



**Meet Christ.  
Be Christ.**

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**Hello, St. Christopher's Community!**  
**Don't Forget!**  
**THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th**  
**ONE service at 9:30 AM**  
**ANNUAL MEETING follows at 11 AM!**

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### **Egypt Bound** *by Fr. Randy+*

This Advent, Nativity, Epiphany, and related Christmastide action in the Gospels must have made the writers rather insane. Imagine the difficulty of writing the story of the coming of the Christ Child into this world—the tightly focused story you wish to tell the specific readers you are writing to, as well as capturing the wonder and awe of an entire event. Then, add to this the nearly impossible job laid at the feet of the developers of our lectionary readings—how could you ever tell the entirety of this impossibly improbable story by picking and choosing scripture bits and pieces for daily worship?

This is where a little bit of Gospel exploring comes into play—and it is amazing what you find when you take the time to seek it out. Immediately following the Epiphany story in Matthew, we spy a series of verses that don't get much play in the lectionary or even in conversations about the Holy Family. This is the story of the Holy Family's great flight into Egypt, (Matt 2:13-15, 19-23.) We prefer to think about cozy manger scenes, yet there is something gripping about this great flight into Egypt. The image of a newborn babe and parents with their firstborn child fleeing for their lives is hard to look away from. There's just something about a new family being in danger that makes us pay attention. It shocks me into the reality that this scene continues to be played, again and again, before our very eyes over the centuries and especially today in the Middle East, Ukraine, Africa, and all around the world.

Part of what makes us pay attention to the flight into Egypt is how stressful it is—supercharged by the immediate threat of violence and death from King Herod. Herod is deathly afraid of this baby king Jesus, and singularly focused upon the destruction of this challenge to his rule. It is hard to imagine the mindset of someone in power not only feeling threatened by a baby, but also

willing to kill every boy child two-years old and younger in and around Bethlehem to eliminate the threat. That was the world that Jesus was born into, a world swirling with stress, power, and violence.

Just try to imagine how Joseph must have felt when the angel came to him and told him he had to flee with his family, or else his newborn boy would be murdered. Their life together so far had already been dramatic and stressful enough! Unbearable stress—I don't know how they slept at night.

Although we don't experience the exact same threat and stress the Holy Family was under, I'm sure we can all relate to the feeling and impact of stress. We can all relate to endless, sleepless nights of worry. Stressful days leading to more and more sleepless nights. Nights that feel like life has you by the throat. Nights that feel like your mind is running an endless series of marathons. Nights that leave you completely exhausted in the morning.

We need to remember that level of stress and exhaustion because we all have our own flights into Egypt. We all have our own version of fleeing from something. We all have our own version of fleeing towards an unknown destination that is anywhere but here. And, I find it most interesting to ponder the word applied to persons making a stress-filled flight from terror—we fit the definition of refugee.

There really may be no such thing as an easy life, but that does not mean that life is not worth living. The challenges we face in our life shape us. These challenges are sometimes rough, unrelenting, and frustrating—coming at us faster than we can comprehend them. Yet, deep down we all know that no one has it easy. We will not have the time and energy to fully process and have the energy to make sense of it all.

Yet, somewhere deep inside us, there is that voice, that speak of hope--that says yes, this is all worthwhile. Amazingly, that voice whispers this is all worthwhile, that it is right, is holy. It's that same voice that says yes, we are going to get through this.

This voice may be that of the angels, urging us to "*Get up, and go!*" We have an action to take in response to the words to go—to move—to act. There will be effort and work required of us—despite our fear and trepidation. In our flight into Egypt, we must keep relying on that voice of God that keeps calling us forward. We must rely upon the voice of God not only to get us through the suffering we endure, but to somehow find meaning in the day-to-day circumstances of our life. We need that meaning to fill our lives.

No part of our life is untouched by God. That includes the nasty parts of our life. Relapses, broken relationships, health issues and food/housing insecurity, breakdowns, confrontations and all the other nasty stuff we'd rather not ever deal with. But it also includes the wonderful things of this life—births, weddings, sober living, and tearful expressions filled with love. We must keep coming back to God again and again with the ever-changing circumstances of our life—in both good and bad, God abides with us always.

Of course, our flight to Egypt will be filled with times of doubt. The doubt is sown by our fears, and these fears can drown us in doubt—making our lives impossible. These fears can paralyze our days. We need God's help. We can admit it, we are not strong enough on our own, we need God's help.

We need to bring to God our fears, our doubt, our stress, and all the other things that keep us up at night. We need God's help in our journey into Egypt. There is no shame in praying out of desperation and great need. God always hears us and is with us.

When we get to the other side of this thing, we will be stronger, we will know ourselves better, and we will be closer to God. Our journey into Egypt may take a long time, but it is worth it. May God help us all. Amen.

Randy+



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## **ANNUAL MEETING of the PARISH JANUARY 19th**

The **Annual Meeting of the Parish** will be held on **Sunday, January 19th**, following **ONE service at 9:30 AM**. The meeting will begin at approximately **11:00 AM**. This is the time when we re-cap all that has happened in the last year, review the completed Budget for 2024, and present the new 2025 Budget. We also elect new members to leadership on the Vestry.



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## **January 25: Godsend Gathering at St. Mark's Cathedral**

Many people are spiritually curious, but church is not on their radar screens. They did not grow up in church, they've heard negative things about Christians, or they've had bad church experiences. It's important for Episcopal churches to have spiritual pathways for these neighbors. Most of them will involve meeting people where *they* are, meaning where they live, work, and play. When we show up in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and the places we volunteer as trustworthy followers of Jesus -- as people who care about, listen well to, and love the people around us -- it's not uncommon for them to ask us about our lives, priorities, and values. When people experience the light of Christ in others, they are drawn to it and want to know more.

On Saturday, January 25 (with a backup snow date of February 1) everyone interested is invited to meet at St. Mark's Cathedral from 10 am to 3 pm to hear the Rev. Dr. Michael Moynagh speak about what he and others in the Church of England have learned these last twenty years as they've engaged in all kinds of experiments to learn how to love and share Jesus with neighbors who

don't go to church.

On January 25 participants will experience something called "Soul Space" recently developed in the UK, and learn more about "the Missional Journey of Fresh Expressions," a pathway for those seeking to form what the ECMN is calling "New Christian Communities."

The week following January 25 Mike and Blair Pogue will be traveling around the state meeting with groups of Episcopalians who want to continue the conversation. The dates, times, and places of these visits will be listed in the ECMN e-newsletter and on the ECMN calendar. If you want to learn more and/or have additional questions for Mike, you are welcome to attend any of these gatherings.

The formation approaches you will be introduced to on January 25 and in Mike's handbook *Godsend* can also be used by institutional churches. Please rsvp to Blair Pogue at [blair.p@episcopalchurchmn](mailto:blair.p@episcopalchurchmn) by Sunday, January 19 if you plan to come, and let her know if you have any dietary restrictions.

Please let Marilyn+ know if you plan to come, and we'll try to arrange car pooling.

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## Are You Watching "The Chosen"?

We planned on having a group discussion this month on "The Chosen" video series. The best laid plans, as they say! Keep watching, or start if you haven't, and we'll catch up on Seasons 1 and 2 in February. Also, let Marilyn+ know if you're interested in joining the conversation.

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## In Memoriam

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of The Rev. Dr. Jackson (Jack) Hershbell, former Associate Priest at St. Christopher's. He and his wife, Anne, had retired to Lexington, WV.

A memorial service will be held at Grace Episcopal Church, Lexington, WV, on Saturday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m., officiated by the Rev. Tucker Bowerfind and the Rev. James Hubbard. The family will receive friends at a reception in the parish hall, immediately following.

Memorial donations are encouraged to the Guiding Eyes for the Blind, [www.guidingeyes.org](http://www.guidingeyes.org), 611 Granite Springs Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; or to any animal-related cause such as your local Humane Society, or SPCA, or to the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (which funds scholarships for Episcopal seminarians), [www.simministry.org](http://www.simministry.org), P.O. Box 21557, New York, NY 10087-1557.

May Jack's soul, and the souls of all the departed, rest in peace.

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## St. Christopher's Crossings Book Group

Greetings and Blessings! There was consensus; we are the St. Christopher's Crossings Book Group.

We will be meeting on **January 23rd, 2025** in the Gathering Room at 6:00 PM. It is a hybrid meeting.

For the meeting link, please contact:

- Angela Robinson, [angela.robinson.elohim@gmail.com](mailto:angela.robinson.elohim@gmail.com)
- Rev. Marilyn

We are reading ***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*** by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

For those of you who might be struggling to finish the book, we are dividing the book into two parts.

**Part 1: 23-Jan-25:** Discuss sections ***Planting Sweetgrass*** through ***Picking Sweetgrass***.

**Part 2: 27-Mar-25:** Discuss sections ***Braiding Sweetgrass*** to the end.

## February Book

In honor of **Black History Month**, we are reading ***James*** by **Percival Everett**. Please join us on **February 27, 2025** for a hybrid meeting to discuss this book.

**There are copies of Braiding Sweetgrass in the Church Office**, if you need one. Ann Trapnell checked out a "Book Club in a Bag" from the Ramsey County Library. The bag, along with a sign up sheet, (so we know who takes them!) in the office at church. They're available to anyone, as long as they sign them out and **return them to the church office by Feb 15!**

There are copies of these books spread out among the library systems. Also try: [Half Price Books](#), [Alibris](#), or anywhere you can get an inexpensive copy because the library copy is unavailable.

## Are you interested in joining us?

**Contact Angela Robinson**, [angela.robinson.elohim@gmail.com](mailto:angela.robinson.elohim@gmail.com)

or Rev. Marilyn, so we can send the details of the meeting information for those who wish to join online.

Also, we look forward to hearing from you about any suggestions you may have as to specific books or genres.



## We Get By with A Little Help from Our Friends

I am here again to ask all of you to volunteer for a week of snow shoveling for the church!

Shoveling weeks are Monday-to-Sunday (because no one wants to wake up to snow on Sunday and not remember that it's the START of your week). \*\*When you sign up, please mark your calendar so you remember which week you "took." Thanks!

Anything over **1.5** inches is covered by our plowing service *when they plow*, BUT, we do need help sometimes mid-day to keep things safe before they arrive. Sand and salt are in (or near) the entries. Call the office if you have questions!

**THANK YOU** to each and every person and family who has signed up to help,

even though nature has not granted us much snow, yet!

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## Prayer List Requests

Have you noticed a "Prayer Requests" button on our website? This is a very short form to add a name to our prayer list! Requests will be monitored Monday through Friday and added to the list published on Fridays. You may, of course, still call the office to add or remove a name from the list. AND, you can use this QR Code to go right to the website!



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## Upcoming Lectionary Readings

**January 19: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, Year C (9:30 AM!)**  
Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11.

**January 26: 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, Year C**  
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

## Sunday Ministries January 19

### 9:30 AM

Nursery: Jean C, Connie H  
Lectors - Pete L, Pat A  
Intercessor - Samuel A  
LEM - Chris B, Marion H  
Crucifer - Madisen C  
Acolytes - Marion H, Ellery B  
Ushers - Bill H, Carol K  
Altar Guild - Ann T, Kathy A  
Coffee Hosts - Vestry/Annual Meeting

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## 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](http://www.stchristophers-mn.org).

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*Thank you for keeping your pledge up to date.*



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