

# The Cunningham Chronicle

## Christ Church, Millwood



Fall 2023

Serving the people of Clarke County and beyond since 1738

### Worship Schedule:

#### **9:30 a.m.**

Holy Eucharist II and  
Sunday School for Children.  
Morning Prayer with music on  
the 2nd Sunday of the month.

Nursery is available during the  
9:30 a.m. service.

#### **10:45 a.m.**

Coffee Hour

#### **11:00 a.m.**

Adult Forum

### **Staff:**

Rector: The Reverend  
Melanie K. Lewis

Email:  
priest@cunninghamchapel.org  
(cell) 540-327-5153

Pantry Coordinator:

Bette Marchese  
cccares@cunninghamchapel.org

Music Director:

Szymon Czerniak  
music@cunninghamchapel.org

**Parish Vestry** (year term  
expires):

Jeff Harris, Senior Warden  
(2023)

Cathy Frederickson,  
Junior Warden (2023)

Terry Chandler, Treasurer (2024)

Macon Uskurait, Recorder  
(2024),

Natalie Greenhalgh (2024)

Page Allen Groseclose (2026)

Chuck Roberts (2026)

Ian Williams (2026)

### **Contact:**

Christ Church, Millwood  
P. O. Box 153  
809 Bishop Meade Rd.  
Millwood, VA 22646  
Phone: (540) 837-1112

### *From the Rector's Desk*

Hello Christ Church and Friends,

Fall came in hot, dry and crispy, but it is turning out to be glorious! I do hope the weather continues to be mild into Advent.

Of course, the program year returns with this season, with the Christ Church Choir, the Children's Choir, Adult Forum, and Sunday School. It's wonderful to hear the rich sound that the full choir provides in leading the hymns.

Since the last newsletter we have also had two concerts in our new concert series: classical pianist Eoin Fleming, and jazz pianist Caleb Nye. These concerts have been tremendously well-received and we are very much looking forward to more. This community seems to have a special appreciation for excellent music of all kinds. Check inside for the schedule of coming events.

Our ministry to our neighbors struggling with food insecurity continues in full force, since the needs are now greater than ever. Bette, our pantry coordinator, has created Friends of the Pantry, which raised more than \$20,000 this year. Thank you for your generous participation in this program! Then, at the end of September we celebrated the harvest with the Farm to Table fundraising dinner. Again, the generosity of the community was outstanding, as the guests raised over \$12,000 for the pantry. Check out Bette's pantry update for new grant awards, new partnerships, and more details. I so appreciate Betty's heart for her work, and for our clients—and I'm grateful that we can all be a part of this ministry.

Bishop Stevenson visited us on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, getting to know the parish, and confirming and receiving members of our community. There are more details, and fun pictures inside.

And we have a new parish administrator—Julie Dillingham! Many thanks to Julie, and to Macon Uskurait, for their work on this newsletter.

Grace upon grace,

Melanie+



## Blessing of the Animals October 7, 2023.

St. Francis Day this year was on October 4th. The following Saturday, we invited animal members of our parish and wider community to join us for a blessing. Here are a few pictures of the event, which we hope to grow year by year.

## Old Chapel Morning Prayer Service September 10, 2023

Twice a year, the congregation gathers in worship at Old Chapel. Built in 1793, it is the oldest Episcopal church still in use west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We will meet there again for an Easter Vigil Service on March 31, 2024, at 6 a.m.



## Ongoing: Music Series at Christ Church

**Upcoming:**      *November 15 at 7:30: Crooked Angels*  
                          *December 6 at 7:30: Harambee Gospel Choir*



CALEB NEI JAZZ



## Dunning Community Service Award



Left to right: Natalie Greenhalgh, vestry food pantry liaison and Powhatan teacher; award winner Mia Timberlake; Jay Briar, Head of Powhatan School

The Thomas H. B. Dunning Community Service Award honors the Powhatan 8th grade student, or students, whose volunteerism at the Christ Church Cares Food Pantry in Millwood embodies Tommy Dunning's spirit of faithful service, and kindness to all.

This year our award goes to a young woman who has shown a willingness to do any pantry task: stock the shelves, bag bulk foods, help clients shop, carry client groceries—I'm told she enthusiastically does even the dirtiest jobs. Her bubbly, positive personality, and willingness to do hard work to help others, honors the memory of Tommy Dunning.

## The Bishop's Visitation



We were happy to welcome The Rt. Rev. E. Mark Stevenson, bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, for his visitation to Christ Church on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The annual visitation of the bishop serves many purposes, the first of which is getting to know the parish, and checking on its wellbeing. To do that he reviewed the church registers with Melanie+ and heard about recent events in the parish. He also spoke with some members of the vestry, and many members of the parish.

In addition to that, during the worship service he formally received Ross Dunning into the Episcopal Church, and confirmed Lauren Hare, Alley Hare, and Bill Waddell. During the service, Bishop Stevenson preached and celebrated Eucharist, and the Children's Choir sang, the Christ Church choir sang, and we heard solos from Emmanuel, Violet, and Adaugo.

A festive reception followed, where parishioners had the opportunity to ask the bishop questions, and to celebrate the confirmands. Many people expressed their appreciation of Bishop Stevenson, and how moving the service was for them. This visitation begins a new, and hopeful, chapter in Christ Church's relationship with the diocese.

Pictured above, left to right: Rev. Lewis, Alley Hare, Bishop Stevenson, Bill Waddell, and Lauren Hare.  
Not pictured: Ross Dunning.





# FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

FALL  
2023



## MORE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE WIN!

What a blessing to announce that in addition to our partnerships with Audley Farm and Oak Hart Farm, we have now partnered with Smith Meadow Farm and Gilbert's Corner Farm, a farm that is a non-profit member of the Piedmont Environmental Council. We are now able to offer pork and lamb for our protein options and a much wider range of produce.

I encourage you all to patronize these farms, and show them how grateful we are for their support.



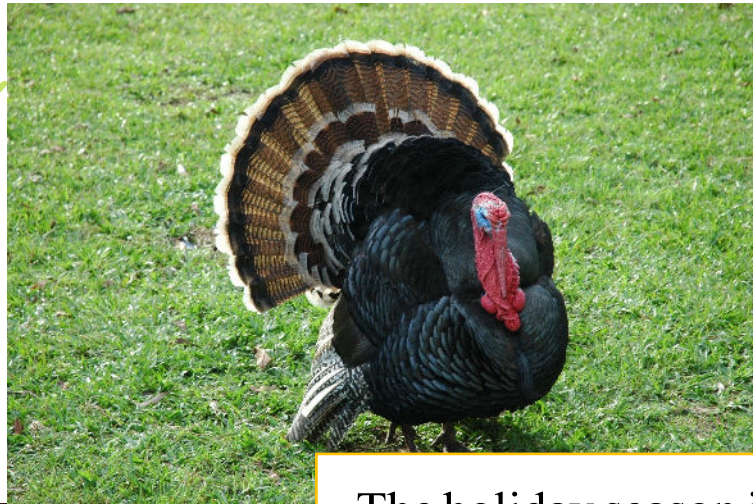
## Friends of the Pantry Wrap Up

We are thrilled to share that, thus far, our Friends of The Pantry Campaign has brought in \$22,000. To all who contributed, thank you from the bottom of our hearts! With your help, we are making great gains at meeting the increased need for nutrient-dense food for our clients!

Plaque engraving is underway, and we'll soon have it on display!



*It's  
Turkey  
Time*



Our Farm-To-Table Event was a huge hit! So much so, that people are already asking if we've set a date for next year. We're not sure yet if we will hold this event again next year, so stay tuned to the newsletter to find out.

We are thrilled, however, to announce that this event did raise \$12,691.00 for the food pantry. Thank you to all who helped support this event. Both the volunteers who served on the planning committee and those who purchased tickets to attend! We will be using these funds to add more items to our food pantry offerings.

The holiday season is right around the corner, and we'll be giving out turkeys on November 17th. In preparation for our turkey distribution, we will be accepting donations of turkeys and all of the Thanksgiving fixings, during the month of October and up to November 17th. More details will be shared via our weekly emails as we fine-tune our schedule.

## **WRAPPING UP THE GRANT SEASON**

We have gone full throttle on our fundraising efforts this year; with ever-rising inflation and increased need for food, it was a necessity. To date, we have been awarded the following grants.

- **Land O' Lakes**
- **Rappahannock Electric**
- **United Way**
- **Anonymous Grantor**
- **Richard and Caroline Guathmey Memorial Fund**



## New Additions to Our Parish



If you drop by the Parish House for a visit, you might get to meet Nina and Poppy. Nina is music director Szymon Czerniak's Great Pyrenees cross, and Poppy is a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel belonging to Melanie+. They often accompany their "parents" to work. Visiting on a Thursday or Friday, you may meet Banner, who has come along to keep Julie company. An interesting side note is that Assistant Bishop Gayle Harris also has a Ruby Cavalier, named Topaz, who travels with her. Maybe these dogs will get to meet her someday.

### Meet Our New Parish Administrator and Communications Coordinator



With a professional background as varied as the airline industry and horse grooming on an international level, Julie has found her new home at Christ Church. Originally from South Carolina, Julie has made northern Virginia home for over 30 years. For many years, she attended an Episcopal church in Loudoun County and was very involved with the Sunday school there. Julie is now fully immersed in Clarke County, where she shares her "farmette" with 4 dogs, 2 ponies, and 2 cats. Her son Ian lives and works in Fairfax County, and you might see him from time to time. Aside from tending her animals at home, Julie is an avid naturalist and enjoys spending as much time as possible outdoors, hiking with her dogs, or gardening. She says she has enjoyed meeting members of the parish and is looking forward to her new ministry here.



Dear Parish members,

Our summer was mild earlier and then tested us all with the heat and drought! I hope the weather change this week will last through a typically long and pleasant Virginia fall.

Speaking of glorious, the wonderful sound of our organ beautifully played by Szymon every week is music to the ears! We are so grateful to have the skills of Biedler Electric Motors in Martinsburg, who manufactured the essential piece of the broken motor, and the skills of Richard

Alford of Lawless and Assoc. in Greencastle who was able to realign and install the motor, and provide tuning. Szymon and John Cermac provided invaluable help in "getting it done." It is becoming more difficult to find skilled shops and people to work on older pieces of equipment, and we are so fortunate to have them. Thank you to all!!

Earlier this month, our former Interim Rector, Rob Banse, asked to utilize our bucolic church and grounds for some filming of campaign ads. He is running for Va. State Congress and, although we cannot endorse him, we do wish him well and appreciate the donation to Christ Church this campaign event elicited. Our own Buster Dunning had his grounds crew do a sprucing up along with his regular weekly mowing. Thank you!

Supporting our Parish House and the Bishop's Pantry are ongoing. The wifi connection for Bette Marchese and the food pantry are hopefully resolved. We always have light bulbs and small items to attend to in keeping our Food Pantry open and supporting our community.

You may have noticed the painting of the tables and chairs on the patio and the addition of a welcome umbrella? Many are able to enjoy the patio during coffee hour and gatherings thanks to the ministry of Donna Gray.

Keeping the sound reliable from the church has been challenging and we have enlisted the help of Wayne Romero who is a local sound expert. We think you may have noticed the improvements? This will hopefully make us able to customize our system for our needs more economically in the future.

The sign in front of our church has been repainted with the correct worship time. Thank you to Cyrus Robertson for his skill.

Ongoing is the replacement of the AC units. With our wonderful but historic buildings, things are usually more complicated than they first seem. More on that project in a later letter.

Wishing all of you glorious autumn weather and progress on your own projects!

Sincerely,

Cathy Frederickson

Junior Warden



Dear Friends of Christ Church,

Previous newsletter columns have highlighted some of Christ Church's encouraging achievements. What perhaps goes unrecognized are the numerous people who contribute their time and energy to help our programs thrive. Limited space in the newsletter precludes listing all the volunteers who contribute so generously. So, please excuse the need to refer to larger groups of you as numerals or third person pronouns.

Thirteen parishioners have volunteered to serve as ushers. We have 26 church members who have trained to be Lector, Psalmist, and Intercessor. Four congregants have learned the role of Chalice Minister and others are in training. We have five willing Crucifers, four from the same family.

Ross Dunning has recently taken the position of chair of the hospitality committee. Julie Dillingham coordinates Sunday School for children with a lectionary-based program with short videos and an age-appropriate Bible stories. Then, Julie brings the kids over to the church from the Parish House in time to join their parents for communion. As the children's classes grow, parental volunteers will be needed.

We have multiple people who add their voices to those of the students from Shenandoah. Collectively they bring us a joyful music program. If you have vocal talents and yearn to sing, please speak with Szymon.

Our Investment Trustees, Tom Gilpin, Cary Embrey, and Ian Williams oversee the performance of our endowment while the eight members of the Vestry conduct parochial business, formulating church policy and plans. Recently Amy Moore, Darren Conners, and David Burns volunteered their services reviewing our finances for the annual audit required by the Diocese.

Bette Marchese has 45 volunteers for the pantry, many of whom are Christ Church members. To prevent burnout, she rotates the schedule for market weekends based upon availability. For shelving and cleaning, Bette puts out a call for volunteers. Four of our families, on a rotating schedule, pick up donations at Martin's in Berryville. A group of four women each takes one Friday a month to help distribute food to the elderly. Another group of volunteers take turns helping with food bank pickups. Six parishioners have served on the planning committee for the successful Farm-to-Table dinner at Audley Farm. Bette has recently partnered with two more farms to provide local, nutrient-dense food for the Pantry's clients. If any of you have connections with other area farms, your help would be welcomed in building new partnerships. The Pantry is particularly in need of dairy and poultry. The Pantry's needs also include a back-up lead for those infrequent market weekends when Bette must be away.

The Altar Guild roles are largely performed by three people. A new individual is in training but more volunteers to share the Sundays would be wonderful.

John Cermak kindly volunteers to tackle many things electronic or mechanical. A previous life on a boat made him quite resourceful.



Our Junior Warden, Cathy Frederickson, rides herd on Parish House, church and Pantry maintenance and repairs.

It is particularly gratifying when members of the congregation simply appear and ask if there are any tasks to perform. Two young members of the church recently spent two days helping with things that needed to be done in the church office. Another parishioner spent several hours alphabetizing the office files. For any role which requires a little practice, Melanie+ happily provides instruction.

Many thanks to all of you who help. We hope that those who have not discovered their own ministry at Christ Church Millwood will simply look about and see what holds appeal. Your contributions to the many tasks for which a growing church needs volunteers, are always appreciated. A bit of volunteering may also afford you a nice sense of being a part of the spiritual mission of this lovely church community.

Sincerely,

Jeff Harris

Senior Warden



## Sunday School

Sunday School began on September 17th, and this session will continue through the end of November. All school age children are invited to participate in this Bible-focused half hour. The children enjoyed the Whirl program, a lectionary-based program introduced last spring, so we are continuing this curriculum. Each session begins with a 5-minute video leading into a discussion of and activities related to the Bible topic.. Our classroom time lasts just 35 minutes, since at 10:05, the children are accompanied to church to join their families for Passing of the Peace and the Holy Eucharist.

## Nursery Time

Ciarra continues to provide an entertaining, professional child care setting for your little ones. It is always fun for them to see what crafty projects Ciarra has in store!

## MUSIC NOTES

**from music director Szymon Czerniak**

The fall season is in full swing and music at Christ Church is thriving. The choir continues to fill our hearts and feed our souls during service with wonderful performances. Every Sunday our choir and soloists treat us to special heartfelt music. Join us each week as we continue this tradition.

The parish children will be joining in on the musical festivities as well. Currently we have planned performances for November 5th and December 24th. If you have children that are interested, please find me and we can discuss rehearsal dates. I will do my best to accommodate everybody and their busy schedules.

In addition to our service, I am also pleased to announce the continuing efforts of the Christ Church Music Series (we are still looking for an official name so let me know your ideas!). Our opening concert for the fall season featured a truly jaw-dropping and mesmerizing performance by Irish classical pianist Eoin Fleming. If you missed this year's concert, do not worry, Eoin has agreed to grace us next year. In the meantime, we anticipate the rest of our series. Local jazz legend, Caleb Nei, performed with his group on Wednesday, October 25th, giving us a wonderful evening of legendary jazz.

On November 15th, the band Crooked Angels will be joining us in concert. The singer/songwriter duo made up of Jamie and Amy Potter are a true gem in the Northern Virginia area and I am pleased to bring their enormous talent to Christ Church. Their eclectic sound combines elements of rock, country, bluegrass and gospel and I have personally experienced the power and beauty that their performances bring to audiences.

On December 6th, Shenandoah University's resident gospel choir will be gracing us with a tremendous concert just in time for the holiday season. Harambee has been an institution at SU for over fifty years and has performed all over the United States. Under the direction of Christ Church's own Adaugo Ejekwu, Harambe Gospel Choir will be sure to deliver an inspiring and uplifting performance.

All performances for the Christ Church Concert Series will take place on Wednesdays at 7:30 in the sanctuary.

The melodies that have lifted our spirits are a testament to the enduring connection between faith and song. I sincerely thank everybody who has helped make all of this possible.



## *Dates to Remember or File Away*

The website calendar is your most up-to-date source for current events, but here are a few highlights. [www.cunninghamchapel.org/calendar](http://www.cunninghamchapel.org/calendar)

Choir practice most Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m.. Check the website calendar for current information.

November 11: Food drive to benefit Christ Church Cares food pantry.

November 15: Crooked Angels Concert at 7:30 p.m.

November 28: Annual blood drive at Boyce Firehall.

December 3: First Sunday in Advent.

December 6: Harambee Gospel Choir Concert at 7:30 p.m.

December 24: Christmas Eve Service at 5 p.m.

December 25: Christmas Morning Service, with music, at 9 a.m.

## **ADULT FORUM**

**Who Wrote the Bible?** Have you ever wondered who wrote the Bible, or how the different books were chosen, or how it came to be in its current form? To answer these questions and many more, join the next Adult Forum on October 29th and November 5th. The Rev. Dr. Donna Scott will lead us in a fascinating exploration of the formation of the biblical canon.

**Journeying the Way of Love.** We will be returning to the Way of Love model, using the Advent lessons in the Gospel of Luke as our guide. Luke provides a pattern for understanding how we can live the way of love in our lives. Join the discussion during Advent.

Keep an eye on the calendar or the **Weekly Update (via email)** to keep current with events here at Christ Church Millwood. Not getting the Weekly Update? Email [christchurch@cunninghamchapel.org](mailto:christchurch@cunninghamchapel.org) to get on the list!



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