St. Christopher Parish

538 Brewer Street
East Hartford, CT 06118
860-568-5240 (Phone) • 860-568-0673 (Fax)
E-mail: stchris-eh@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.stchris-eh.org

Rev. John P. Gwozdz, Pastor
E-mail: pastorstchris@hotmail.com

Mr. Philip J. Gosselin, Deacon
E-mail: imgoose@comcast.net

St. Christopher Parish

Jesus said,
“When you hold a banquet,
invite the poor, the crippled,
the lame, the blind.
...You will be repaid
at the resurrection
of the righteous.”
Luke 14:13, 14

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ August 28, 2016

MASS SCHEDULE
Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m.
Sundays: 8:00, 10:30 a.m.
Monday – Thursday: 7:30 a.m.

CONFessions
Saturdays: 3:00 – 3:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONS
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Eucharistic Exposition and
Adoration • Scriptural Rosary •
Perpetual Novena in Honor of Our
Lady of the Miraculous Medal •
Benediction

FUNERALS
We will help you plan the Mass
of Christian Burial for your loved
one after arrangements have been
made with a funeral home.

BAPTISM
By appointment; please call
the parish office to schedule.

MARRIAGE
Please contact the parish office
at least six months in advance
of your intended wedding date.

OFFICE MANAGER
Bonnie Szalay  860-568-5240

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL
Mrs. Kathleen Welch, Principal
Audrey Cesana, Secretary
www.saintchristopherschool.org
860-568-4100

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Maria Sousa  860-895-8692
stchrisre@gmail.com
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 28, 2016

“You have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God.”

– Hebrews 12:22a

PARISH SUPPORT
What We Collected (August 21): $ 5,599*
*Includes $583 received through our Online Giving program and $695 from mail-in offerings.

Thank you for your support of our parish family.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION
The First Reading in today’s Holy Scripture is from the Old Testament Book of Sirach. At times this Bible book has also been called the Wisdom of Sirach. Similar to Proverbs, Sirach is a series of teachings recorded between 200 and 175 BC.

The first verse of this reading captures one of the key elements of stewardship. It says, “My child, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.” The word “humility” literally means “of the earth” or in a phrase which might mean more to us “down to earth.” The good steward realizes that he or she receives everything from a loving and generous God. That can be a humbling recognition.

“True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less,” is how the eminent author and theologian C.S. Lewis put it. We are important in the eyes of God. Jesus emptied Himself in our behalf. He was humility incarnate. Washing the feet of His Apostles, He comes to us at every Mass in common bread and wine.

If we practice and pursue stewardship as a way of life, we choose to let others be more important; we are not controlling; we support others in silent ways. Are you willing to let God take charge of your life? Being a steward means that. That is the message from Sirach, and it is a message given us by Jesus over and over.

– www.catholicsteward.com

SANCTUARY LAMP
The lamp beside our church tabernacle reminds us of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Ash The candle in our church burns this week

In Loving Memory of
Reverend James H. Smith
(His Sisters)
SCHOOL NEWS
Saint Christopher School is anticipating an excellent start to the new school year! The PreK program is booming with new classroom space and a new reading series, Superkids, has been brought into the Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms.

Hoping for the students to experience the outdoor beauty of God’s creation, we are asking the community for donations of plants for a small garden and some wood chips for ground cover. If you are able to help us out, please call the school at 860-568-4100. Peace and Thank you!

WORDS OF WISDOM
Father John quoted in his homily last weekend words of wisdom that reportedly were written on the wall of Mother Teresa’s home for children in Calcutta, India, and are widely attributed to her. Several of you requested a copy of these words, so we are happy to make them available to you here.

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you.
Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.
Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.
Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.
Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them anyway.

OFFERTORY GIFTS
We invite you to participate in our weekend liturgies by bringing up the gifts of bread and wine to be offered. If you’re interested, please take the wooden fish from the gift table before the start of Mass.

PRAYER FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR
This coming week marks the beginning of a new school year for many young people. We offer up this prayer for these young people and for their teachers and staff.

God of wisdom and might,
we praise you for the wonder of our being,
for mind, body and spirit.
Be with our children as they begin
a new school year.
Bless them and their teachers and staff.
Give them strength and grace as their bodies grow;
wisdom and knowledge to their minds
as they search for understanding;
and peace and zeal to their hearts.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP
The St. Margaret Mary Church’s Bereavement Care Ministry in South Windsor is offering a ten-week, spiritual-based program that provides support for those suffering the loss of a loved one. Trained facilitators guide and encourage participants to share with others their experience of loss as they move through their journey from grief to healing. This “New Day” program begins on Thursday, Sept. 1, and will be held in the Rectory, 80 Hayes Road in South Windsor from 2:00-3:30 p.m. To register, please call Lisa Grivers at 860-528-4845 or Kathy Sullivan at 860-644-5388.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: GRADES K-8
Religious Education classes for students entering Grades K-8 will begin on Sunday, September 18. Please help us to prepare by registering your child as soon as possible. Returning families are asked to complete a new registration each year. Our First Communion program is a two-year program beginning in 1st Grade. To register your child, please contact our Religious Education Coordinator Maria Sousa at 860-895-8692 or at stchrisre@gmail.com.
Dear Friends,

As you know, the Pastoral Planning Process study of parishes and schools in the archdiocese continues. Pastors have been consulted as well as those in positions of leadership in each parish, including ours. No official conclusions have been reached at this time. In the meantime, I think it’s important that everyone have a clear understanding of the demographical changes that have made such a study necessary.

Below is the reprint of an article which does an excellent job of explaining how things have changed in the past ten, twenty and fifty years both in the archdiocese and in our part of the country. It’s almost the reverse of the times in which I grew up (in the 50’s and 60’s), when growth was the by-word. We are living in different times and the church has to adjust its resources accordingly.

– Yours in Christ, I am, Father John Gwozdz

From Maintenance to Mission: A Snapshot of the Church Today

CARA (The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) is one of the most well-respected polling organizations in the U.S. Catholic Church. Regularly, it conducts surveys and interviews to assess the state of the Church, solely based on research data. Last week it released one of its periodic surveys. It is worth examining some of its findings in light of the efforts of pastoral planning under way in the Archdiocese of Hartford. To begin with, here are a few “snapshots.” After each entry, you might ask yourself, “What are we doing or what can we do in response?”

• There is a decline in infant baptisms in the U.S. Church, but there is an increase in children being baptized after their first birthday, and also in teenagers being baptized.

• Millennial generation Catholics (those born roughly between 1980 and 2000), are less likely than older Catholics to have received Confirmation.

• Across the board, Mass attendance holds steady at approximately 23 percent of self-identified Catholics attending Mass at least once a week. Nearly 80 percent of Catholics attend either once a month, a few times a year or even less often.

• A majority of self-identified Catholics do not belong to any parish; they float from parish to parish according to Mass times, family schedules, etc. (The financial impact on parishes because of this trend is only now beginning to be examined. Increasingly, parishes in the South and West are using on-site debit card readers, ATMs, etc. to get contributions from irregular and unaffiliated Mass attendees.)

• Nearly 20 percent of Catholics do not believe the Bible is the inspired or actual word of God.

• Millennials are more likely than older Catholics to have doubts that God even exists; only 64 percent say they believe in God with doubt.

• As a whole, U.S. adult Catholics rarely go to confession; this statistic has not changed in the last decade. More than 4 in 10 don’t go to confession with any regularity. Nearly 3 in 10 goes at least once a year.

• The population center of the Catholic Church has shifted from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West. Millennials make up 26 percent of the population. Pre-Vatican II Catholics (i.e., those born before 1959, when Pope St. John XXIII called for the council) make up less than 20 percent of the adult population.

Again: “What are we doing or what can we do in response?”

(Reprinted with permission from the author, Fr. Tim S. Hickey.)

2017 MASS INTENTIONS… This is a friendly reminder that we are accepting Mass Intentions for 2017. If you would like to secure a Mass for a particular date in 2017, we encourage you to call or stop by the parish office as soon as possible to avoid disappointment as Masses are filling up quickly. Please note that our weekend Masses are completely booked for the remainder of this year and our weekdays Masses are close to being booked.
What is Lectio Divina?

While reading sacred scripture, read the words with a love and sense of discovery until something seems to strike home. Sit with the passage as one would with a good friend-not just thinking or analyzing, but instead remaining in a quiet, listening spirit, so the word can nurture and challenge you.

**Call to Prayer:** "Let us take a moment in the midst of all our activity to prepare ourselves for prayer."

**The Word of God:** Choose one of next Sunday’s readings. One person reads the scripture aloud as others are attentive to a word, phrase, or theme that is meaningful to them. Allow for a minute of silent reflection. Have another person read the same scripture a second time.

**Faith Sharing:** Begin with an open ended question such as “What strikes you from this reading?” and/or you can use the “Reflection Question” found below. Allow time for reflection & sharing.

**Closing Prayer:** At the end of the faith sharing, invite participants to pray aloud for any particular petitions or praises they may have. Feel free to close with: The Lord’s Prayer or spontaneous prayers or a faith-based song.

Reflection for Next Sunday, September 4, 2016 – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

In today’s Gospel Jesus reminds us that our bond with Him takes absolute precedence over all other bonds, familial or social. Love of riches or their selfish use is absolutely incompatible with being a disciple of Jesus. Your attitude toward your possessions – all of which you hold in stewardship for God – shows where your heart is in relation to true discipleship. Take a journey through Romans 12:9-21 if you have doubts about how those of us seeking the kingdom of God need to live.