

the Crucifer

The Newsletter of Christ Church/Episcopal

Vol. XXVIII, No. 7
April 29, 2026
christchurchtyler.org

FROM THE RECTOR:

*Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*
Proverbs 22.6

God has given a number of charges to the Church. The Scripture directs us to:

“Go and make disciples of all nations.”
(Matthew 28.19); to *“Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”* (Matthew 22:37–38); and to *“Love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”* (Matthew 22:39–40).

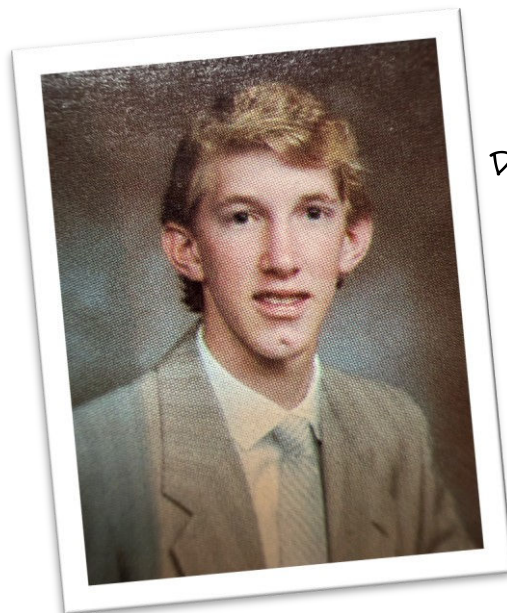
Every faithful Christian seeks to obey the commands of God with a joyful heart. And the Church is especially mindful of and purposeful about raising our children to know Christ, His love, His call, and His commands.

As the school year comes to a close, we are especially mindful of the wisdom of Proverbs 22.6. And we will celebrate on successive Sundays the blessing of our kids and will honor their accomplishments.

This coming Sunday, May 3 at 10:00 in the downtown nave, Bishop Fisher will bless a good group of our youth who are confirming their faith in the Lord. We will host a reception for the confirmands in the parish hall following the worship service. The following Sunday, May 10, we will honor our mothers, and we will celebrate Youth Sunday at Christ Church! Youth will help lead our worship services on both campuses. And at 10:00 and 11:00 that morning, at Christ Church South and our downtown campus respectively, we will honor our graduating seniors at receptions in their honor. Please join us!

There are lots of commands that we obey because we must. This month, we celebrate, congratulate, and give thanks to God for our young people because we love them.

Faithfully yours in Christ Jesus, *David*



DAVID LUCKENBACH
Class of 1987



This month we are getting ready to celebrate our graduates at Christ Church, but this is a celebratory time for all students. I remember looking ahead to the summer in middle school and it loomed like an eternity, like it would never end. I am certain that students are getting giddy for the summer break.

We celebrate this time of year because of what our students—especially the seniors—have accomplished over their educational tenure. And there is something else too: We celebrate the incredible sense of possibility and openness that comes with graduation. There is perhaps no other point in our lives when we have so many opportunities before us. All of life stands ready to be lived like a grand adventure. When we are walking with Jesus, his words from John 10:10 may be ringing in our ears, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” For our graduates, this abundant life is almost palpable as they look ahead to years filled with promises, brimming with joy.

Our graduates have every reason to believe that life will be good, that life *is* good. It’s easy for them to grasp the truth of Genesis 1:31, when after creation “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” This world, and this life are good because God has made them. To know and believe this is one thing, but to feel it to be true is another. I suspect the graduates know and feel it to be the case.

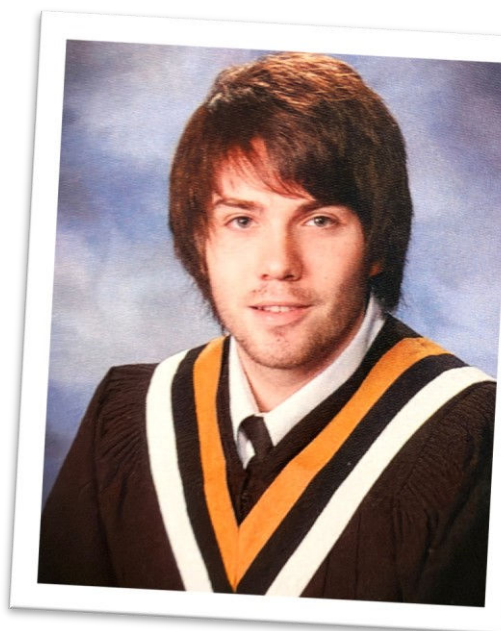
Us older folks who celebrate with our graduates are truly glad for them. For us, though, the joy might be tempered a little bit with the (for some, very long) experience of life. We’ve been in their shoes, looking at over the possibilities of our lives. And then we’ve lived those years, and for many of us, along with

the good and beautiful experiences we’ve had, unexpected frustrations and disappointments found their way to us as well.

Some of us found that the career we trained for wasn’t quite right for us, or that the family we planned to have never quite worked out. We ran up against physical limits that dampened our potential, or we lost touch with friends who we thought would be with us for life.

And all of us experienced the narrowing of our lives, as the great expanse of possibility we gazed into in our teenage years came into focus on this one life, this one career, this one family. All of the other options we had before us started to fade away. We learned to live not with possibility, but with reality. Saying “yes” to some very good things has meant saying “no” to many other things.

Still, we celebrate with open eyes. Even after the setbacks and heart aches and let-downs we recognize that life remains good, because all life is still a gift from God. When we see this when we are young and the world is before us, and we see it when we are in the middle of the busyness of family life, and we see it when we are old. Life is good because God is good, and in Jesus he has come to give us abundant life.



COLE HARTIN
 Class of 2008



music at Christ Church
Jeffrey Ford
Choirmaster & Organist

The Crucifer · April 29, 2026

Two Organists Walk into a Choir Stall...

A conversation with our Organist-Choirmaster, Jeffrey Ford, and Assistant Organist, A.J. Meals, about music, worship, and the path to the organ bench.

You might have been expecting a joke, but what we found instead was a wonderful conversation.

As we well know, the music of the Church lifts our voices, deepens our prayers, and enriches our worship. In this edition of The Crucifer, we visit with the two organists who faithfully serve at the organ console each Sunday. Jeffrey and A.J. share how they began playing, where they trained, and what they love most about leading worship through music.

We are entertaining the idea of making this a regular newsletter feature. If you have a question you would like us to answer in a future edition, please email us with the subject line: "Question for The Crucifer."

JEFFREY: jford@christchurchtyler.org
AJ: mealsa@gladewaterisd.com

1. **What motivated you to play the piano and organ?**

AJ: When I was a child in my evangelical church, I always loved the musical portions of the service. I was especially drawn to watching and listening to the pianists and organists play. Most of them were untrained or self-taught, but they inspired me deeply.

I knew I wanted to learn to play myself. Since I came from a non-musical family, I didn't know how to ask for lessons, so I began teaching myself. That approach led to a few bad habits—ones my college piano teacher later had to help me correct!

JEFFREY: I grew up in a country church, and one Sunday evening a gospel quartet came to sing. I was impressed with the pianist, and that is when I decided that I wanted to learn to play the piano. It wasn't until my first year of college that I decided to make church music my full-time work.

2. **What is your favorite part of the service?**

AJ: Musically speaking, I have always been drawn to hymns—the beautiful union of music and theology. It is my greatest joy to lead the congregation in hymn singing during the service, with the organ supporting our shared voice of worship.

The more the congregation sings, the more richly the hymns bless all of us. So stand up, open your hymnal, and SING THE HYMNS!

JEFFREY: My favorite part of the service is listening to A.J. go from the anthem of the day to the doxology.

3. **Where did you get your training?**

AJ: Funny story: as I mentioned earlier, I began by teaching myself, using the music literacy I gained in high school band and choir and applying it to the piano.

Later, at Texas A&M University-Commerce, I began formal piano study as a secondary instrument while pursuing my music education degree. My primary instrument was horn.

After college, I returned to piano study and later began organ study with my dear friend Bill Bane, organist-choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Church in Longview. His practical, real-life experience as a church musician helped prepare me for the unique demands of service playing as a professional church musician.

JEFFREY: I learned to play the piano starting in the third grade, I believe. My piano teacher came to our home and charged \$3.50 a lesson. His name was Maurice Bowsher.

After several years of piano, there was an organist in our church who thought that I would do well on the organ and gave me free organ lessons. After she had taken me as far as she could, I took organ lessons in a nearby town and progressed to playing for wedding receptions, country club dinners, and other events.

Upon graduating from high school, I went to Asbury University and received a B.A. in Organ. Five years later, I went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where I earned my master's degree in Organ and Church Music.



Register Now!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
June 22-26, 2026

www.christchurchtyler.org/vbs

Friends!
We need 17 adults to meet our Crew Leader requirements for VBS! Crew Leaders will lead a small group of elementary-age kids. There's no preparation required.

REQUIREMENTS?

Show up, be present, and have some serious fun!

Volunteers are how we make VBS happen.

Please register to volunteer so we can give kids a week filled with fun and lots of learning about Jesus.



CHILDREN'S CORNER BIRTHDAYS!

4/29 Winnie Harbold
5/2 Isaac Cline
5/6 Ivy Wait
5/7 Eleanor Albea
5/10 Olivia Crawford
5/11 Jake Vaughn



Special **combined** service | DOWNTOWN

CONFIRMATION

with Bishop Jeff Fisher

Sunday, May 3rd | 10:00am

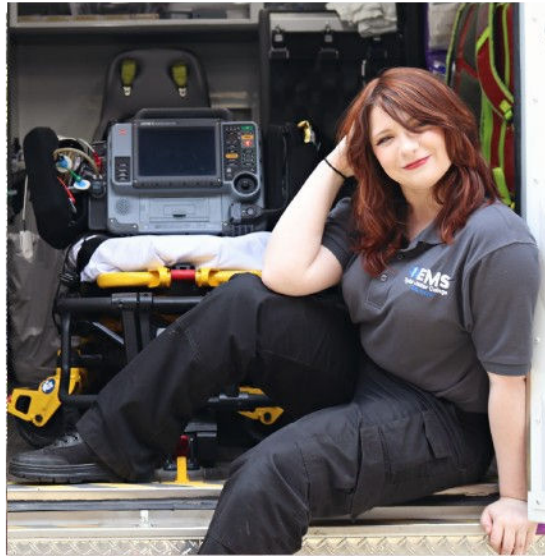
*Reception after the service honoring
the youth confirmands & their parents
as well as the adult confirmands.*

**SUM
MER**
SCHEDULE

DOWNTOWN only
begins May 3, 2026

7:30am Holy Eucharist
9:00am Christian Formation
10:00am Holy Eucharist

[South Campus times do not change]



Reese Caroline Clinch
TYLER LEGACY HIGH SCHOOL

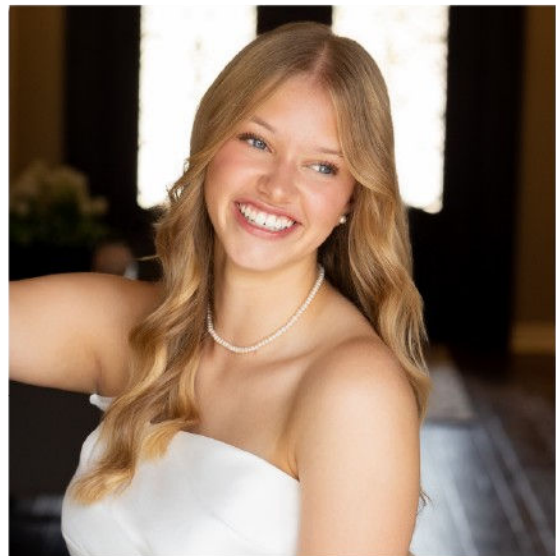
Plans to attend TEXAS STATE
in San Marcos in the fall and major in
Medical Laboratory Science with a
minor.

The Class of



Claire Godbold
CHAPEL HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Claire will be attending Project Search and then
TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE for the Culinary Program.
Once she finishes TJC, Claire plans to attend UT Tyler.



Katie
ALL SAINTS

Katie plans to attend
elementary school at
THE UNIVERSITY OF
at Sewanee

Youth Sunday | May 10th

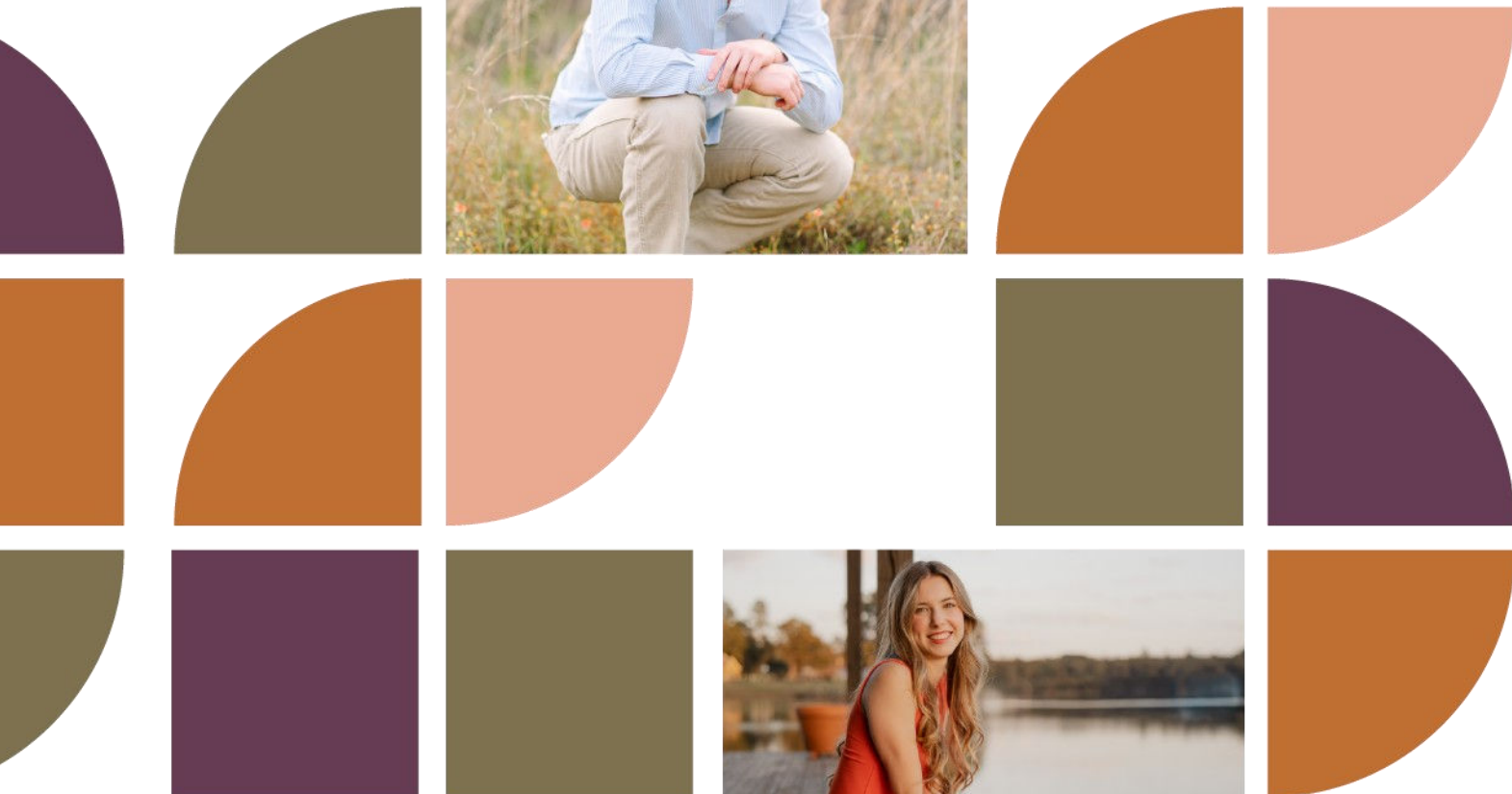
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L

UNIVERSITY
major in
with pre-med



Cole Phillips
ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Cole will be attending
THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
majoring in Political Science.



Caroline Elizabeth Luckenbach
ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Caroline is pursuing a degree in
secondary education and attending
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
in Nashville, Tennessee.



Caroline Joy Weissmann
WHITEHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL

Caroline will be attending AUBURN UNIVERSITY.
She is majoring in Biomedical Sciences with plans
to attend medical school.

Senior Receptions

Downtown | 11:00am

South | 10:00am

- We celebrate and give thanks for all of our graduating seniors.
This Crucifer reflects the senior information available at the time of publication.

[This article was originally in the September 10, 2025 issue of the Crucifer]

Loving Your Neighbor: A New Focus on Outreach at Christ Church Tyler

At Christ Church, we believe that one of the clearest ways we live out our faith is by loving and serving our neighbors. This calling is woven into the mission of our parish and the Gospel itself. To help us discern how best to use our gifts in service to others, the Vestry formed a special Loving Your Neighbor Task Force.

Over the past three months, this group has prayerfully reviewed the many ways Christ Church is already involved in the community, while also listening for where God may be calling us to expand our reach. Out of this period of study and discernment, three key ministry areas have been identified where our parish can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors.

The three ministries chosen are:

> **Adopt-a-Family** (Ukrainian Family Resettlement)



Walking alongside a refugee family as they build a new life here in Tyler.

> **Loaves & Fishes** (Hunger 4 Love & Willing Workers)



Responding to food insecurity in our community through hands-on service and compassion.

> **Tyler Street Team**



Offering dignity, support, and Christ's love to those experiencing homelessness.

Throughout the year, we will highlight one of these ministries each month in *The Crucifer*, sharing stories of impact as well as practical opportunities for parishioners to get involved. This is a chance not only to learn about the needs in our community, but also to see the fruits of our collective time, talent, and treasure at work.

We invite every member of Christ Church to prayerfully consider how you might join in this effort. Together, we can embody the love of Christ and extend it beyond our walls into the heart of our community.

“Let all that you do be done in love.” – 1 Corinthians 16:14

Adopt-a-Family *our Ukrainian Family*



When Nora Kononovych shared in March that her two grandmothers were still in Ukraine, the hearts of our Prayer Shawl Ministry were deeply moved. They gathered shawls made with prayer and purpose and obtained the family's address. In mid-March, the packages were carefully addressed in English and sent on their way — off to a war-torn country with no guarantee they would ever arrive.

The ministry prayed and waited. Then, about four weeks later, came wonderful news: the shawls had arrived. Both were sent to Nora's father, Yevgeny, who cares for his mother Luba in Nikopol — one of the most frequently and intensely targeted cities in Ukraine. To the ministry's delight, they even received a photo of Luba wrapped in her shawl (*see photo to the right*). Yevgeny will send the second shawl to Nora's other grandmother, Maria, who lives in the relative safety of the Carpathian mountains.

In the midst of war and uncertainty, two women in Ukraine will feel the warmth of a church family's love wrapped around their shoulders.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry we welcome any ladies or men who like to knit or crochet to join the Prayer Shawl Ministry. It is very rewarding! We meet at 11:00am, on the third Tuesday of the month in the Epiphany Room (summers off) at the Downtown Campus, or you can knit at home too. We've also had a very successful Summer Knitting Camp for Church Youth. For more information contact Joanna Reagan.

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Tyler Street

From homeless to hopeful



For two years, Tyler Street Team volunteers walked alongside a double amputee living deep in the woods — bringing food, blankets, water, and companionship. They didn't come to fix him; they came to know him.

Three months ago, facing a dangerous winter storm, he made a courageous choice to come inside — trusting a team that had never let him down. Tyler Street Team covered his housing and needs while working behind the scenes to find him a permanent place.

After nine years of homelessness, he has his own home, three meals a day, and a community that loves him. This past Sunday, he was baptized at Christ Church South. His sponsors were Cally & Robert Finney, Oliver Finney, Julie & Ernie Becker and Roger Fowler.



Nora Kononovych & her mother, Iryna at South Campus.

Nora's grandmother—Luba Kononovych, Nikopol, Ukraine

2 Loaves & Fishes Willing Workers



Where faith becomes action

The **Willing Workers** are a ministry dedicated to serving our community and sharing the love of Christ through acts of kindness and service.



SERVING TOGETHER
Making a difference through service.



BUILDING COMMUNITY
Uniting people with a shared purpose.



SHARING CHRIST
Reflecting God's love in our actions.



Please donate at willingworkers.betterworld.org

Doing the Lord's work for God's people.

In Our Prayers

Please consider including the Prayer List in your daily devotions:

Luba, Maria, Yeve, YK, Iryna, Nora, Yevgeny, Lisa, Anna Marie, Fred, Owen, Jennifer, Cindy, Earl, Linda, Mike, Mark, Dalton, Marian, Jerry, Stella, Dale, Kirby, Patty, Sarah, Ben, Joshua, Helen, Brinley, Cooper, Hans, Sarah, CF, Chris, Peggy, Heidi, Luke, Jessica, Rick, Kay, Amber, Tabitha, Mike, Sydni, Barrett, Martha, Kendall, Kitty, Colleen, Lee, Cody, Lorrylei, Thomasine

The Anglican Communion: *The Diocese of Worcester (England)*

The Episcopal Church: *Dioceses of Arizona & Arkansas*

Diocese of Texas: *Christ Church—Matagorda & Trinity—Marshall*

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please contact The Rev. Stephen Stine if you'd like to keep or add someone to the prayer list 903.530.8168 or ssti@tjc.edu.

**Congratulations
on the marriage of:**

*Carol Duncan &
Lansford Ireson*
April 18, 2026.

Congratulations on the baptism of:

Kyle Brown.

South Campus
April 26, 2026

upcoming

FRIDAY | May 1

The Bob Rowlett Memorial Golf Tournament

SUNDAY | May 3 **Downtown Service Times Change*

7:30am Holy Eucharist | CCD

9:00am Confirmation Reception | CCD

10:00am Combined Confirmation Service | CCD

10:00am Christian Formation | CCS

11:05am Holy Eucharist | CCS

WEDNESDAY | MAY 6 & 20

6:00pm **Women's Depth Group** | CCS

SUNDAY | May 10 **YOUTH SUNDAY**

7:30am Holy Eucharist | CCD

9:00am Christian Formation | CCD

10:00am Holy Eucharist | CCD

10:00am Senior Reception | CCS

11:00am Senior Reception | CCD

11:05am Holy Eucharist | CCS

TUESDAY | MAY 12

5:30PM DOK Potluck Social | CCS

THURSDAY | May 14

Keys to the Kingdom | *Theology Book Study*

3:00pm Downtown in the Guild Hall

*RSVP office@christchurchtyler.org

SUNDAY | MAY 31

12:30pm **Picnic Under the Pavilion** | CCS





Christ Church | Episcopal
118 S. Bois d'Arc
Tyler, TX 75702

903.597.9854
office@christchurchtyler.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.christchurchtyler.org

Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship Services (Summer hours 5/3/26—Labor Day)

7:30am **CCD:** The Holy Eucharist *Rite I*

10:00am **CCD:** The Holy Eucharist *Rite II*

11:05am~ **CCS:** The Holy Eucharist *Rite II*

~live-streamed christchurchtyler.org

CHRIST CHURCH: ONE CHURCH—TWO CAMPUSES

CCD: Christ Church *Downtown*, 118 S. Bois d' Arc, Tyler, TX 75702 (*office address*)

CCS: Christ Church *South*, 15747 Old Jacksonville Hwy, Tyler, TX 75703

www.christchurchtyler.org | office@christchurchtyler.org

Please Note: *The Crucifer* is published twice monthly (once in July & December).

If you have something you would like to see published in *The Crucifer*, please contact Samantha Hague at 903-597-9854, shague@christchurchtyler.org.



The vision of Christ Church is to be recognized as a joyful, spirit-filled community of apostles reaching out and transforming lives for Christ.