



Hello, St. Christopher's Community! *The correction is the announcement about Faithful Innovation, which belonged in the box that held instructional text just before the Lectionary Readings in the first email.*

No Pattern... No Formula... *by Fr. Randy+*

Our Wednesday Holy Eucharist service this week gave me time to pause following an intensive week of engaging our faith family members with life-changing issues. Our appointed gospel lesson was from Luke 7:11-17, which is the story of the widow of Nain and her newly deceased son. The story focused my thoughts on the immediate and direct impact on lives—both then and today—of death, disease, and unexpected loss we humans suffer on this side of the veil.

You may recall, the widow of Nain was broken-hearted at the death of her only son, whose body was now being carried out of the city walls on a bier to his place of burial. Jesus happened to pass them by at the city gate, saw the woman's grief and pain, and reached out to touch the bier carrying his body. The son immediately regained his life.

*Hmmm...*an interesting outcome when Jesus intervened in our mortal lives. But, this intervention is somewhat unique—*No Pattern—No Formula*. Let's review several of Jesus' miraculous interventions in the lives of those who have been marginalized, when he heals those who are sick or lame or grieved;

-when he heals Peter's mother-in-law, he takes her by the hand and lifts her up

-he reaches out to a leper—touches him—and makes him clean

-he commands the paralytic to stand up and take his mat and go home with just the sound of his voice

-he tells a man with a withered hand to stretch out his hand—it is healed

-a woman reaches out her hand on her own volition, to touch Jesus—and she is healed

And, that is just in the first five chapters of Mark's gospel!

And these stories don't even take into account the time Jesus made paste out of dirt and spit to put on the eyes of the man born blind, or the times when someone was healed by Jesus when they weren't even close to one another! When raising the dead, he reaches out his hand to touch a 12 year-old girl. He commands Lazarus to come out of the tomb—even though he stinketh of decomposition! When casting out demons, he calls them out by name, drives them into swine, and commands them to be silent.

As humans, we like to reduce people, and movements, and chaos to their baselines—a predictable least common denominator. We like to identify formulas and patterns which are repeatable and predictable. We prefer reliable processes to harness the randomness of our lives—something easy to packet like bagged soup mixes. It will be the same each and every time—no variables—no surprises.

But Jesus is not so easily boiled down.

You can't take down precise measurements when applying it to his great healing power. You can't weigh and measure the love incarnate that suffered death on the cross for our salvation.

When Jesus taught, he ministered. When he healed and raised the dead, he avoided formulas at all costs. It's as if he were doing everything he could to show us, and the whole world, that following him wasn't possible by simply following a formula or pattern or recipe. He didn't have one way to heal, so if you replicated it over and over again, you'd get the same results.

Take a sick person, "just add Jesus," and poof—all is OK.

NO—that is not how Jesus works. There is no formula in initiating a relationship with Jesus; No formula of maintaining a relationship with him; No set pattern in living into the Kingdom of God.

We are to open our hearts and minds to the mystery of Jesus—*God present with us*—incarnate, yet fully divine. It can be uncomfortable, challenging, and downright frightening to do so. There is no pattern or formula for the way in which God works. *Trust and believe—and be ready for the unimaginable!*

Randy+



THIS SUNDAY!

On **May 7th**, we're going to beat our own bounds between the services. Additionally, we're throwing in a bit of May Day celebrating - we'll have our young folk be Queens of the May and Kings of the Spring!

Music Up Next

Okay, the music on Sunday is a little different from our usual fare. Because of the Rogation procession, we're going to take the Way Back machine to the 1400s and 1500s. If you think that sort of music is boring, come have a listen.

The choir's anthem for the day is *Ecco la Primavera* (Spring has come), a celebration of the wonders of the earth at this time of the year. All of the hymns come from our very own hymnal – but they're all from the 1500s. And they're *not* dreary.

In addition, the recorder consort is playing! Remember that they only began this venture last fall and now are playing Renaissance dance tunes – a Pavane by a composer in Henry VIII's court and then our postlude is a happy little piece by Henry himself. In addition to being an erratic monarch and the catalyst for the English Reformation, Henry was a fine musician. He apparently played the lute, the harp and the harpsichord in addition to the recorder. But the recorder was his fave. The Met Museum says he owned 76 of them when he died. Along with all sorts of other instruments like lutes and harps and harpsichords. And bagpipes, and trumpets, and trombones. And he wrote music as well. There are 33 pieces credited to him in *Henry VIII's Songbook*, dating from 1518. Since he died in 1547, I suspect he wrote many more than that.

So I would encourage you to come and hear all of this music. The procession around the grounds will start at 9:30 at the front doors. And there'll be scones!

Sunday Bible Study and Discussion Group

For the next three Sundays, we will discuss Acts of the Apostles, which is read each year during Eastertide. Based on the book "Holy Imagination," by Judy Fentress-Williams, we will discuss as follows:

Date	Time	Chapters	Themes
May 7	9:00 AM**	1-7: Jerusalem	The Holy Spirit
May 14	9:15	8-12: Judea	Beyond
May 21	9:15	13-28: Diaspora	Ends of the Earth

You need not have read the book or the Bible chapters! Grab coffee and meet in the Gathering Room. **Note early meeting on 5/7 due to Rogation Day activities.

Welcome to St Christopher's Episcopal Church Meet Christ, Be Christ

The Faithful Innovations Team would like to welcome the parish of St. Christopher's to share with us your special welcoming or hospitality moments. Tell us about a time when you were welcomed here at St. Christopher's. Tell us about a time when you welcomed someone new, or found welcoming in a member of the congregation you either did not know or did not know well. We will meet in the Parish Hall following each service on Sunday, May 21.

Upcoming Lectionary Readings

May 7: Easter 5

Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14.

May 14: Easter 6 - Mother's Day

Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:7-18; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

Tell us about Hwy 36



Take the Hwy 36 survey!

What is YOUR vision for the future of Hwy 36? MnDOT is conducting a study of Hwy 36 and needs your input. This study will look at car, truck, transit, bike and pedestrian use along and across the highway. As residents and community members of this area, our experiences and voices are valuable. Please visit the website to learn more about the study and take the survey.

Survey link: <https://metroquestsurvey.com/p61j>

Study website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy36maplewood-roseville/> (Or use the QR code below)



COVID-19 Protocols

Wearing masks inside the church building for worship and other activities is optional. Please remain attentive to the health needs and concerns of others, knowing some of our community will continue to wear a mask indoors, and be kind.

Are you receiving this email forwarded by a friend?

You can now sign up to receive the weekly Parish Mail and monthly *e-Traveler* in your own inbox. A sign-up form is now on the main page at our website. Just go to www.stchristophers-mn.org.

www.stchristophers-mn.org



Thank you for keeping your pledge up to date.

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church | 2300 Hamline Ave N, Roseville, MN 55113

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