

St. Christopher's

e-Traveler



Meet Christ.
Be Christ.

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From the Rector



**The Rev.
Randy W. Johnson**

Rector

“It Begins with a Spark”

“Good gravy...,” These are the words that rolled off my tongue in a not so subtle reference to our recent Thanksgiving dinner. But, it was a very different time of family, friends, and feasting this year. I am fairly certain that you had to have *“the talk”* with parents, kids, and close friends before the holidays...mind you, NOT *“the talk”* about birds and bees, but the one about our inability to gather as we always have done for as long as I can remember.

COVID-19 has deeply scarred our world with indiscriminate attacks on our health and well-being. Nearly everyone I know has had a personal touch with this disease. Medical science is doing incredible work in development of a vaccine which will hopefully be distributed beginning the end of 2020. We cannot place all our hopes and wishes that the vaccines will be the end all, and we still have much personal responsibility in maintaining strong response actions such as; staying home when sick, wearing a mask, washing hands frequently and maintaining 6 foot physical distancing. We all are ultimately responsible for living a life of love in Jesus Christ—taking care of ourselves and loving our neighbor. We have the power to make a healthy choice to make the difficult, yet critical decision, to love unconditionally even as our hearts long for the physical presence of those we love. We likely will have a similar decision to make as Christmastide arrives. The gravy tastes good on the turkey and potatoes, but it just feels very different without the engaging presence and conversation of family and friends around the table. It felt much

like the spark of life was missing, or at least diminished or hidden under a bushel basket.

In the quietness, I have been reading ***Parent, Teacher, Mentor, Friend: How every adult can change kids' lives***, by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D. Dr. Benson writes this book with an eye towards each of us answering a call to action to be a supportive presence in the lives of our children and young adults. Five hundred years ago, German theologian Martin Luther said, *"Indeed, for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young?"* The power of supportive and loving relationships cannot be overstated. Whether you know it or not, you already have tremendous power to change a young person's life. This also applies to the lives of people of any age. *YOU have that power!*

"It Begins with a Spark." Dr. Benson describes it as, *"... a special quality, skill, or interest that lights us up and that we are passionate about. It comes from inside us, and when we express it, it gives joy and energy. It is our very essence, the thing about us that is good, beautiful, and useful in the world."* To me, it sounds much like what we believe and experience in the season of Advent, as we anticipate the coming of the Messiah—the coming of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Jesus *IS* that spark which ignites that light which comes in this time of darkness—both as a physical factor of nature, but also the darkness that has overshadowed us during this global pandemic and tumultuous time of unknown.

You may ask what our role and call to action is as followers of Jesus—to ***ignite the spark***--as we support family and friends at this Christmastide. It is the same as the love and support we extend to the young ones in our community which allows them to grow and flourish in health and wisdom:

- Give support and encouragement;
- Teach values and acknowledge their unique identity is affirmed;
- Encourage courageousness about trying new things;
- Teach the importance to persevere through difficulties; and
- Provide all the resources that not only help them survive, but lead them toward thriving.

Seeking Christ and Being Christ This *IS* the spark we are called to share with the world. And by the way, you will also bring untold joy and fulfillment into your own life.

Peace and all things good.

Randy+

Music Notes



Karla Cole

Director of Music Ministries

My husband loves Patrick O'Brian's sea-faring novels. It could be argued that they are the only works of fiction that he actually likes to read. He says reality is such a trip, why bother with fiction. I would argue that reality is too much sometimes, and I need a little escapism. When our kids were infant and toddler, Matt had walking pneumonia and retreated to the attic with stacks of those books and pots of tea. Meanwhile, with a new baby and a toddler who wasn't done being a baby yet, a house and a full-time job – I was working for the Lutherans at the time – three pastors. Within a year of my having left there (to move to Minnesota), the papa bear pastor went into alcohol rehab, the mama bear pastor moved back east to escape the passive-aggressive Midwesterners, and the baby bear pastor divorced his wife. At the time, I thought I was the crazy one. Reality, indeed.

Anyway, imagine my surprise when Sam Sifton quoted Patrick O'Brian in his NYTimes Cooking newsletter this morning. He quoted a description of the doldrums from *Blue at the Mizzen*, "the heat, the faintly drifting cloud, the ship pitching heavily with no way on her, the flaccid sails, were all the same." For many of us, the days *are* all the same right now. Sam would argue that we just need a little creative cooking inspiration to get us out of our doldrums. But, even those of us that like to cook are getting a little bored with that by now. I would argue that musical pursuits occupy the mind and heal the soul. Go to our website and find the **October HymnSing** on the Music Blog and sing along at the top of your lungs. Did you ever get the **Year of Wonder** by Clemency Burton-Hill? The whole book is a meditation and therapy session. You could turn the stereo way up with your favorite tunes and hunt for dust bunnies. Pull your old trombone out of the basement and annoy the neighbors. Or take up the recorder. It's cheap and easy to play. Get yourself a starter instrument, an instruction book, and set aside twenty minutes each day. You might find that a twenty minute practice session stretches out a bit as you come to be able to play tuneful little pieces. Then you start to play one part of a duet into the voice recorder on your phone so that you can play duets with yourself. And before you know it, we'll be able to socially distance and tootle away in the parish hall. They make these nifty face masks that have trap doors for the mouthpiece of your instrument. If you're interested, give me a holler.

So, Thanksgiving was a bust for everyone this year. The Christmas decorations have gone up already and people are playing carols on the Musak. But it just doesn't seem right, either. It's bleak, I know. As Minnesotans, we should be well-prepared for this sad, isolated Christmas holiday because of all the blizzards we've experienced. We are hardy people, strong women, good-looking men and above average children and all that. We've got to be able to make Christmas feel like Christmas in spite of the virus this year, right? Well, in light of that, we musicians are tackling a **Virtual Lessons and Carols**. It will be a bit pared down in contrast with recent years, but hopefully, heart-warming and joyful just the same. Watch the weekly email and the FaceBook page for the roll out of that project. I've heard that ECMN is also preparing a diocesan Lessons and Carols that should be lovely as well.

And then, do put **December 20th** on your calendar because we're having a

party in the parking lot. **Once in Royal COVID's City: a socially distanced caroling event** will be held from **3:00 to 5:00 on Sunday afternoon, December 20th**. There will be mulled wine, cider and hot chocolate, lots of cookies, cheerful luminaries, rosy cheeks and some caroling. Dig out your warmest coat and boots and your most colorful scarf and join us as we shake our collective fists at both the weather and the pandemic and have a little fun in spite of it all. If you enjoy baking, donations of homemade cookies would be most appreciated, as there will also be cookie plates delivered to all of our shut-ins. The children are decorating the plates, we will fill them with cookies and some helpful elves (volunteers would be welcome for this, too) will deliver them. A little Christmas cheer for everyone! And then, someday when the pandemic is a distant memory, we'll laugh and remember how we stamped our feet and froze our fingers in the parking lot, howling Christmas carols at each other from ten feet away. And it will feel a lot better when it's just a memory, won't it?

Grace and peace,
Karla

Footprints DECEMBER 2020 News from Children's Ministries



Marion Hunner

**Children's Ministries
Director**



What is happening with the children of St. Christopher's and their families? Lots! Thanks to our wonderful Sunday School teachers and their willingness to "think outside the box," we are presenting lessons on Zoom every Sunday. We also decorated plates for Lessons and Carols, and we're working on our first-ever Virtual Christmas Pageant! Continue reading for more details!

Sunday School: We meet on Zoom at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. We are almost done with our exploration of the life of Moses, but we're stepping away from Moses for 2 weeks to learn about the Liturgical Calendar colors and the 4 Sundays in Advent. We will also be making individual, no fire Advent wreaths! All of our lessons are now placed on the St. Christopher's website (under the "learn" tab) once they are presented so that families can access them even if they can't be with us on Sunday morning.



Family Worship: We meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month in person where Fr. Randy leads us in interactive storytelling and engages the children in celebrating the Eucharist with him - using individual patents and small cups (with grape juice!) Each child then gets to distribute the Eucharist to their family.



Do Not Be Afraid, a Virtual Christmas Pageant!

Most of our families, and even some of our youth, are working on various parts of our Christmas pageant. It is great fun working with each individual cast member (15 total!) on their parts. And my new skill for COVID . . . video editing! We are filming some scenes at home and some on Zoom, and they will all be pieced together into one video. Our tradition is to share our pageant on Epiphany. This year everyone will have a chance to view it at coffee hour on Sunday, January 3rd.

Youth



Chad O'Leary
Director of Youth Ministries

Dear Friends,

Oh, the silence. In the isolation of this pandemic it seems extra loud. I know that my personal struggle has been how to turn this unique time into one of growth -- and that quest continues!

Although it seems like five lifetimes ago now, last year we did a drive to collect money for our friends in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, who had shown our youth group such great hospitality (and perspective) on our pilgrimage. We, as a community, were able to share several thousand dollars with our new friends, which went to a variety of rebuilding projects for the church, coats for families, and some really cool gifts for our children and youth. It felt like such a positive way to give back after we had benefited so much from their hospitality. While we will not have a similar drive this Advent season, our youth are about to begin a parish-wide initiative for this Lent. We plan to invite individuals and families to assemble planned "food kits" throughout the Lenten season that will, during the first week of Easter, be shared with the Food Shelf. In addition, we will be assembling a collection of prayers from you -- voices of our community - - for individuals and families to read as they add food items to their collection basket throughout the reflective season. Individuals and families will have the choice to participate on the weekends, just doing Holy Week, or throughout all 40 days. We are excited to plan and hopefully bring together our hearts and hands in a very special way during this very difficult time for many.

You may also be seeing some slight updates to our webpage -- primarily to our landing page. Web traffic has increased during the pandemic and we will be providing a bit of a "face lift" with the addition of some fancy dancy buttons, new pictures, etc. This is also a great time, if you are part of a committee, to update your pages. If you have new pictures or content that you would like shared with the interwebs, please send them my way and I'd be happy to help you get them to where you want them to go.

Have a blessed Advent season and embrace the deep silence of this holy time; it does bring peace to know that I am learning to do so alongside friends in faith.

Chad

Stewardship Update

Please prayerfully consider your Pledge for 2021.

As of this sending, we have **83** pledges in of about 116 expected. We are short of our target amount by about \$66,000. If you need a Pledge card, call the office Monday-Thursday and Ruth will mail one. OR, you can just tell Ruth what your pledge will be (by phone or email), and she can enter it in the computer.

If you need to know what you pledged for 2020, to assist in your 2021 pledge decision, please call or email Ruth in the church office, and she will get you the correct information.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Our 2020 Annual Meeting will be held virtually on January 24,

2021.

We expect to mail out copies of the Annual Report about one week before the meeting. Please watch for information about logging in for the meeting. It will be very similar to connecting for Adult Forum.

If you will be submitting a report for the Annual Report Book, PLEASE have it in the office not later than January 10th. THANK YOU!



DECEMBER Calendar Highlights!

2 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship -Parking Lot

6 Sunday - Advent 2

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

9 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

11 Friday

11 AM to 1 PM Keystone Mobile Food Shelf - West Lot

13 Sunday - Advent 3

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

14 Monday

6 PM Finance Committee Meeting - via Zoom

16 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship -Parking Lot

20 Sunday - Advent 4

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

**3 PM - 5 PM Once in Royal COVID's City:
A Socially Distanced Caroling Event**

21 Monday

6:45 PM Vestry Meeting - via Zoom

23 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

24 Thursday -- Christmas Eve (No Service)

Office Closed

25 Friday -- Christmas Day (No Service)

Office Closed

27 Sunday -- Christmas 1

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

28 Monday

e-Traveler Deadline for January

30 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

Please note: Outdoor worship services are now being held in the North parking lot; please **tune your car radio to 96.1 FM** to hear the service. Due to the COVID-19 protocols in place as we prepare this edition of the e-Traveler, most other 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



Ruth Thillen
Parish Administrator

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

It seems pretty strange to not be anticipating the production of several hundred service bulletins for the Christmas services. This Christmas will be one to remember, for sure! I will miss all the hustle and bustle, but, I am sure it will all return next year, and be all the more beautiful for the extended separation we are all living. I miss all of you, and I hope to see many of your smiling faces on our "Zoom Annual Meeting" next month!

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
Colleen Carpenter, Seminarian
Rev. Randy W. Johnson, Rector

Our Regular Schedule

Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist (On Hiatus)

8:00 AM Adult Formation/Zoom Coffee Hour

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

---Currently meeting in the North Parking Lot---

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

11:30 AM Fellowship

Wednesday: 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist in the North Parking Lot

Current Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9 AM - 4 PM

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church | 2300 Hamline Ave. N.

Roseville, MN 55113

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STAY CONNECTED

