

# ILLUMINARE

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## MISSION BEYOND 2011

An abundance of different thoughts flood the minds of young people when they hear the words, “summer break.” Summer break is an opportunity to take a breath, hang out with friends and family, vacation, go away to camp, and hopefully experience life in a different way than what they are used to in their regular school routines. Our youth have many demands on their lives as they strive to perform well in academics, sports, and a variety of other extracurricular activities. Our hope and primary desire at Christ Church is to create and foster an environment that specifically ministers to our youth mentally, physically, and spiritually. Our goal is nothing less than changing their entire outlook and approach to life, especially as it relates to their walk with God.

With that in mind, one of the centerpieces of our Christ Church youth ministry is our mission trips. A Christ Church youth mission trip is so much more than a week of community service with the solitary intent of giving one a broader view and appreciation of our community as a whole. As each trip unfolds, our youth and adult participants are taken out of their comfort zone, their usual routine and surroundings, and placed into an environment focused on the presence of God. In July, the Christ Church youth and adults—made up of 38 total participants—served in the two communities of Webster County, WV and Rocky Mount, NC. Counting all Mission Beyond 2011 participants, we served over 2000 hours in these communities and worked on close to 40 homes.

The 2011 mission trip theme was “Connect”, centered on the bible verse found in John 15:5 which states, “I am the vine, you are the branches: those who abide in me and I in them will bring forth much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” Each daily message guided us via discussions, videos, devotions, and prayer to learn what it means to be in God’s presence. This year was particularly fun and exciting as each trip provided us with the blessing of experiencing God’s creation during our Wednesday excursions. During the West Virginia trip, we whitewater rafted on the New River (rated in the top 5 of the nation) and in North Carolina we zip lined through the beautiful trees and mountains outside of the local community in which we served.

On July 2, 13 junior high youth and 3 adult participants journeyed to Webster County, West Virginia. The community in Webster County was the most rural we have served during any of our youth mission trips. Many of our residents were elderly and were in desperate need of wheelchair ramps and basic repairs such as leaky roofs and cracked foundations. Overall, this was one of our youngest groups to participate on a Christ Church mission trip. We were unsure precisely how they would respond. One very important prerequisite to remember in developing our expectations is to not limit the way God works in our hearts and minds. As the week unfolded, our youth became immersed in atmosphere focused on God mentally, physically, and spiritually. As Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” When we take the spotlight away from ourselves and focus instead on the needs of others, we are denying our basic selfishness. As we remove self from the picture and focus on purely serving God and hearing His voice, things begin to change. We begin to change as we approached the end of the week, our entire group began to experience God in their hearts in different ways. It was truly a blessing to be a part of this trip and to see the seeds of faith grow so quickly in such a brief period of time.

During the last week of July, our high school youth served in the community of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. We worked primarily in a very low income area of Rocky Mount where we made wheelchair ramps and made badly needed home repairs. One of the cosponsors of this community work

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explained to me that several of the homes we worked on were used for the primary purpose of transitional housing for those who had previously been homeless and unemployed. Almost every day that we worked in the Rocky Mount community, we faithfully endured over 100 ° temperatures. Despite the heat, we managed to complete project after project for our residents by the end of the week.

Many of our high school youth participants are veterans of mission trips, with some having been on six or more consecutive trips. Of these youth, we have several who have become incredible leaders and mentors to the rest of our group. Many took the role of devotional leader for their respective crews and even the role of leading and guiding teenagers from other youth groups into a closer walk and understanding of God throughout their week of service. As always, we place our trust in Jesus to initiate the spark in the hearts of our youth. For the first time, many received the seed of faith that we pray will continue to grow in them each day. The most powerful blessing that we have seen from this group was the deep desire in their hearts to truly know God. We set our confidence in words found in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it in you."

Although, a single week may not seem like a long time in the great picture of life, it only takes one moment for God to truly connect to us if we can open the doors of our heart to Him. As 2 Chronicles 16:9 says, "The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him." One week isn't much, but for many of Christ's Mission Beyond 2011 youth it was the faith seed they needed to deepen their commitment and relationship to the God of all. We thank each person and family who played a part through their thoughts, prayers, and support in making Mission Beyond 2011 an incredible life changing experience for so many.

God's Blessings and Peace,  
Daniel Ciufi

## **List of Mission Beyond 2011 Participants to:**

### **Webster County, WV**

Chase Hefte  
Austin Willis  
Hayden Burkett  
Brett Manifold  
Will Healy  
Sean Whitehead  
Emily Shearer  
Elizabeth Clark  
Sarah-Kate Casey  
Nicholas Borne  
Oliver Guice  
Jacob Bopp  
Jack Vining  
Sherri Nozik  
Daniel Ciufi  
Margaret Casey

### **Rocky Mount, NC**

William Willis  
Sean Gardner  
McKenzie Elliott  
Evan Lewis  
Brennan Skinner  
Christoffer Friend  
JD Gardner  
Lucy Smart  
Sean Kelley  
Olivia Hocevar  
Colleen Drapcho  
Colin Skinner  
Madeleine Boyd  
Satchie Snellings  
Sarah Goodgion  
Max Morvant  
Taylor Wager  
Natalie Csintyan  
Bryant Badeaux  
Reina Gardner  
Renee Csintyan  
Ray Kelley  
Daniel Ciufi  
Sherri Nozik

## FORMING CHILDREN IN FAITH AT CHRIST CHURCH AND SCHOOL

*“The first condition of human goodness is something to love, the second, something to reverence.”*

George Eliot writing in *Middlemarch*

I began working at an Episcopal school in 1976 in Boca Raton, Florida. I took my first group of teenagers on a mission trip to El Salvador that same summer. Since those days, I have served other Episcopal Schools in D.C. and in Texas. A great deal has changed in thirty five years within our society and in our culture, much of it positive and even exciting. Yet, I believe that the overall context in which we try today to shape children’s moral and spiritual formation is more challenging, complex, and problematic than even a decade ago. And just for that reason, even more important! Parents remain the most important faith teachers in their own kids’ lives, but church and school play vital roles as well. Especially an Episcopal parish school, and in particular Christ Church and School.

As with all effective learning, we must begin by asking the right questions. What are we trying to accomplish in our worship, faith formation classes, school environment, and community service? What do our children need to know about God and God’s relationship with the world and themselves? What knowledge is essential for them to live spiritually wise lives?

As a Sacramentally focused and Biblically-centered Christian, I believe the purpose of spiritual teaching is to enable our children to:

- Experience life not only as a problem to be solved but also as a gift to be received.
- Discover how many occasions there are for loving and how fulfilling it is to practice loving.
- Know the joy of blessing and being blessed without giving up the strength and freedom to say no.
- Acknowledge the mysteries at the heart of life that cannot be solved but can be explored.

Yes, I know these are big existential questions! But children do *have* plenty of existential questions, though they may not have the words or awareness or the cognitive tools to name them. Our job is to give them those tools. What *is* most important, however, is what they already have from (at least) birth onward: connection to a loving God. *We* don’t give that to them, we can’t, but it *is* there. It comes from God. Sadly, we *can* foul it up or muddle it or deaden it.

At Christ School and Christ Church, what we seek to do is nurture in every child a *desire for God* and the capacity to know God as real, gracious, and accessible. Which means that curriculum matters and how we teach matters – in faith formation every bit as much as it does in reading, history, or science. This is why we use Godly Play with our kids for seven years from pre-K through grade five.

Godly Play comes from the third-generation of Montessori education and was developed in the 1980’s by Jerome Berryman, a Montessori teacher and Episcopal priest. It is used in thousands of churches, schools, hospitals, and elder care centers in North and South America, Europe, Australia and sub-Saharan Africa. Our own Barbara Sears has been teaching it for more than 20 years. I discovered it and began using it in 1989. It is the most powerful, effective way I have ever known to teach younger children the Bible, the Sacraments and church year, the Saints, and how people are to behave in a Christian community. It utilizes the two critical gates of knowing for younger children – play and language. The teaching is done through oral storytelling, sacred stories told by heart. The stories are accompanied by sensory materials which are child-sized, artful, clever, and so beautifully made even 5-year old boys want to treat them with care. The “open” classroom is designed deliberately to present the whole story of Christian salvation, arranged at children’s eye level, whenever they enter the room. All the senses and the imagination of the child are engaged to help them experience God’s presence and learn God’s story. In a culture in which almost all boundaries have collapsed, the educational goal is to help children learn that freedom is not the capacity to act on every impulse (that’s called “whim”) but the ability to know who you are, whose you are (God’s!), where you are going, and what moral and spiritual tools you need to make sound choices for the journey. We aim to build in children the capacity and skill to self-direct in positive, healthy and holy ways. Information is certainly shared and learned, but Godly Play is not information-centered. Its focus is relationship-centered – knowing God, not just knowing about God.

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This is not a new idea or just a Montessori technique but a classical and well-tested Christian practice. Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Augustine called it the “inner teacher.” In Godly Play, we believe that if we gather the children with kindness and consistency, tell the story faithfully, encourage and affirm the children’s responses, and pray with integrity, then God’s Spirit will be present doing the teaching that needs to take place in each child on any given day. I know it happens because I’ve shared it and watched it for 20 years.

Finally, there is another way that teaching Godly Play is like teaching arithmetic, language arts, or physical science. Children don’t learn all they need to learn about grammar or multiplication in one year. One year builds upon another. There is both repetition and new material, and of course the children themselves are growing and changing. Perceptions evolve and understanding deepens. Complexity is added. The learning process is like a spiral rather than a flat line, and the same holds true with faith formation. In Godly Play, we use 64 “core” stories and another 40 secondary stories, as well as various combination stories for the older children. More stories are on the way as Berryman himself continues to write. If every child hears the core stories once each year for seven years, that is not too often. We adults might get bored, but our children will not. Their responses will evolve and their understanding will deepen.

To sum up then: what is at stake for our kids in worship and faith formation at Christ? Just this: when we proclaim to them the familiar words of Jesus from John’s gospel, “I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me,” we aren’t just reciting a bit of Scripture. We are not giving them new data. We are giving voice and expression to the stirrings of their young hearts and minds. They already know God. What they need is the name of God. What we try to do in Godly Play, ever so patiently and persistently, is help them discover God’s name. God creates. God is light. God is love. God forgives. God is the Good Shepherd. God feels. God is breath. God suffers. God calls us into relationship. It is essentially a process of inviting them, helping them, to fall in love with God. As Christians – children, youth, and adults – we recognize this love in expressions of joy and justice, forgiveness and grace, hospitality and compassion. And Love is so very close to children, who are themselves so rich in love. Only by honoring and nurturing that first, fundamental Love relationship with God can we truly guide our children into a more mature commitment of faith: to live with grace and peace as creatures made in God’s own image.

Father Tom Blackmon, Rector  
Christ Church and School

## ARE YOU CURRENT ON YOUR PLEDGE?

Sometimes during the summer, we go to sleep about staying with our pledges and gifts to the church. Unfortunately, our vendors and suppliers don’t so we almost always face a cash crunch in late August-September. If you think you might have fallen behind, please try to make it up for us as promptly as you can. If you are unsure, ask our Treasurers. If you want to do more, well, by all means! You don’t need to call anyone.



## SUMMER THIRD SUNDAY CONCERTS AT CHRISTWOOD

**Sunday, August 21** — Southern Tradition: a New Orleans based barbershop quartet

*The concert will take place in the Garden Room at 5:00 p.m. and are free and open to the public.*

## ANOTHER WAY TO HELP THE HUNGRY IN OUR AREA



Your gently used furniture and working appliances can provide food for the hungry of our community. Furniture, appliances and household items are needed by All Saints Thrift Store located at 908 Columbia St. in downtown Covington. Its' profits go directly to the Food Bank. Call 985-892-5282 to arrange for pickup of large items. You may drop off donations from 9AM - 3:30 PM, Monday through Saturday. All donations are greatly appreciated! Liz Bedikian

## SHOP BLUE PEW FOR SCHOOL



Do some good for Christ Church by doing well for yourself. BluePew.com is a shopping web site that features over 400 merchants offering clothes, groceries, electronics, toys, etc. and features such brands as Adidas, Bass Pro, Sony, Pet Smart, Borders, Brooks Brothers, Skechers, and North Face. When you purchase on Blue Pew, each merchant sends a percentage of your purchase to Christ Church. The percentage varies from merchant to merchant – their decision – but there is no administrative cost to you or the parish. Twice a year, Blue Pew will send Christ Church an accounting and a check. If you're regularly buying children's clothes, pet food, fishing gear, or printer ink, you can stay with your favorite brands and augment our budget at the same time. For more information go to

[christchurchcovington.com](http://christchurchcovington.com) and click on "resources". Give it a try!



### **Diocesan Men's and Women's Retreat September 23-25, 2011**

This traditional silent meditative retreat will begin with supper at 6:30 on Friday, September 23, 2011 and end at lunch on Sunday, September 25, 2011. During the weekend there will be several meditations as well as private spiritual direction. Participants are free and encouraged to take full advantage of the scenic grounds of the Solomon Center for walking, meditating, fishing, reading, and relaxing. Attendance at meditations, voluntary spiritual direction, and all aspects of the Retreat is optional.

### **Joy Conference October 7-9, 2011**

The 17th Annual Joy Conference for Women begins after dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, October 7 and ends before lunch on Sunday, October 9. Come for the weekend and gather with other women who seek a deeper relationship with our Lord. Spend time singing and praying, worshipping and learning, creating and resting (and, of course, enjoying the wonderful meals). Put the date on your calendar now and be a part of this joy-filled weekend in October.

### **Cursillo November 3-5, 2011**

This event begins after supper on Thursday, November 3rd and concludes on Sunday, November 5th. During these three days, talks are given by lay persons and clergy who have spent time working together planning for the Cursillo. The teachings of Christ are discussed with others on their faith journey. The talks and discussions are interspersed with prayer, songs, recreation, laughter and moments of reflection and quiet. The Eucharist is celebrated daily.

## KUDOS

**Randy Turner, Jim Valliant and Lloyd Magee** for installing the new awning outside of the Commons



## ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND



If you can sketch, paint, or imagine, please contact Mary Anne Reidy to help with Celebration of Ministries coming September 11th. It is a theme that will bring you into a whole new (but with the familiarity of childhood) world. Mary Anne Reidy - 985-789-6315 or email [reidyma@netscape.com](mailto:reidyma@netscape.com)

## EDUCATE YOUR VISION

New opportunities for adult formation are coming in September! The Genesis of our Family Story; Men's Group; Wisdom Way of Knowing; Grace Gatherings; Parenting; Marriage Enrichment; Children of Faith, and much more. Look for more information on the website in the coming weeks

## We need a vacuum



Do you have a vacuum you would like to donate to the church? If so, please call the church office at 892-3177.

# Christ Church, Covington

*An Episcopal Church and School  
in the Diocese of Louisiana*  
120 S. New Hampshire St.  
Covington, Louisiana 70433  
(985) 892-3177  
fax - (985) 892-3187

Early Childhood Center - (985) 892-9156  
Christwood Blvd. Campus - (985) 871-9902  
[www.christchurchcovington.com](http://www.christchurchcovington.com)

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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### The Rev'd A. Thomas Blackmon, Rector

tblackmon@christchurchcovington.com

### The Rev'd Anne M. Maxwell, Associate Rector

amaxwell@christchurchcovington.com

### The Rev'd Winston E. Rice, Assisting

wrice@christchurchcovington.com

### Mr. John Morvant - Head of School

#### PARISH STAFF

Susan Griffis *Parish Administrator*

sgriffis@christchurchcovington.com

Laura Robert *Publications Coordinator*

publications@christchurchcovington.com

Eunice Hutchison *Receptionist*

receptionist@christchurchcovington.com

Daniel Ciufi *Youth Ministries Coordinator*

dciufi@christchurchcovington.com

Sherri Nozik *Asst. Youth Ministries Coordinator*

youth@christchurchcovington.com

Mary Anne Reidy *Parish Life Coordinator*

mareidy@christchurchcovington.com

Martha Smart *Godly Play Coordinator*

godlyplay@christepiscopalchurch.com

Kathleen Turner *Newcomer Ministries*

kturner@christchurchcovington.com

Carolyn Parmenter *Director of Music Ministries*

Jessica Sermons *Organist*

Benjie Branson *Assisting Organist*

Max Welch *Organist*

Buddy Anderson *Nursery Coordinator*

Chuck Aversa *Facilities Coordinator*

#### VESTRY

2009-2012—Jeff Bell, Mark Berry,

Michelle Gallagher, Lucie Thornton

2010-2013—Bill Batson, Mel Elliott,

Jim Valliant, Paul Vining

2011-2014 — Mary Thomas Coady, Patterson Conner,

Michelle Prather, Judy Shopf

#### Scheduled to Serve Sunday, August 21, 2011

	7:30	10:00
MC	Liz Taurman	Margaret Mashburn
EM		Linda Wendle John Linder
Acolytes		Cecily Stewart Carlton Stewart Walker Trahant
Lectors		McKenzie Elliott Camille Dufour
Ushers	Don Kieffer Charlie Stahr	Mark Wendle, John Girault, Cory Barbier, David Yeates, Don Duggan, Edmund Hughes, Paul Vining, Michael Forrester, Ken Shell
Greeters		Michael Willis, Kerry Yeates
Altar Guild Team II		
Caring Ministry Leader Ann Geiger 792-1128		
Lessons For Sunday, August 28, 2011 Exodus 3:1-15, Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c, Romans 12:9 -21, Matthew 16:21-28		