

St. Christopher's

e-Traveler



Meet Christ.
Be Christ.

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From the Rector



**The Rev.
Randy W. Johnson**
Rector

"We didn't see this coming!"

Mark 8:31-32a: "Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly."

I teach a course to newly appointed emergency managers called, "Decision making and ethics." It is meant to provide practical and proven decision-making strategies that are employed when preparing for and responding to a disaster event. One of the more interesting lessons learned is an example I share to emphasize how leaders react when an emergent disaster event occurs in their community. I roll a video of leader after leader standing before a bank of media cameras and microphones, as they one by one say the very same words, "We didn't see this coming."

This is the response of many of us as we suddenly wake up to find that the COVID-19, or coronavirus pandemic, has actually arrived on our doorstep. We watched with detached horror as coronavirus wreaked disaster upon the people of Wuhan, China. But we didn't see it coming to us. We didn't foresee that the world as we know it, with its economic swagger and sense of invincibility above our neighbor, would come crashing to a halt. The freedoms we have taken for granted and enjoyed, such as shopping, meeting

in restaurants, socializing with friends and playing sports, have been taken away in the twinkling of an eye.

In St. Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins to warn his closest followers that he is about to experience suffering and death. They don't see it coming. A blind man from Bethsaida is healed. When Jesus looked at him intently, the man who was born blind 'saw everything clearly.' (Mark 8:25) But the disciples don't see clearly--they don't grasp or understand what Jesus is telling them. When Jesus tells them that he is going to be killed (Mark 9:31), the evangelist remarks: "They did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:32).

In the face of chaos and calamity, Jesus invites us to see clearly; to foresee what's coming. To journey with him on the path of sacrifice. To find in death the God-given hope of new life. But to do this with real depth of understanding; to see and grasp and understand --this requires us to glimpse the mystery of the crucified God. And we can only do that on our knees, touched by the hand of the great physician who opens our eyes so that we see reality as it truly is. "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

"Lord Christ, you are known to us in the breaking of the bread; reveal yourself to us as well in our quiet, in our solitude, and in our hopes." Michael Rusk, rector of Emmanuel Church, Geneva.

Be well and stay safe. Be physically distanced and remain socially connected. Be kind, smile often, and know God loves you.

Randy+



**The Rev.
Mary Rowe**

Assisting Priest

Being an outgoing, hugging, people person, this period of social distancing and staying at home has been a challenge. During my daily walk about, I'm spending a lot more time talking to and listening to the birds and geese.

This time apart from the worship and activities of St. Christopher's has reinforced my love for our community. There are things each of us can do to stay connected if we want to. Even though separated physically, we can pray

for each other as a person comes to mind. We can take a moment to call someone from our directory and just check in with them, even if we don't know them very well. The Spirit is challenging us to be creative!

This is not the way in which I had envisioned saying what I need to tell you, but ...

After Easter, I am stepping down as the assistant priest at St. Christopher's. I will still be licensed in case Randy needs me. This is my 25th year as an ordained clergy person, the church is very healthy, and Randy is a terrific rector, so this is a good time for me to retire from my position. As I am not a rector, I plan to continue coming to St. Christopher's and worshiping with you in the pew. I dearly love you all, and for that reason, it has been a hard decision.

My husband and I look forward to traveling, and spending more time in Moab (after the pandemic settles down).

May our Lord continue to bless and keep you , as you grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Love in Christ,
Mary+

Music Notes



Karla Cole

Director of Music Ministries

Music Notes

"Oh dear, what should we write?," the chorus went up, as Ruth reminded us that yet another *eTraveler* article was due. And Fr. Randy suggested that we just write about what we're doing while the church is shuttered. Just. Well, I spent the first week trying to figure out how to manage the Holy Week and Easter services without any rehearsals. And then it became apparent that there wouldn't even *be* any Holy Week or Easter services, so I had to pout about that for a few days and go back to the drawing board.

Without Wednesdays and Sundays to order my week, I haven't the foggiest notion of what day it is. As I write, it's a Friday, which feels pretty much like all the other days of last week. Up to this point, I have at least been able to go to church and practice, and I have succeeded in getting a few pieces of music recorded – we'll see if I can figure out how to get them posted to the website. It

looks like I'll have some time to work on that that, now that we're supposed to just stay at home. Our son is working on the "front lines" at Costco and has a sheet of paper in case he gets stopped, explaining that he's in transit to or from an "essential" job. I'm not sure I could spin practicing the organ as essential. So now I'm totally working from home.

As I mentioned, our son goes in and out every day and has a keep-the-virus-away regimen. He regales us with amusing and terrifying tales from retail, when he's not skyping with his girlfriend, who lives in Eden Prairie, may as well be Fargo. Our daughter, who is a PhD student in Chicago, is here with her cat and her dissertation. My husband, Matt, works from home, doing phone calls and virtual meetings as if he were at the office in downtown St. Paul. Or almost. Comcast was here twice this week.

Oh, and I started a blog. Ever since blogging became a big thing, folks have encouraged me to blog. I'm still not sure that I have important enough thoughts, or even enough things to say to keep a blog going, but right now, I have plenty of time to read and think deep thoughts. And write a blog. You can find it on the homepage of the website – there's a **Music Ministries Blog** tab there. I'll try to post every Monday. Maybe even with music!

One of our friends in the ECMN community has been widely quoted for saying, "this Lent is the lentiest Lent that ever lented." She wins the prize for encapsulating this season of the coronavirus as it effects communities of faith. Rather than giving up chocolate or our favorite tippie for Lent, we've given up the eucharist, the liturgy, the Stations of the Cross, the beautiful and contemplative services of Holy Week – even our Easter celebration. We are called to *not* practice our faith with our church community during this holiest season, and to trust that we will all come back safely together again soon. God's asking a lot more from us this year.

Take care and keep well,
Karla

Footprints APRIL 2020 - News from Children's Ministries



Marion Hunner

**Children's Ministries
Director**



Here I sit, in my home, on the third Sunday in a row that I have not gotten to see most of my St. Christopher's family. Yes, several of us made it out on March 15, but it was a small group, and we practiced social distancing: spreading out in the church, not touching during the peace, forgoing wine at communion, and not lingering afterward. It wasn't the same,

and I miss everyone.

I have been keeping in touch with our families via email and Facebook, and I've even reached a few on the phone. I have been compiling faith filled resources for families and sending them sporadically, trying desperately not to overwhelm these people who are already overwhelmed. Staying home with your children is a full-time job. Working is a full-time job. Many of our parent are doing both simultaneously right now.

However, as I write this today, I am celebrating modern technology and the willingness of several families to have joined me on a Zoom call. For those of you who aren't familiar with Zoom, it is an application that allows several people to "call in" to a video meeting on their electronic device (computer, tablet, phone). Each participant can see and be seen by the others. We can also hear each other and carry on conversations. It brought me great joy to see and interact with five of our families. We visited, checked in with each other about the joys and challenges of being at home, and I read a story. Our story was about where we find God: when we see people embody the fruits of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) we are seeing God. Final page of the story: "I don't see God the way I see my friends or the streetlights or the river, but I see signs of God's spirit all around me, right here in the city. I know what God is like, maybe I can be like that, too."

In this unprecedented, scary time, we look for God all around us. Today my heart is full.



Chad O'Leary

Director Youth Ministries

A Little Extra Love

All of us are probably starting to feel the rooms in our house shrinking as this pandemic rages on. At times, I have stopped just to offer gratitude that both Troy and I are still living and no one has been charged with attempted murder. It has also become very apparent to me as I have connected with my students through distance learning that their lives have been greatly impacted and there is a lot of grieving (and not always a full set of tools to process that grief). Youth and young adults are hard-wired for social interaction and so a "stay-in-place" order can really impact their day-to-day outlook. It's normal for every student to complain about school (I mean, who likes having to get permission to go to the bathroom or have their minute-to-minute existence ruled by bells?) but teenagers rely on the interactions at school, both within the classroom and

outside of it, to build their village. This village consists of their closest friends, trusted teachers, and inspiring coaches. Limiting access to the family that they have built can be difficult to process and can grind daily decision making to a halt. I can go down the list of sports and extracurriculars to which our young people belong. I can go down that same list and identify that all of these activities are no longer available in their original form or at all. I know that I reflect very fondly on the final months of my senior year. My class started to break out of their self-designated “cliques,” prom was a blast and graduation was a right of passage from being a youth to a young adult. Six teens in our parish family may not get to experience these senior year moments and it is important that we acknowledge that loss as a community. Please be sure to keep Cora L, Julia L, Patrick H, Bobby T, Joe B and Jessica N in your prayers. And if you have a graduating senior in your life, give them a little extra love during these next several weeks.

We want our young people to know that we stand beside them through this difficult time so I have been in touch with them by phone but will also be sending some periodic messages in other, more old-fashioned, ways as this “stay-in-place” order persists. It is my hope that in the late spring or summer we will be able to come together in celebration and have an old fashioned “so how was your quarantine?” party.

I will also be working in the weeks ahead to update our website to have a “members only” section where people will be able to share/read prayer requests. Our sense of community at St. Christopher’s is a model for many faith communities in the ECMN and I am committed to helping maintain that connection during a time when most things seem quite disconnected.

As a friend of my posted on Facebook, “this is the lentiest Lent that ever lented.” Boy, isn’t that the truth? Wishing you all a very healthy April.

Chad

Green Team

Happy Anniversary! April 22nd marks the 50th year of celebrating Earth Day. The theme for 2020 is climate action.

As individuals, we all have the power to change the world. The magnitude of a single action may seem small, but small, individual changes add up to big changes. Here are some suggestions:

- Bring a bag when you go on walks and pick up garbage.
- Compost – keep food scraps, napkins, and tissues out of the landfill. With community drop off sites open 24/7 it is easier to compost. We have started at church (look for the bucket with the green composting bag inside). The Green Team will be hosting a coffee hour at church to instruct how to compost (date TBD).
- Plant a tree or give a tree planted in someone’s name. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and improve air quality.
- Bring a reusable bag to the grocery store. Keep several in your car so

they are always handy.

- Shop wisely – more and more environmentally friendly products are now on the market. Shampoo can be purchased in bar form, eliminating the plastic container.
- Use reusable water bottles.
- Bring a reusable mug to your favorite coffee shop.
- Ditch the plastic straws. Use a reusable one or don't use one at all.
- Make your yard creature friendly – put in a bird feeder or bird house.
- Shop at the farmer's market.
- Go meatless – even for one day a week.
- Re-purpose jars and other containers.
- Volunteer at an environmental organization.
- Become educated. There are a lot of websites where you can become informed.

Every day can be earth day if we all do our part!

The Green Team

Food Shelf Update

In mid-March, **123 pounds** of food went to the Keystone Food Shelf from St. Christopher's. Thanks, everyone! Keep up the great work!



APRIL Calendar Highlights!

1 Wednesday -- April Fools' Day!

5 Sunday -- Palm Sunday
No services

9 Thursday -- Maundy Thursday
No services

10 Friday -- Good Friday
No services

12 Sunday -- EASTER SUNDAY
No services - please sing Alleluias at home!

13 Monday --
Finance Committee (meet online)

19 Sunday -- Easter 2
No services

20 Monday --
Vestry Meeting (meet online)

21 Tuesday --
Meals on Wheels - Offsite (?)

26 Sunday - Earth Day
No services

27 Monday -- e-Traveler Deadline for May issue

30 Thursday
Community Dinner (tentative)

Please note: Due to the COVID-19 protocols in place at the end of March as we prepare this edition of the e-Traveler, most activities of our community and outside groups have been cancelled or postponed. If we are able to resume activities, we'll send out plenty of notices.

Last Words



I hope you have enjoyed the April **e-Traveler!**

Thank you for all of your cards and good wishes after the loss of my mom. It has been a blessing to me to be so cared for by this community, as well as the community at Holy Apostles, where I attend.

It has been very quiet, in the office and at home, as we all are staying safe from the coronavirus. I listen for the still, small Voice, and I am rewarded in many ways - including bird calls outside, and sunshine, and the sudden arrival of a cat to purr in my lap. God is good.

(Here's Geordie, below. He's a very good sleeper.)

Ruth Thillen
Parish Administrator



St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

VESTRY:

Kathy Ackerman, Sr. Warden; Mike Sirany, Jr. Warden
Allison Jensen, Clerk; Suzanne Hitchcock, Treasurer

Erin Bowman; Barbara Hovey; Ann DePaolis-Jones; Josh Kattelman;
Alexander Kun; Tom Linder; Jeanna McLoughlin; Al Reedstrom; Lisa Spiro

STAFF:

Ruth Thillen, Parish Administrator
Chad O'Leary, Youth Ministries Director
Marion Hunner, Children's Ministries Director
Karla S. Cole, Director of Music Ministries
Rev. Mary Rowe, Assisting Priest
Rev. Janet MacNally, Deacon
Rev. Randy W. Johnson, Rector

Our Regular Schedule

Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist

9:00 AM Fellowship

9:30-10:20 AM Children's Education-Room 107
(*NO First Sunday*)

9:30-10:15 AM Youth Education-Youth Room

9:30-10:15 AM Adult Education-Parish Hall

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

10:30 AM Children's Chapel (*First Sunday ONLY*)

11:30 AM Fellowship

Wednesday: 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 9 AM - 4 PM

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STAY CONNECTED

