666

Rector Search *Update*

Parish Summit Meeting, Saturday, September 20th *Mark your calendars!*

By Ton Heijmen, *Senior Warden*

The search for a new rector of Christ Church will begin in earnest on Saturday, September 20 in the Parish Hall and we need all of you to attend!

This is your chance to have your voice heard in the search process. Under the guidance of The Reverend Liz Tunney (our search consultant – see the attached for her Bio) we will spend the better part of the day (9 am to 3 pm) discussing what Christ Church stands for and what we do well when we are at our best. We won't wallow in our shortcomings, but focus on the strengths of our community and what we would look for in our new rector – him or her – to bring out the best in us. It will be a fun day and we can use it to forge new friendships and deepen relationships in our congregation. I promise it won't be boring!

We will use the Appreciative Inquiry Method as described in some detail in the attached article.

We have many things to be proud of: our role in the Oyster Bay community; our support of the Life Enrichment Center; our parish family; our stewardship of the endowment; our beautiful campus; the promise of the Youth Center; our revitalized Sunday School program; the renewed Men's Group; our music program; our celebration of the Casparian's decade; the Community Gardens; our Outreach and support of Diocese programs; and the list goes on and on....

We count on your support and enthusiastic participation in this program – this is your chance to be heard – **DON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS.**

We'll see you all on
September 20 at 9 am!

Timetable (we hope and pray):

2014 **September** – Conduct Vestry and Parish retreats and Summit; select Search Committee (9 members)

2014 **October** – Install Search Committee and complete parish brochure under the guidance of the writer's committee; begin receiving names and develop questionnaire for candidates

2014 **December** – Review written responses and cull the candidate list

2015 **January** – Phone interviews with promising candidates

2015 **March** – Face-to-face interviews in Oyster Bay with top candidates by the Search Committee; selection of final 3-4 candidates

2015 **May/June** – Interviews with Wardens/Vestry and Bishop; selection by Vestry and Wardens

2015 **August** – New rector in place

Talk to your wardens and vestry about any concerns you may have – we promise a transparent process and will keep you informed at all times.

Introducing Father Charles Colwell, Our Part-Time Interim Rector



We all know the smiling faces of Charlie Colwell and his lovely wife Judy (especially our eight-o'clockers...), both long-term parishioners of Christ Church. The Colwells live on Ivy Street in Oyster Bay and were in fact married 50 years ago in Christ Church! We may not know the detailed background of Father Colwell and thus we have included a small biography of Charlie, as he has some very interesting experiences, including several Interim Ministries. He has just finished being the Interim at Christ Church Manhasset. This month, the Colwells are visiting their ancestral home in Maine, where his family was in the lobster business.

We are very lucky to have Charlie as our Interim, working with Fred Miller and the Wardens/Vestry during our transition period. He will be working part-time, covering Sundays, Wednesdays and other duties such as Vestry meetings, pastoral care, etc...

Please welcome Father Colwell with open arms.

The Reverend Doctor Charles R. Colwell

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Colwell retired 6 years ago after 36 years as the Rector of the Church of St. Barnabas in Irvington-on-Hudson in Westchester. He is from Deer Isle, Maine, an island off the Maine coast, where, for generations, his family was in the lobster business. He graduated from the University of Maine and the General Theological Seminary. He started his ministry at St. Margaret's Church in the South Bronx. He then spent a year in a clinical training program serving as Protestant Chaplain upstate at the Orange County Jail and Camp LaGuardia (homeless shelter run by New York City). In 1967 he became Associate Rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City. The Colwells moved to Irvington in 1972, when Charlie became Rector of the Church of St. Barnabas.

Father Charlie has held many leadership roles in the Diocese of New York over his 50 years as a parish priest: twice President of the Standing Committee, Chair of Bishop Sisk's Transition Committee, Chair of The Ministry Commission, and member of the Evangelism and the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committees.

After 9/11, Father Charlie founded the

Center for Jewish-Christian-Muslim Understanding, Inc. and has served on the boards of Abbott House (foster care agency), The Irvington Ambulance Corps, The Irvington Advisory Board, and Student Assistance Services (addiction and education agency). He has also produced 4 videos for cable television. In 1998 he was the first recipient of The St. John the Theologian Award for pastoral care by the bishop of New York. In 2008 he received a Congressional Citation from Congresswoman Nita Lowey for his interfaith work in Westchester County. That same year he was honored by The American Muslim Women's Association. He published his memoir, *Collision of Worlds: A Priest's Life*, in 2008.

Since his retirement, Father Charlie has served as Interim Rector at St. Luke's Church in Sea Cliff, St. Stephen's Church in Port Washington, St. Mary's Church Lake Ronkonkoma, St. John's Lattingtown, Grace Church Massapequa, and Christ Church Manhasset. He and his wife Judith, who grew up in Oyster Bay, were married in Christ Church Oyster Bay 50 years ago this August! Judith is retired from her work as a psychotherapist after 48 years. The Colwells have three grown daughters and three grandchildren.

The Reverend Elisabeth E. Tunney

Originally from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, Liz Tunney became priest-in-charge of St. Paul's in Patchogue in September, 2011 where she was ordained as a priest by Bishop Provenzano. She was called as rector in April of 2014.

Liz believes that majoring in Latin and history prepared her to deal with the bureaucratic machinations of the financial services industry where she spent 29 years doing organizational development consulting. She refined her understanding of the business world with an MBA but spent most of her career facilitating groups of employees as they improved service, quality, and productivity. She enjoys providing the training and coaching that enables a group to accomplish its goals.

Liz has been a trainer in the Church Development Institute which provides and offers organizational development training for clergy and lay leaders; she has served as a trainer for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Diocese of Colorado. Liz also did training for the Leadership Training Institute which offered laboratory workshops in human interaction, group development, design skills, and conflict man-

agement for clergy and lay leaders.

Before experiencing a call to ordained ministry she put her skills to use as a vestry member, a secretary, and a senior warden. As a member of her diocesan consulting team she consulted with parishes about team-based ministry, conflict management, vestry retreats, church mergers, and strategic planning.

Liz provides consulting services for the Diocese of Long Island by facilitating retreats, and coaching vestries and search committees. Liz was originally trained in Appreciative Inquiry in 2004. In 2012 she and Canon Betit attended Rob Voyle's workshop on using Appreciative Inquiry in the search process. Since then Liz has coached two churches through the full search process and provided coaching to a third for the vestry retreat and parish summit.

Appreciative Inquiry and the Search Process

By The Rev. Elisabeth Tunney

As your search consultant I will be using Appreciative Inquiry to guide the search process for your new rector. Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to organizational development that looks to leverage strengths rather than fix problems. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on asking questions about what the organization is like at its best and helps an organization to use those examples to create a desired future.

This organizational theory suggests that:

- In every organization, like a church, something works. Focusing on best experiences helps us to create a vision for who we are at our best. And when we talk about ourselves at our best we start to create that reality.
- We create reality out of our experiences; naturally members of a congregation have different experiences of reality. Healthy congregations value those differences. Bringing everyone together to share their best experiences ensures that those differences will be heard.
- We influence our direction when

we ask questions about our lives together and we can begin to move in the direction of those questions.

- when we start to answer them. That why Appreciative Inquiry asks questions that are appreciative.
- It's a lot easier to accept change when we can bring some of the past with us. Therefore if we want a positive future, we want to be sure to bring the best parts of the past.
- Growth and development come from having a clear and common vision for the future. Appreciative Inquiry provides a way to engage people in creating and owning that vision.

Appreciative Inquiry has been used successfully in strategic planning, in business redesign, in team-building, and in search processes. Many dioceses use Appreciative Inquiry in their search processes because Appreciative Inquiry helps a congregation determine the kind of church it wants to be. Identifying your goals, hopes and wishes helps to clarify what skills, talents, and values you should be looking for in your rector. In an Appreciative Inquiry Summit a congregation shares its stories about its best experiences and uses those experiences to create a vision for the future. Telling stories together

helps a congregation to articulate and recognize its core values. Values inspire, motivate, and define a congregation's identity. Successful searches focus on trying to match the values of the candidates with the values of the church - which is very different from describing a list of attributes that are desired in the next rector. When a rector shares the same values as his/her congregation both are able to work and grow together.



Rob Voyle, the guru of using Appreciative Inquiry in the search process, says that the search process is not just about trying calling a new rector, it is about reflecting on the mission and ministry of the church, how it works to bring about the Kingdom of God and to serve Christ in their community and the world. This is sacred business and the relationship between a priest and his/her parish is a sacred bond. To this end the work that you do as a vestry, as a search committee, and as a parish in the search process is Holy Work. Participate fully and trust that God will be present in the process.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.”

Jeremiah 29:11-12

Warden's Corner

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

This issue of *The Compass* has lots of important information for you to digest, so please read it carefully. As we are saying “Goodbye” to the Casparians, we enter a period of uncertainty when the Search Committee embarks upon a most important task: finding a new rector for Christ Church Oyster Bay. As the outgoing rector of St. Thomas in NYC said in his final sermon: ***“God calls each priest who becomes Rector here. It’s the Vestry’s sacred responsibility to pray and to search for who that priest – whom God has already chosen – is”***. (Thanks to Martin Evans for sharing this sermon with us)

Many events will take place in the coming months leading up to calling a new rector and it starts on September 20 with the all-parish Summit Meeting – we certainly hope for significant participation from all of you. This is your chance to be heard and lend your opinion to the process. Soon after that meeting we will announce members of the Search Committee and their work will start in earnest. We will also write and produce the Parish Brochure which is our main communication to prospective new rectors.

Sometimes during such a period of transition, parishes have experienced a significant drop in Sunday attendance and an equal drop in pledge income. I feel very confident that with Father Charlie Colwell as our Interim Rector and Father Fred Miller as our Curate, we will NOT have this problem. I hope all of you will continue to faithfully join us on Sundays for breakfast and Services and will fulfill your pledge to CCOB as the year progresses. We plan to have some special Sunday events to keep you interested, and I pledge to communicate often and extensively on the search process and make it as transparent as possible without breaking confidentiality boundaries.

Other important events will take place: Hector and his family will move into the rectory so his house can be renovated; the rectory itself received central air conditioning; the rehabilitation of the Youth Center will continue after we receive all

the permits, and we will start a new Stewardship Campaign in the fall. New leadership is being sought for this campaign. The Website is in the process of renewal and we will endeavor to keep this important communications tool up-to-date. The *Compass* will be published about every two or three months.

We pray for a time of renewal and introspection. We will organize an additional number of Parish Pot Luck Suppers so all will have a chance to discuss our progress and keep our parish family intact. Use this time to get to know your fellow parishioners a little better and make a point of talking to those you may not know so well. Wear your name tag so Father Colwell will know who you are. Stop by the office and chat with Stacy or Fred. Keep current by reading the weekly e-mail blast, visit our web site and say a prayer of encouragement for the Search Committee. Remember that the Wardens and Vestry are ready to discuss any concerns you may have; please don't keep them to yourself!

This is not a time for the weak hearted, but our parish is alive and well and I look forward to a great year!

Keep the Faith and may God Bless you and our beloved Christ Church.

Ton Heijmen
Senior Warden

Parishioners' Corner



Night Walk

By Rick Robinson

The Moon is my sole companion on a late-night walk,
casting soft shadows upon the pavement and
moving with me through the dark trees of spring.
As the road curves, it playfully changes its position,
as if to hide from me before resuming our stroll.
There will be other nights, of course,
when I must walk alone, but the Moon is
faithful in its way, like an old dog
who goes on ahead and yet
always returns to my side.



Adios Dear Peter

By Frank Rinck

For Christ Church this season sees an end
As we embrace our leader whom we love,
To feel his presence 'til the day we'll send
You off, released as we would free a dove.

For our Church a void will be created,
Our Ambassador and Captain rolled in one,
Over a decade your spirit to us mated,
That bond is fixed, and ne'er will be undone.

Even in our sadness, there's joy anew
For you and yours can in the garden grow
That which will nurture more than just a few,
And food for all, some you have yet to know.

We wish you peace and love as off you sail,
And envy those o'er whom your spirit will prevail.

*Commissioned poem especially composed for this issue of *The Compass* as a tribute to Peter

Save the Date!



Sunday, August 31

Last joint service of the summer (Father Casparian's last official day as Rector); Jeff Prey and Peter Casparian reflect on the last 10 years in Oyster Bay

Sunday, September 7

10 am service featuring Fr. Michael Carlisle as guest preacher, and several musical guests

Sunday, September 7

Peter's retirement picnic will follow the 10 am service, a community-wide celebration of a decade of partnerships

Saturday, September 20

Parish Summit Meeting 9 am

From the Treasurer's Desk



The end of the second quarter, or mid-year, giving statements were recently mailed out. These statements are a record of your giving to Christ Church as of June 30, 2014. We are most grateful for your devoted support in keeping current on your pledge commitment and we encourage those, who are able, to please keep up with your pledge obligation over the summer.

The 2014 operating budget of \$661,018 is funded 48% by pledges and operating income (\$316,200) and 52% (\$344,818) from funds generated by our endowment.

In addition to the operating budget, Outreach, Music and Capital Expense are budgeted at \$535,515 for this year and funded through endowment contribution and assistance of several large donor gifts.

The total budgets of Christ Church Oyster Bay for fiscal year 2014 total \$1,196,533. The endowment funds pay 74% of the expenses and contributions 26% of the expenses. For many years, the wardens, vestry and financial team have struggled with this issue and the best ways to address it. It is an ongoing dialogue and constructive input to the process would be more than welcome.

The Financial Planning Committee meets every year during October and November and prepares the budgets for the ensuing year. The proposed budget is then brought to the Vestry for discussion and approval before being put in place.

Our endowment is managed well and has enjoyed sustained growth. The investments are with Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch and the diocesan investment fund. It was with deep sadness that we said good-bye to Abigail Feder, a parishioner and friend, who aptly chaired the investment committee for many years and did such an incredible job. She brought knowledge and intelligence to the process of structuring the investments and monitoring their performance. We owe Abigail a great deal of gratitude for all that she accomplished and know her presence and counsel will be greatly missed.

In April, CCOB welcomed Mary Sadler as the new financial administrator. In her first few months, she has done a wonderful job of organizing our records and taking charge of the financial concerns of the parish. Mary is a certified public accountant and was admitted to the New York State Bar in April 1999. We are most fortunate to have her on the CCOB staff and extend a warm welcome to her. It has been a real pleasure to work with Mary.

Please feel free to contact me directly at haroldougherty@aol.com if you have any financial matters that you wish to discuss.

Laura K.V. Dougherty
Treasurer

A Tribute To Marguerite

By Colby Luckenbill

The ladies of Christ Church came together to honor Marguerite Casparian, with a lovely going away party at Patti and Fred Bauerschmidts' home on Center Island, NY, on Saturday August 9th. Virginia Slutter and Patti Bauerschmidt were the parties' main organizers.

It was a perfect summer day for the occasion. All was in alignment with God's loving presence which was felt all around us. One approached the Bauerschmidts' house through a terraced garden with brick walks. Upon entering the elegant and welcoming home, the party appeared like a vibrant garden teeming with graceful butterflies fluttering and resting joyously about.

Lovingly homemade and carefully selected appetizers and desserts were presented for all to sample. There were delicious salmon and shrimp appetizers as well as prosciutto wrapped around tender rich green asparagus. The sweet selection comprised French fruit tarts, moist homemade blueberry coffee cake, rich chocolate brownies, and many more items. Delicious re-

freshing drinks such as Bellinis, white wine, San Pellegrino, lemonade, and ice tea were served.



Marguerite and Gina
(photo by Shari Dembowski)

Everyone basked in the light of Marguerite's glowing presence. She looked stunning in an elegant contemporary lavender linen dress with ruffled hem and lovely blown glass Venetian earrings. Her eyes sparkled and her smile was kind and happy. Many reflected on their own special connection to and appreciation of Marguerite.

Gina Maisano gave a deeply felt speech at the gathering, expressing how welcomed Marguerite made her feel when she first arrived. Her favorite part of the party was "how happy it made Marguerite" whom she considers the heart of the church. Patti Bauerschmidt, was the gracious host of the party and looked beautiful in a blue and white nautical dress. "Everyone was happy to see Marguerite. It was a warm occasion we will all remember," Patti recalled. "Marguerite is so warm

and encompassing.” Ron Hlinka, who worked at the event, said that “Marguerite has always been very open and receiving of people in the Church.” “Marguerite is just such a marvelous person, warm, friendly and generous with her time,” said Marla Peltzer. “She is amazingly hospitable, and very talented artistically and musically. She is an enthusiastic member of the choir and we are all going to miss her a lot.”

When asked about her artistic talent, Marguerite answers passionately, “I have always, always, always been an artist.” She explained how so much of her being enjoys making art. “If I am away from it I don't feel whole; I feel distracted. If you're not using your talents you're not happy.” It's about “using your talents because God gave you gifts, if not it's a waste.”

From all the people I spoke with at the party they were buzzing with love and having an experience of sharing it. It was not an intellectual idea but a strength of the heart. Knowing that and feeling it in community will bond us and carry us through the transitions we are all facing collectively and individually. I learned this from watching and participating with my grandparents, the late Don and Anita Luckenbill who lived in Oyster Bay

for over 60 years and gave fully from their hearts in church and through music to all.

“I thought the party was just perfect,” Marguerite said warmly. “I don't like to be the center of attention but I was very comfortable.” Virginia Slutter said she enjoyed the feeling of camaraderie that was created. Virginia loves Marguerite's “boundless energy to reach out to everyone to extend love and understanding.”

It was a fitting tribute to celebrate Marguerite in a special event as she has so often been the central figure creating events and parties for others. “At church we focus on the rector and this was a way to focus on Marguerite,” said Marie Brussel. Gail Scaramuzzo expressed how “Marguerite is just a good human being. I really feel that she brought a lot of women together and broke down walls that were there before. Maybe that is her legacy.”

Having the women come together and bonding in celebration of their love and appreciation for Marguerite made for a wonderful day enjoyed by all. Marguerite, in her closing words said it best: “It's not over, friendship is for a lifetime - We are a part of you and you are a part of us.”

The Church School

By Joseph LoBianco

Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”*

On Sunday mornings, when parishioners are joined in worship at the 10:00 am service, a group of dedicated teachers minister to our children in the Church School.

Melinda Wenner Bradley, the Director of Religious Formation, has a master’s degree in education and has been a classroom teacher for the past 20 years. In the last 13 years, she has been working in religious as well as scholastic education.

In her experience and opinion, the mission of the Church School is threefold. Its main goals are to provide religious education in the context of the Episcopal Church and teach commitment to Christian principles, create community for young people, and enable children to put faith into practice by exploring how to live out and witness their faith.

The Church School meets in the Parish

Hall, and the location of the classes vary from the Godly Play room, Saint Hilda’s room, and the Roosevelt Library. There are two age groups 4-7, and 8-11, and a typical class starts at 10:00 am and ends around 10:45 am, in time for the Eucharist.



The Godly Play Room

One curricular focus on the Church School is Godly Play®, a “storytelling curriculum at its core, that honors the spiritual life of children,” explains Melinda. In the Godly Play room, shelves are filled with story materials for teaching about the Bible and the liturgical practices and symbols of the Church. The experiential method makes spaces for children to explore scripture and church practices (baptism, the calendar of the church year) in a very personal, tangible way.

The students ask great questions, and the complexity of the Bible stories fascinate them. When the older children’s class read about Noah’s Ark, Melinda handed out a different Bible

to each student and asked students to pick out key words from each text. Some were children's Bibles, others were academic Bibles. The students discovered that even though the text varied in complexity among the different Bibles, the story was still the same, and they explored it's meaning together.

This past year, the focus was on the Old Testament, and in the coming year, the students will be exploring the New Testament. Melinda hopes the Church School children will fully explore Jesus' message and ministry.



Sacred Story Shelves (Old Testament)

Melinda believes that communicating with families is important, and sends out a monthly calendar of Church School and parish events. She hopes that this helps families feel more connected, and allows them to think about the church in their daily lives.

It is crucial that the children of Christ

Church feel part of the larger community of the parish, and that is why the Church School sponsors a number of special events such as All Hallows' Eve, St Nicholas Day, and Shrove Tuesday.

Melinda envisions a future of "what could exist beyond Sunday morning." In addition to Sunday classes, she would like her students to be able to connect outside of church, through social events like pizza and game nights, and fellowship-building activities.

"Kids are spiritual from the day they are born. Our job is to give them a way to explore and affirm their faith."



Melinda Wenner Bradley

For the past twenty years, Melinda Wenner Bradley taught history and religion in schools and served Quaker religious education programs. After attending a Godly Play core training in 2005, she began a journey that has woven together her interests in children's spiritual lives, program development,

and how to support families and teachers in church communities.

Melinda has been a trainer since 2010, focusing on trainings for Quaker meetings and Friends schools. She served from 2007-2013 as the clerk of the Children's Spiritual Life Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Quakers) and is a co-author of *Faith & Play™: Quaker Stories for Friends Trained in the Godly Play® Method*, for which Jerome Berryman wrote a beautiful blessing.

In 2011, Melinda was named by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to the National Council of Churches "Circle of Names" campaign in support of women's ministries.

Sojourning in the Christ Church community has provided her an opportunity for rich interfaith connections. She lives with her husband Matt and their three children (ages 7, 10, and 13) on the campus of East Woods School, where he is Head of School.

Email: mwennerbradley@gmail.com
Phone: (484) 678-6508 (cell)

What is Godly Play®

Godly Play® is a Montessori-inspired curriculum created by Episcopal priest Jerome Berryman. In Godly Play, Bible stories are presented in an open-ended way that invites children to experientially find themselves in the stories. Godly Play includes stories from the Old and New Testament and "liturgical action" stories about practicing our faith.

This curriculum:

- Honors the spiritual lives of people of all ages (and faith backgrounds)
- Is designed for children in preschool through middle school; can also be used with older students and with adults in multigenerational settings
- Involves a highly visual form of storytelling
- Models worship practices and makes room for silence
- Uses open ended questions that invite wonder and reflection
- Gives children words and images for expressing their beliefs and faith
- Provides an intentional, managed environment that supports individual and corporate discovery
- Is grounded in children's own experience
- Is designed to be used with a particular method that requires training.

THE COMPASS

THE NEWSLETTER OF CHRIST CHURCH

An Episcopal Parish in Oyster Bay

61 East Main Street, Oyster Bay, NY 11771 USA

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Mission Statement

With God's help, we strive to embody the unbounded love of Jesus Christ. Sustained by the Holy Spirit on our journey of faith, we offer hospitality, healing and hope.