



Hello, St. Christopher's Community!

"Haw...Gee!" *by Fr. Randy+*

The red-faced farmer stopped along the fence line of the field, took off his large-brimmed straw hat, and wiped his brow with a bright red handkerchief. Freshly churned dust smeared into the fabric square along with profuse sweat and grime. Alongside the farmer stood a pair of matching russet red oxen. They shifted their weight from left to right as they dunked their muzzles into the water trough—quenching their thirst in ginormous gulps of cool water. The farmer let them rest and refresh, as he stood alongside their enormous heads and spoke to them in hushed tones—calling them by name. The oxen bobbed their heads in anticipation of a pat and scratch on their foreheads.

Our family was visiting the Living History Farms in Des Moines, Iowa. The Iowa summer heat was stifling and the humidity seemed to carry the sound of *“crackling corn growth,”* which we could almost hear as the cornstalks stretch towards the sky. We had been watching the farmer drive a team of oxen as they ploughed the length of the field with a single bottom plow. The furrows were long and straight, as the shiny steel plow blade cut through the topsoil and turned the rich soil over in anticipation of sowing seed.

The farmer returned to the well-worn wooden handles of the plow and called to the oxen team, *“Come up!”* The oxen immediately strained against the yoke and harness and pulled the plow forward. As the team moved forward, they sometimes slowly veered to the right or left. The farmer would yell, *“Haw!”* to make them turn to the left and *“Gee!”* (jee) to have them turn to the right. His steady hand on the plow and his eyes fixed forward kept the furrow straight.



The yoke across the shoulders of the oxen is an object of work, keeping two animals together to share strength and accomplish a difficult task. Interestingly, oxen are not paired casually. In training oxen to the yoke, one ox is typically the more experienced; while the other learns to keep pace with it, not to lag or pull ahead or veer off course to the right or left. The two work side-by-side, learning to work as a team and in support of one another. The less experienced ox thereby learns from the more experienced and mature one. With time, the yoke is equally borne, the two become a team, or a “yoke of oxen.”

Matthew 11:28-30 states; *“Come to me, all you are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Jesus is telling us to stop, breathe easy, and rest. Life can become burdensome and extremely taxing to our bodies, hearts, and souls. In recent days, several in our faith family have been struggling mightily under the burden of very difficult health concerns, stresses of work and school changes, and relationship struggles. Jesus is offering to come alongside us and to share in bearing our burdens. He encourages us to prayer and Sabbath rest. Much more than a momentary pause or deferral from the hard work of life, Jesus offers us a personal relationship and a way to live with freedom and peace.

Times of retreat both give relieving rest right now and help us remember, rekindle how to live well day by day. Reclaim wonder and gratitude. Be honest and vulnerable in our prayer. Remember Jesus’ teaching and promise. I strongly encourage you to take time to be silent and listen for his voice. Return to company with Jesus who is ever gentle and loving.

Here is real rest: walking, working, and living alongside Jesus.

Randy+

It’s Time for a New Directory!

Matt Cole has agreed to photograph each family unit for a new, do-it-ourselves directory. He will set up a photo booth and take pictures after services on several Sundays, but sadly, NOT including Start-Up Sunday, September 10.

So, put on your prettiest smile and get yourself to church!

Or, simply send a recent photo to Ruth in the office and we'll be glad to add it.

We also need some volunteers to help herd people on Sundays for photos, to update information, and to help put the directory together. Look for more information in weekly news, and email Marilyn ([HERE](#)) to help.

Music Up Next

Look for more organ music on Start Up Sunday. Peggy Bartunek joins us that day, to show us what the Rodgers organ can do - things that your less-than-techie organist just hasn't figured out yet! She will also be around afterwards to answer any questions you might have. And the choir will be back in their places and raring to go with a special musical treat for you on that day.

Karla Cole

Hearts and Hands needs Cookies on September 21

The Hearts and Hands group will meet on Thursday, September 21, at 10:30 in the Parish Hall. We will be packing our homemade cookies for Community Kitchen in Minneapolis. We would love to have folks in the parish join us in this baking project. If you are interested in participating, drop off your homemade cookies (any variety) in the kitchen on Thursday, September 21, by 10:30.

Community Kitchen makes, packs and delivers hundreds of meals each week to unhoused neighbors. The organization is powered by volunteers and food rescue. Please consider joining us in this community outreach.

If you have any questions call Sally Brown 651-483-8232.

Hallelujah!

We need to staff the nursery on Sunday mornings!

We have a family who is interested in transferring from another Episcopal church to St. Christopher's, as they have recently moved. They have a 2-year-old, and they're hoping to be able to utilize the nursery on Sunday mornings. This is a great time to re-establish a nursery team at St. Christopher's, as we have not had one since Covid. Please let Marion know if you would like to help with this ministry. Our hope is to have enough people so that everyone can serve about once per month beginning with Sunday, September 10th.



THIS WEEK is our **LAST single service at 9:30 AM** for the Summer.

We will return to two services on **September 17th**.

Fall Adult Formation

This fall, Bishop Loya has asked each faith community to study the Gospel of Luke at roughly the same time, and we plan to do just that for our Adult Formation hour on Sunday mornings. (9:15-10:15). We'll be using the recommended book (Interpretation Bible Series: Luke) and will begin on September 17, the week after our Start-Up Sunday.

Books will be provided; contact Marilyn+ to pick one up, and start your reading. We plan to cover one chapter a week. More information will follow.

Upcoming Lectionary Readings

September 10: Pentecost 15, Proper 18

Ezekiel 33:7-11; Psalm 119:33-40; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20.

September 17: Pentecost 16, Proper 19

Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:8-13; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35.

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.

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