

# ELECT TO CONNECT



**We seek unity with God and one another  
in Christ through**

**solemn and joyful WORSHIP,**

**vital and supportive COMMUNITY,**

**formative Christian EDUCATION,**

**and the sharing, through OUTREACH,  
of our diverse gifts.**

# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

545 South East Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60304

708-386-5613, fax 708-386-5690

[stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) [www.stchristophersoakpark.org](http://www.stchristophersoakpark.org)

## Table of Contents

<b><u>SOLEMN &amp; JOYFUL WORSHIP</u></b>	3
Sunday Worship Schedule	3
Acolytes	3
Altar Guild	4
Chalice Bearers	4
Choir	
Adult Liturgical	4
Boys & Girls	4
Instrumentalists	5
Flower Guild	5
Greeters	5
Lectors	5
Liturgical Arts	5
Prayer	6
Healing Ministry	6
Ushers	6
<b><u>VITAL &amp; SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY</u></b>	7
Building & Grounds	7
Communication	7
Office Assistance	8
Fellowship Events	8
Foyers	8
Men's Group	8
Women at the Well	9
Women at the Tap	9
Pastoral Care Ministries	9
Guild of the Christ Child	9
Helping Hands	9
Lay Eucharistic Ministers	10
Stephen Ministry & Lay Chaplaincy	10

Stewardship	10
Finance Team	10
Annual Giving Team	11
Vestry	11
<b><u>FORMATIVE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</u></b>	12
Intergenerational	12
Library	12
Welcome to St. C's	12
Children	
Joining the Church: Baptism of Infants & Children	12
Infant to age 3: Little Lambs Nursery	12
Nursery Assistants	12
Age 3-K: Spark Workshop I	13
Grades 1-3: Spark Workshop II	13
Grades 4-6: Preteen Spark Workshop	13
Sunday Workshop Shepherds/Assistants	13
Youth	
Grades 7 through 8: Rite-13	14
Grades 9 through 10: J2A Sojourners	14
Grades 11 through 12: Confirm Not Conform (CnC)	14
Youth Leaders/Assistants	14
Adults	
Adult Leaders/Facilitators	14
Inquirer's Class: Confirm not Conform	15
Sunday Morning Adult Forum: Weekly	15
Sunday Afternoon Adult Forum: Periodically	15
Evening Book Study: Monthly	15
Thursday Evening Bible Encounter: Weekly	15
Seasonal Events	15
<b><u>OUTREACH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE</u></b>	16
Animal Care League	16
Back-to-Work Clothes Closet	16
Cathedral Shelter of Chicago	16
Dismantling Racism	16
Green Stewardship Team	17
OPRF Food Pantry & PADS meals assistance	17
OPRF Walk-in Ministry	17
PADS: Work with the Homeless	17
St. Cyprian's Food Pantry & Thanksgiving Baskets	17
Fundraising Events	18

# Solemn & Joyful Worship

*In our consumer-oriented world it's tempting to think of worship in terms of what we can 'get out of it' rather than what we can 'bring to God.' The truth, though, is that both things are important. On one hand, worship is meant to feed, comfort, challenge, strengthen, and inspire us to go back out into the world equipped as God's hands and hearts in daily life. On the other, worship is meant to give thanks and praise to God, drawing us out of ourselves into the divine mystery where our gifts can be used to God's glory. At St. Christopher's this happens in many ways. Some wear vestments and serve up front, some come on Saturday to set up for Sunday, some sing, greet, or just show up to worship – but all keep us faithful to the Greek meaning of "liturgy" – the work of the people.*

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

**8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite One:** This 50-minute service of Holy Communion offers a quiet time of contemplation and prayer using the traditional language of the English Reformation period, including "thee" and "thou." It is a simple spoken service without music.

**9:30 a.m. Wiggle Worship Communion:** Geared toward young children and their families, this service begins with 10 minutes of music warm-ups in church, followed by 30 minutes of singing, sermon, prayers, and Holy Communion with words and story easily accessible to children but also meaningful for adults.

**10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite Two:** This service of Holy Communion offers the contemporary language of our own day, and features music that includes instrumental preludes and postludes, congregational hymns, and choral anthems. St. Christopher's Liturgical Choir – led by organist/choirmaster Mr. L. Richard Sobak – sings regularly at this service (joined at times by our Boys' and Girls' Choir.)

## ACOLYTES

Acolytes carry the cross and torches in procession and assist in preparation of the altar for the Eucharist. Anyone age seven and up, including adults, is invited to train as an acolyte. High school students and adults may also train to bethurifers – who carry and swing the thurible in which incense is burned during festival Eucharists. **TIME COMMITMENT: 2-3 training sessions per year. Serve at Sunday and special services once every 4-6 weeks. Be on time, and find your own replacement if you cannot serve as scheduled.**

## **ALTAR GUILD**

Just as for festive occasions at home, we take out the best linens and silver for worship. Members of the Altar Guild work in teams behind the scenes to make sure that the vessels for communion and linens for the altar are set out, bright, clean, and properly organized for services. They wash things up when services are over and put them away. They also keep the candlesticks clean, the candles stocked with oil and help with special services, including weddings and funerals. **TIME COMMITMENT: Setup is divided between Saturday afternoon/morning and Sunday before the 10:30 service and other days when the Eucharist is celebrated. Altar Guild members serve every 4 weeks.**

## **CHALICE BEARERS**

When we gather for worship, clergy and lay people both have a place in administering communion. A range of ages is represented at our altar including teenagers, young adults, and older adults. Chalice bearers usually stand with the presider during the Eucharistic Prayer. **TIME COMMITMENT: One 30 minute training session. Chalice bearers serve every 6-8 weeks.**

## **CHOIR**

Music is an important part of life at St. Christopher's and includes:

### **Adult Liturgical Choir**

The St. Christopher's Liturgical Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Sundays from 9:30-10:15 a.m. under the direction of our organist/choirmaster. They sing most Sundays from September through mid June and for special services. Membership is open to singers age 15 and older, and while choral experience and sight-reading skills are an asset, neither is required. Special rehearsals are also called at times during the year. New members are always welcome, no audition is required, and opportunities are offered throughout the year for short-term participation in special events. **TIME COMMITMENT: In addition to weekly rehearsals, extra rehearsals are held prior to Lessons & Carols and Easter. Fall and spring Evensongs are regularly scheduled as well as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil services.**

### **Boys and Girls**

Our music program for children age three through fifth grade is led by St. Christopher's teachers and assistants who introduce music during the children's Sunday Workshop time. They use rhythm instruments and learn songs to sing in church for special Sundays and events.

## Instrumentalists

If you have talents such as playing an instrument – piano, cello, flute, trumpet . . . you name it – then our organist/choirmaster wants to know. Instrumentalists are needed for Sundays, occasional Evensongs, summer services, preludes, and postludes, so please let us know.

## FLOWER GUILD

People may donate altar flowers or greens for any Sunday of the year (except Lent) in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for a special person or occasion. A check made out to St. Christopher's for \$35 is usual, and several people may donate flowers for the same Sunday as noted in the instructions on the bulletin board in the parish hall. One of our parishioners buys and arranges flowers, but welcomes assistance.

## GREETERS

Greeters welcoming people after church are doing more than filling a slot on a duty chart; they are extending hospitality to strangers. At St. Christopher's this is done in part by vestry members after the 10:30 service, but we also need non-vestry members to greet visitors after worship, invite them to coffee hour, escort them into the parish hall for refreshments and introduce them to others. Training is provided.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Currently there is no formal schedule of non-vestry greeters. Individuals interested should contact the parish office.**

## LECTORS

When we gather for worship on Sundays and other special occasions, clergy and lay people both have a place in the reading of Holy Scripture. Children in grades 4 and up and adults who have good strong reading voices are invited to join this ministry. Training is provided and readers are usually scheduled to read once a quarter.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Training is provided. Readers are usually scheduled once every 12 weeks.**

## LITURGICAL ARTS

St. Christopher's adorns its space seasonally and for special services to create a deeper sense of beauty and mystery. At the Easter Vigil, for example, long sheets of simmering blue organza have suggested the River Jordan; or at Pentecost, tongues of fire made of red and orange silk have hung from lamps in the nave. If you are creative and enjoy seeing an idea come to life, join this group and help enhance worship.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Varies with the occasion and may range from a few hours to install the pew candles to several days to create new decorations.**

## PRAYER

ALL of the names on St. Christopher's prayer list are read aloud on Sundays at 8:00 a.m., while at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. people are asked to offer their own prayers silently or aloud. Thanksgiving for birthdays and anniversaries are also offered weekly from a list maintained by our office assistant, so please contact her at [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) or 708-386-5613 to update this list or add a name to the prayer list.

## HEALING MINISTRY

Clergy members often offer prayers-for-healing at the Communion rail on Sunday, but St. Christopher's would like to extend its healing ministry to more people and to include the non-ordained as healers. If you feel a call to this ministry or want to join the discussion, please speak with the Rector. **TIME COMMITMENT: Offered monthly and for special occasions. May be a non-ordained service after the 10:30 a.m. service.**

## USHERS

Walking into church can be a bit daunting without ushers to provide a warm welcome. Ushers provide a bulletin to help navigate worship, directions to available seats, gather the offering, and direct traffic at communion. They work in teams, serve every 4-6 weeks, and help extend hospitality to strangers. It's also a wonderful opportunity to get to know new faces and new members are ALWAYS needed. **TIME COMMITMENT: 30-minute training session. Serve usually every 5-6 weeks.**



# Vital and Supportive Community

*At its core, community is about hospitality, which is nothing less than welcoming Christ in ALL people. For example, folks who cook pancakes, host Foyers, or organize a Progressive Dinner are serving as more than social secretaries; they're connecting the rest of us with God's love. Likewise, "Helping Hands" – which matches a cook with a member home-from-the-hospital who needs a meal and reminder that they are cared for – offers not just human hands but the hands and feet of God. Caring for the building we use, the money we spend, the means by which we communicate, are all part of sharing Christ's vision and supporting one another.*

## BUILDING & GROUNDS

St. Benedict (often called the father of western monasticism) once said that the care we take with the liturgy should extend to everything. "Regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar," he said. Such is the work of those who care for our building and grounds – weeding flower beds, changing light bulbs, planning the parish work day and making or overseeing repairs and improvements to our facilities. **TIME COMMITMENT: Varies and occasionally a quick response is needed. Many of the routine tasks can be self-scheduled.**

## COMMUNICATION

Communication happens in a variety of ways at St. C's and skills are always needed in the following areas of ministry:

- ✠ Our regularly updated website: [www.stchristophersoakpark.org](http://www.stchristophersoakpark.org). Recent sermons are also available here.
- ✠ Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/stchristophersoakpark>.
- ✠ The Rector's Blog: <http://pariscoffey.blogspot.com/>
- ✠ Our monthly newsletter *The Messenger*, which is sent via email and U.S. mail, or can be downloaded from our website.
- ✠ Weekly email updates – usually sent out on Thursdays – to let people know what's going on in the coming week.
- ✠ A directory of friends and members that is updated quarterly.
- ✠ An automated telephone tree that helps alert those who do not have email to important parish news and special events.

If you have items of interest to communicate to the parish you are also encouraged to contact the church office at 708-386-5613 or [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) and we will see that they are included.

## OFFICE ASSISTANCE

Office help is always needed, but especially late August through early October for our Fall Ministry Kickoff, mid-December for additional service leaflets, mid-January for the Annual Meeting, and for the two weeks before Holy Week for the multiple leaflets needed for worship. If you can help collate, fold, and staple or do anything else in the office – answer phones, organize materials, etc. – we are grateful. **TIME COMMITMENT: Flexible for many tasks. Usually a 2 hour commitment is needed for most tasks but the day and time may be flexible. Larger, longer term and recurring tasks exist for anyone able to make greater time commitment.**

## FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

A number of parish-wide events take place at St. Christopher's during the year so that people can get to know each other better and share food and fun at the same time. These events, which require organizers and MANY helpers, include (but aren't limited to) the following:

- ✦ Advent Craft Night & Spaghetti Supper
- ✦ Lessons & Carols Reception
- ✦ Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- ✦ Newcomers' Dinners
- ✦ Easter Sunday Reception
- ✦ Progressive Dinner
- ✦ Silent Auction (alternating years)

**TIME COMMITMENT: Varies from a few phone calls to recruit helpers to set up, organize the refreshments brought by parishioners, and clean up and for the Easter Vigil reception, to major logistics, advertising, and volunteer recruitment for the silent auction. The auction may involve several smaller special assignment teams.**

## FOYERS

Periodically parishioners meet in homes or at church to share food and friendship. If small, the group host may decide to prepare a meal, but in large groups everyone brings something. It is NEVER a closed circle. New members of all ages – singles, couples, and partners – are always welcome! When groups get too large they split into smaller groups. New groups usually form in the fall. **TIME COMMITMENT: Coordinator organizes the first yearly event and maintains the participant list. Groups set their own schedule.**

## MEN'S GROUP

This group of men of all ages meets the third Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast and fellowship. *ALL ARE WELCOME!*

## WOMEN AT THE WELL

This group of women gathers one Saturday a month from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to get to know God and one another better. We also like to eat, socialize, and just have fun. New members are always welcome!

## WOMEN AT THE TAP

Women with young children, without children, or with grown children gather to share wine, laughs, and lively conversation in the evening.

## PASTORAL CARE MINISTRIES

Pastoral care is provided by a team of clergy and lay ministers working together to see that people receive help and prayer in times of need and celebration. ***Please let the church know when a crisis such as an illness, OR joyful event like a baby's birth occurs in your life.*** During office hours, please call the church at 708-386-5613 and speak with a staff member, or in an emergency or after hours call 708-214-8278 (this number is also on the church's voice-mail system). The following pastoral care teams are also part of this important ministry:

### Guild of the Christ Child

When a new baby is born at St. Christopher's, members of this team visit baby and parents on behalf of the church. They take a small gift, some helpful handouts of information, and find out what kind of help the family needs. They also keep the church in touch through cards and mailings until age 3 when children join Sunday Formation Workshops. **TIME COMMITMENT: Maintain records of new infants and schedule home visits and periodically distribute literature to families. A team of visitors is also needed. Ideally an individual maintains contact with the same family from birth thru entrance into church school.**

### Helping Hands

Hands that bring meals to someone home from the hospital or that deliver flowers after the loss of a loved one aren't just human hands; they're the hands of God. The "Helping Hands" ministry offers a variety of assistance like taking a person to the doctor, helping with a resume, raking leaves, or making small repairs for a shut-in, and much more. If you can cook, drive, help with household chores, baby-sit or just visit, please contact the church at [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) or 708-386-5613 or and let us know you're willing to help so that we can call you when need arise. **TIME COMMITMENT: Unknown. Needs determined on a case-by-case basis.**

## Lay Eucharistic Ministers

Lay Eucharistic Ministers assist the clergy in taking communion to parishioners unable to attend services at church – reminding us that sharing the Eucharist is the responsibility of the whole church. After receiving training from the clergy, “LEMs” take the consecrated wine and bread to sick and shut-in parishioners one Sunday a month. **TIME COMMITMENT: Visit the designated individual once a month.**

## Stephen Ministers & Lay Chaplains

St. Christopher’s also has specially trained lay ministers who are available to offer more in-depth or going pastoral care. Training for this ministry is usually offered once a year in conjunction with Grace Episcopal Church for Stephen Ministry, or by Bishop Anderson House for laid chaplains. There are some costs involved for both. Those who feel called to serve in this ministry are asked to contact the rector at church at 708-386-5613 or [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net). **TIME COMMITMENT: Extensive training required and generally involves longer time commitments for ministry.**

## STEWARDSHIP

An ancient concept is that a steward is one responsible for someone else’s property, finances, or affairs. The Church loves this word and uses it in two ways:

- ✦ First, to remind us that everything we have — our property, work, health, family and indeed our very life — is a gift from God: In this use, we are called to take special care of the world and ourselves, because we are responsible to the God who created them.
- ✦ And second, to encourage us to dedicate a portion of our resources for the work and life of the church and the world: In this second capacity parishioners are invited to consider what proportion of time, talent and financial resources we will offer back to God in thanksgiving for all we’ve been given. Our church has little source of income beyond these pledges and contributions of its people.

## Finance Team

The majority of our church’s day-to-day life and ministry depends on the gifts of its people, but St. C’s also has a small endowment and occasional donations from outside groups using our space. This Team meets as needed to make endowment decisions and to help plan for our church’s future. **TIME COMMITMENT: Meets periodically to review investment performance and make recommendations on changes.**

## Annual Giving Team

Each fall, we ask you to consider a financial pledge for the upcoming year so we can make plans and allocate resources responsibly. **The members who organize this appeal are called the Annual Giving Team and new members are ALWAYS welcome.**

To make a pledge at other times of the year, please pick up a pledge card and information at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall or contact the church at [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) or 708-386-5613.

We encourage you to consider a pledge in proportion to your income. Statistics show the average pledge to churches is 2.6 % of income; the biblical standard is 10 %, but pick the percentage that's right for you.

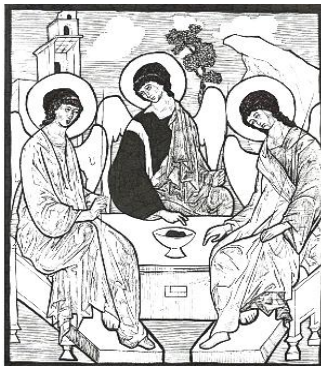
Personal checks are the typical form of pledge payment, but pledges can also be paid in cash using an offering envelope, by automatic payment from your bank, or online at [www.stchristophersoakpark.org](http://www.stchristophersoakpark.org). To make a gift of appreciated securities, please contact our treasurer.

Once you pledge, you will receive offering envelopes, a letter of acknowledgment, periodic letters updating your pledge status and a year-end tax statement summarizing your giving to St. Christopher's.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Team generally meets in the fall to develop strategy and support materials and coordinate distribution of materials to the parish.**

## VESTRY

The vestry is elected by the parish to serve as its board of directors and legal agent. The nine members and two wardens of the vestry work closely with the rector, serving in a variety of ways to help the church meet both day-to-day and long-term challenges. **TIME COMMITMENT: Vestry members are typically elected to serve 3-year terms. Meetings are monthly on the third Tuesday. Additionally, members are expected to take active leadership roles in one or more ministry areas.**



# Formative Christian Education

*We're fond of the journey image for the Christian life at St. Christopher's and convinced that the point of the journey is that we never arrive. There is always more to consider, more to learn from one another, more to glean from books and teachers of the faith. We encourage you to take advantage of classes, retreats, forums, small groups, our parish library and other resources. We don't want you to check your brain at the door — your questions and doubts are welcome.*

## Intergenerational

### **CAROYLN CARNOT & BETTY NIED MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

The books on the low shelves along the northern wall of Ahlborn Parish Hall are available to check out by children and adults. Help is needed to catalogue the books and keep them organized. **TIME COMMITMENT: The current library needs to be cataloged in a simple system. Monitoring and updating time will be minimal.**

### **WELCOME TO ST. C'S**

This 30+ minute tour for newcomers offers an introduction to the life and faith at St. Christopher's and is held the first Sunday of every month. Led by the rector or a member of the vestry, the class follows the 10:30 a.m. service. Children are welcome.

## Children

### **JOINING THE CHURCH: BAPTISM OF INFANTS & CHILDREN**

Parents and godparents who want to present infants for baptism prepare by taking part in two meetings to explore the meaning of the sacrament and the commitment they are making.

### **INFANT TO AGE 3: LITTLE LAMB'S NURSERY**

This is a great place for children to make friends and enjoy some playtime while Mom and Dad are in adult education and/or worship. St. Christopher's staff and volunteers create a nurturing environment for our youngest Christians, using age-appropriate materials.

### **NURSERY ASSISTANTS**

Although we have two paid teenage assistants in the nursery, we also need a volunteer adult who is able to help keep the nursery clean and organized, rotate toys, and give the toys a good cleaning as needed. **TIME COMMITMENT: The nursery currently needs some reorganization, but monitoring and upkeep will be minimal.**

### **AGE 3-K: SPARK WORKSHOP I**

Joyful noise is part of this spiritual formation program that begins every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in Room 4 on the lower level and ends when children come into church about 11:15 a.m. to join their parents for Communion. The Bible story-based "Spark Sunday Workshops" used by this group allow children to explore meaning and mystery in the Bible through hands-on activities, art projects, games, and music. Each Bible story is presented from a different perspective for 4 - 6 weeks, building knowledge through repetition.

### **GRADES 1-3: SPARK WORKSHOP II**

This group, which also uses "Spark Sunday Workshops", meets every Sunday in Room 3 in the lower level beginning at 10:30 a.m., ending when children join their parents in church for Communion. Children encounter Bible stories in this class through drama, music, video, art, science, and Bible games. Spending 4 - 6 weeks on a single story allows children to learn from different perspectives and helps them deepen their faith and their relationship with God and each other.

### **GRADES 4-6: PRETEEN SPARK WORKSHOP**

These participants meet every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in Room 1 on the lower level, and then join their families for Communion. The group uses more sophisticated workshops in art, music, drama, Bible games, video, and science. The "Spark Sunday Workshop" program offers 150 Bible stories from the Old and New Testament with workshops to accommodate the different ways that kids learn. The group also supplements the learning with field trips, adventures and other activities that are fun and stimulate thought-provoking conversation.

### **SPARK WORKSHOP SHEPHERDS/ASSISTANTS**

Shepherds/assistants are needed in the above programs to help pass our faith to our children. Children are deeply spiritual by nature, but their faith needs to be nurtured and their questions and insights shared. We have one teacher in each classroom who is with the children every week, but it is also crucial to have rotating shepherds/assistants to help with art projects and to keep the children on task. **TIME COMMITMENT: Shepherds may assist with one or more sessions for any age level. No preparation for class is needed but may be helpful.**



# Youth

*St. Christopher's uses the Journey to Adulthood (J2A) program for young people in grades 6/7-12, providing a liturgical frame for their experience in modern culture. It celebrates individuality and creative potential, and teaches the skills needed for successful participation in church and society. The program is based on the concept that manhood and womanhood are gifts from God, but that adulthood must be earned.*

## **GRADES 7- 8: Rite-13**

Rite-13 supports young people as they take their first steps away from family into self-discovery. It stresses the group as community, encourages friendship, and offers a safe place to explore new interests, ideas, and abilities. **TIME COMMITMENT: 1½ hours every other Sunday at noon and at other times as agreed.**

## **GRADES 9-10: J2A SOJOURNERS**

The J2A Sojo group blends action and contemplation in teaching young people faithful living. This includes making a holy pilgrimage together following their 2 year in J2A to deepen relationship with God and one another. Upon their return – equipped for new levels of responsibility – they are encouraged to take their place in the adult life of the church. **TIME COMMITMENT: 1½ hours every other Sunday at 5:00 p.m. and at other times as agreed, including 2 weeks for pilgrimage.**

## **GRADES 11-12: CONFIRM NOT CONFORM (CnC)**

Guided by adult advisors, members of this group begin to deepen involvement in the life of the church and community. The program also encourages them to claim their own beliefs, resolve how they will live these out in the world, and decide at the end of two years whether or not they are ready to be confirmed. **TIME COMMITMENT: 1½ hours every other Sunday at noon and at other times as agreed.**

## **YOUTH LEADERS**

Although leaders for *Journey to Adulthood* are discerned by a specially chosen team, the rector and DCE always appreciate knowing if you are interested in this ministry. Assistants are also needed for a variety of things, and this group is made up of volunteers.

# Adults

## **ADULT LEADERS AND FACILITATORS**

Leaders and ideas for formation groups/classes are always welcome!

## **INQUIRER'S CLASS: CONFIRM NOT CONFORM**

A six-week class is offered yearly for those over age 18 who want to explore their own beliefs more deeply. The group typically meets every other Sunday from noon to 1:30 p.m., focusing on the questions, **"What do I believe?"** and **"How do I live out MY beliefs in the world?"** At the end of this class members may choose (or not) to make a mature commitment to the Christian faith through (1) adult baptism, (2) confirmation or reception into the Church, or (3) by making a public reaffirmation of baptismal vows. **TIME COMMITMENT: One-and-a-half hours on Sundays and self-directed reading/study time.**

## **SUNDAY MORNING ADULT FORUM: WEEKLY**

One-hour Adult Forums meet in Room 1 on the lower level and begin at 9:15 a.m. Discussions are usually led by a lay leader of the church and have included everything from a book study to an in-depth look at world religions. All are welcome and new leaders and suggestions for topics are appreciated. **TIME COMMITMENT: One hour at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays and self-directed reading/study time.**

## **SUNDAY AFTERNOON ADULT FORUMS: PERIODICALLY**

Discussion groups meet periodically in the Aldworth Vestry Room at St. Christopher's on Sunday afternoons on topics of interest. Some of these have included "Career Discernment," "Job Loss," "Aging," "Prayer," and other topics. Suggested topics and speakers are always welcome, including the offering of your own knowledge and skills. **TIME COMMITMENT: One hour on Sundays after the 11:30 a.m. coffee hour.**

## **EVENING BOOK GROUP: MONTHLY**

Meeting weekly to read and reflect on a book selected by participants. Discussions are fun and provocative, and newcomers are welcome. **TIME COMMITMENT: One hour on Thursday evenings at the rector's home and additional time for self-directed reading.**

## **THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE ENCOUNTER: WEEKLY**

Examining one book of the Bible at a time, this group offers in-depth study and discussion of the Bible. Newcomers are always welcome. **TIME COMMITMENT: One and a half hours, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Aldworth Room. Additional time for self-directed reading/study.**

## **SEASONAL EVENTS**

In Lent and Advent special programs, quiet days, or worship services are offered to help reflect on the season and deepen our faith.

# Outreach & Social Justice

*Outreach and social justice are vital to our church's mission in part because it helps others, and in part because it changes us. Like medical schools whose mission is to train doctors and nurses, the church's primary mission is to train disciples. In the process we may treat the sick, but just as vitally, we create healers. This means it's not enough to write a check for outreach from the church treasury, although the check is important. We also need to send people along with the check so that WE can be changed. Both help make God's love visible in the world but the latter helps make the world's needs visible to the church. Often someone returns from this ministry saying, "My eyes have been opened; my life is changed." The church needs to be in the business of changing lives, our own and those of others, which we do through the following:*

## **ANIMAL CARE LEAGUE**

Each October – on the Sunday closest to the Feast of St. Francis (October 4th) – we bless animals at St. Christopher's. This includes our own pets but also animals needing adoption. The Animal Care League is a limited admission shelter located in Oak Park that provides homeless cats and dogs with food, shelter, medical attention and love until they can find them a loving home. Donations on this Sunday also go to support this not for profit organization that depends on the generosity of our communities to help us meet its goals.

## **BACK-TO-WORK CLOTHES CLOSET**

Clothes for those who are economically disadvantaged and are seeking work are collected, organized, and offered to recipients free of charge. Volunteers arrange and organize clothes as well as donations for weekly visitors to this frequently-used ministry. **TIME COMMITMENT: Maintain order, process new donations, rotate clothes seasonally, and prepare appeals when additions are needed. An hour or two a week usually is adequate.**

## **CATHEDRAL SHELTER OF CHICAGO**

Serving those homeless from alcoholism or other addictions, Cathedral Shelter of Chicago depends on volunteer help and financial support from St. Christopher's – offered in a variety of ways.

## **DISMANTLING RACISM**

Be part of opening our doors and hearts to ALL! This 2-day training, offered twice a year by the Diocese of Chicago, helps raise awareness of racism and shows us how to be more intentionally inclusive.

## **GREEN STEWARDSHIP TEAM**

Help organize events and become a spokesperson to educate our Church and wider community on how to be responsible stewards of our earthly gifts, such as beginning a battery recycling program. **TIME COMMITMENT: Start up this new ministry and identify actions for focus. Time commitment is self-directed.**

## **OPRF FOOD PANTRY & PADS MEALS**

There are three ways at St. C's to help the hungry in Oak Park:

1. Bring food to church for the Oak Park/River Forest Food Pantry.
2. Transport food to the OPRF pantry, find out about needed items, and report back to our church's Office for leaflet announcements.
3. Assist with meals for the homeless on a regular rotation at a local area PADS site.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Include as part of regular shopping trips. Transport food to pantry on a weekly or biweekly basis. Prepare food for PADS once a month and deliver to the scheduled site.**

## **OPRF WALK-IN MINISTRY**

Help support those with immediate needs within the Oak Park/River Forest Community by volunteering one hour of your time a week.

**TIME COMMITMENT: Volunteer one hour or more each week to provide client assistance**

## **PADS: WORK WITH THE HOMELESS**

Help serve the homeless in our area by working short evening or early morning shifts at local churches where overnight food and lodging are offered; or help provide monthly breakfast, lunch, or occasional dinner. In the fall you are also invited to help purchase school supplies for PADS and at Christmas to provide gifts for PADS families and make deserts for their Christmas party, which St. Christopher's hosts. **TIME COMMITMENT: Shelters are open from mid-September thru mid-May. Commitments for sites are generally for the entire shelter year. Check with PADS to see the list of current opportunities**

## **ST. CYPRIAN'S FOOD PANTRY & THANKSGIVING BASKETS**

To help feed the hungry in the greater Chicago area St. Christopher's donates \$75 of ground beef a month for this pantry, which is the only one in its area. We also raise about \$2,000 each year to help with Thanksgiving Baskets. Volunteers are needed to deliver the ground beef each month and to help solicit funds for Thanksgiving Baskets in

the fall. **TIME COMMITMENT:** Purchase (local vendor already secured) and deliver monthly meat to St. Cyprian. Organize and promote annual Thanksgiving donation drive

### **FUND RAISING EVENTS FOR OUTREACH**

Help create and implement new ways to assist our church in raising the money needed annually for the above ministries and for special appeals like Episcopal Relief and Development and other projects. **TIME COMMITMENT:** Varies. A recent "Nets for Life" drive involved being available after Sunday services to take donations for nets in addition to setting up a display.



*This handbook should contain an insert with an updated list of contacts. If it does not, please contact the church at 708-386-5613 or [stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stchrisoakpark@sbcglobal.net) and we will see that you receive one.*