

Part of how we mark time in the church is by the rhythmic cycle of our weekly worship and our yearly seasonal calendar. It is how we orient ourselves towards God. And layered upon this is our missional work together. When we look back at the last 10 years, we see that we have done much together to improve, revitalize, create and even let go of certain ministries. This is all part of the life-cycle of the church.

Mother Clare tells us that all things flow from worship. Over the past 10 years, we returned to including evening worship services for all major feast days and added other spiritual offerings such as Ashes to Go, joint Stations of the Cross with neighboring parishes, outdoor services, singing the Hallelujah chorus together on Christmas eve, labyrinth meditations, guided meditations, Epiphany pageants, outdoor Stations of the Cross and Stations of the Resurrection, and Blessing of the Backpacks. The parish was privileged to put forward one of our own for ordination and to be a part of her formation. We celebrated the life profession of one of our congregation as a Third Order Franciscan. An intentional focus on our connection to creation was shaped through the celebration of Rogation Sunday and Lamass Day, and the building of production gardens at the church and the rectory.

A children's choir was reintroduced, and in 2016 our Contemporary Christian music band was created and offered monthly praise and worship gatherings. During the past decade, we were blessed with the consistent presence of our music minister, and now we find ourselves needing to forge a new path forward. And as much as things have changed over time, it is our Altar Guild that is steadfast in its support and underpinning of our worship.

For Christian Formation, we have moved from a Sunday morning Adult Inquiry & More forum, a Lenten and Advent program, to adding regular evening Bible Study, Episcopalian 101, and The Way of Love. We completed RenewalWorks as a parish which led us to participate in the Living Discipleship program featuring year-long studies of The Path: A Journey through the Bible and Walk in Love, concluding with Celebrating the Saints this year.

Our youth formation program has followed the natural aging of our younger church members, moving from an active youth program which participated in 2 walking pilgrimages, to formation geared towards younger children, who are now growing up as well.

The list is long for improvements to our buildings and grounds. From 2012 to present, a new roof was put on the church, the rectory was purchased, the kitchen underwent a complete renovation, followed by the lower level hallways, library, youth room and Miller Hall with the installation of French drains to alleviate recurring flooding. Square Hall was dedicated as Miller Hall, and our chapel was renovated and rededicated. Improvements to the church offices were made. Major upgrades to the rectory and sanctuary were completed recently through the Capital Campaign.

Our Outreach programs also grew during this past decade, in scope, impact and in the involvement of lay leaders. Our first Episcopalian Bike to Build was in 2013. It became a yearly event for 7 years to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. We participated in 7 Habitat Build Days. Overcoming community resistance together, we hosted our first Nourish Babylon community meal in 2015. Six years later, we continue to feed the body and soul of those in need in our community by continually layering on social services and responding to the pandemic with grab and go hot meals. Other Outreach efforts have included yearly Souper bowl Sunday collections, Christmas shoebox gifts, intergenerational Elf Party, and pet outreach.

Over the decade, we've hosted many events aimed at fun, fellowship, hospitality and fundraising. There was the 60s party, Halloween party, Carnivale celebrations, dinners at the rectory, St. Exercius Day, band receptions, Basket Bash, plant sales, Paint Nights, Game Night, Memorial Day Parades, a film debut, and probably more! In 2013, our Healing & Wholeness group moved us toward healthier food offerings at all our events.

Our leadership skills and capacity have grown through training and intentional focus. We have participated in programs for Congregational Development, Faith Formation, Stewardship, Pastoral Care, Parent Leadership, Invite Welcome Connect and have had annual vestry retreats at the beginning of each year. We sought and received many grants that helped our ministries grow in various ways. In 2017 the vestry called Mother Clare as rector with a recommitment to mutual ministry.

Our Communications abilities have grown in what seems like warp-speed, coupled with words that never existed in our vocabulary! We moved from a monthly printed newsletter, to a twice-revised website, a FaceBook page, electronic TV and digital email announcements, Zoom meetings, a YouTube channel, Mailchimp email blasts, a new church database after a ransomware attack, livestreaming and hybrid church services.

The theme of our recent 150th Anniversary commemoration was Honoring the Past, Building the Future. We celebrated with 3 major events: a worship service with the bishop celebrating our incorporation as an outpost for Christ on the south shore of Long Island, a Parish Fun Day and Picnic, and a Dinner Dance Gala. We also embarked on and completed a capital campaign that exceeded our goals.

As we look to build our future in these uncertain times, we know we are supported by the foundation that was built by those before us, and also that we, as present members of Christ Church, have participated in the building of strong ministries together in the last 10 years.