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Hello, St. Christopher's Community!

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### **Scared to Life** *by Fr. Randy+*

This week our MN School Safety Center team hosted a very special training conference at the DECC Center in Duluth. We were hoping for some seriously spring weather in this delightful city, but the weather forecasters insisted on predicting wind and rain. The 300+ attendees at this training conference were coming from all across the country—including educators, public safety officials, school counselors and wrap-around service providers for students and their families.

The conference was facilitated by one of our most valuable partners in school safety—the I Love U Guys Foundation. The Foundation was started in 2006 by Ellen and John-Michael Keyes following a school shooting in Colorado that took the life of their daughter, Emily. On that day Emily sent two messages... One to her mother, Ellen, *"I love u guys. K"* and to her father, John-Michael, *"I love you guys."*

The Keyes family, as a result of this horribly tragic loss of their daughter to senseless violence at her school, began the Foundation to assist in developing trauma-informed and effective strategies to address traumatic events which impact school communities. Their mission is to restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations, and government entities.

Today, the Foundation is led and supported by survivors, family members, first responders and community members with a vested interest in safety, preparedness and reunification through trauma-informed training of all persons involved in educational and public safety services, as they address all-hazards events impacting schools. All of their materials and resources are provided at no cost to school communities throughout the world.

*Amazingly*—a most terrifying and tragic life-ending event--became the launching point of something amazingly life-giving.

Since Easter, I have been working with several families facing life-ending events. I have been assisting them by providing support and planning for death experiences. I have been presiding at funerals. I have been finding myself repeating a phrase, which I was positive I had right, but actually was wrong. *"In the midst of death,"* I've been telling myself, *"we are in life."* While, in my own feeble mind it sounds as though it seems to make sense, I have created a problem. My recollection of the words is actually backwards. In the Committal Prayer (Rite I; BCP pg. 484), the text actually says, *"In the midst of life, we are in death."*

The mind trick my brain was foisting on me has some merit. We have been seemingly suffering for many years with a great litany of losses and death—from COVID, to warring, to domestic violence, to unabatingly endless gun violence in our own communities. We are good at dying. We've had a lots of practice. We know what to do in the face of death. We know what is expected, even when gripped by shock and grief. *In the midst of death.*

In a way, we are no different from the three women, who made their way to the tomb, that first Easter morning. (Mark 16:1-8) They too, knew what to do when confronted with death, even a death as horrific as the one Jesus had died. Like us, these women had seen death, and they knew what to do, what was expected, how to behave. Death, it seems is simply part of living. *In the midst of death.*

I imagine these three, even when numb with grief, were beyond shock. Death, even the death as Jesus suffered, could not shock them. Yet Mark is clear, the women were alarmed, terrified, amazed, afraid, and speechless, so much that they fled, probably dropping their burial ointments and spices as they ran—and *they said nothing.*

Like these women, we are good at death. Death, whether it comes quietly, after a long life, well-lived; suddenly in a blaze of bullets; agonizingly, unexpectedly; alone in a hospital room; death no longer shocks us. Yes, we may grieve, but no, it does not shock.



What shocks, alarms, terrifies, amazes, and makes us afraid and speechless is *life*, and especially the kind of life Jesus offers us in the resurrection! *Our coming to Christ changes everything!* Such a life is shocking, terrifying, and alarming, because rooted in the dying and rising of Jesus is living into the Spirit-filled lives which are unpredictable, risky, and reverse of the way of the world. This Spirit-filled life reminds us that life does emerge from death, joy can be found in sorrow, and a life given away, is a life given back.

Life is so much easier when we know what to do, what is expected, how to behave. But a life lived empowered and emboldened by the Spirit of the Risen Jesus is unpredictable and risky, for that life is no longer ours, but Christ's, who lives in us.

In the midst of death we are in life. Make it so in your life today *Randy+*

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## Annual Hamline Ave Cleanup

In recognition of Earth Day, the Green Team will be doing the annual cleanup of Hamline Avenue in between services on Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. If you would like to join us, please meet in the lower narthex at 8:45 am to get a vest and a trash bag. We will work in teams. Bring a pair of sturdy gloves (gardening, etc.) Hope to see you there; all are welcome! Thank you, the Green Team.

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## Collection May 5-12

The Hearts and Hands group is organizing a Parish wide collection for BRIDGING, our neighbor non profit. Bridging's mission empowers people to thrive in their homes by providing quality furniture and household items for those pursuing housing stability. On **May 5th and 12th** we will be collecting **lightly used towels, sheets, blankets, mattress pads, bedspreads and pillows**. As you spring clean, we urge you to look for items to donate, or buy, as you think of our neighbors in need. Questions? Call Sally Brown at 651-483-8232.

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## Lenten Calendar Donations

Have you been following the Lenten Calendar that the kids presented in February? Please bring your donations on Sunday, and mark the memo line, "Lenten Calendar." For more information about this project, please click this Link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KoqyTm9IKmq88KP02PaMF5dJrBJEGIHP/view>

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## Acts Bible Study Continues this week!

Do you want to find out more about what happened in the young Church after the first Easter? We'll learn the stories of the Apostles and other followers of Jesus in the Book of Acts. Bring your Bible (any version) and join us at 9:15 on Sundays through May. Even better if it has a map of the Holy Land in it (not required, though)! Questions? Contact Lyn Lawyer or Marilyn Baldwin.

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## We hope you'll join us for Cocktails & Canapes!

Saturday, April 20th

5:00 – 7:00 pm

Parish Hall

Price per person: \$20

Event Donors: Bailey-Humes', Crows, DePaolis-Jones', Hartmans, Trapnells

All are welcome for an elevated happy hour at St. Christopher's with a

specialty cocktail or two, beer, wine, and plenty of non-alcoholic choices to enjoy. Assorted appetizers will complete the event. Feel free to invite a friend!

**(If you missed your chance to sign up during the event fair, it's not too late to attend! Please contact Ann Trapnell at 651-325-8801 to register.)**

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## Upcoming Lectionary Readings

### April 21: Easter 4

Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18.

### April 28: Easter 5

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:24-30; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8.

## Sunday Ministries April 21

### 8:00 AM

Lectors - Pete L, Chris M  
Intercessor - Chris M  
LEM - Robert W  
Usher - Cindy & Pete L  
Altar Guild - Karen H  
Coffee Hosts: Joel & Leslie N

### 10:30 AM

Nursery - Ann D, Rich P  
Lectors - Matt C, Lyn L  
Intercessor - Josh K  
LEM - Madisen C, Lyn L  
Ushers - Ann & Larry J  
Altar Guild - Kathy A  
Crucifer - Madisen C  
Coffee Hosts: Green Team

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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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