

St. Christopher's

e-Traveler



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From the Rector



**The Rev.
Randy W. Johnson**
Rector

Tribulation, Transition, Transcendence, and Transformation

It was about a year ago today, when a MN Department of Health leader called us at our emergency management office and asked for a meeting over coffee. *Hmmm...that feels a bit weird, doesn't it?* While sharing a hot beverage, we were told of a real concern looming (*literally*) over the horizon. The term used is one we are today intimately aware of--COVID-19. Little did any of us know at that time that this tiniest of viruses would soon explode onto the scene and tremendously impact the way humankind lives throughout the entire world —***Tribulation*** is at hand!

This **Tribulation** in the guise of a global pandemic has consumed us—our emotions, resources, and fundamental ways we live and work. I truly believe it has forever shaped the ways in which we view the world and our neighbor, and how we are to engage each other as human beings and most especially as Christians. The Tribulation of the global pandemic was quickly followed by the murder of George Floyd, and the resultant calls for racial equity and justice for all persons—a bright light was shone in this country and around the world to this most basic of human rights. Then, on January sixth, we witnessed the attack on our nation's capital during the legislative process of peaceful transition of presidential power and leadership. I have to believe none of us could have foreseen all of this coming at us a mere one year ago.

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Friends...we are in the midst of tremendous **Transition** on many levels and many fronts. This transition is most acutely viewed and experienced by people of faith living throughout the world. The Holy Spirit is boldly present in our midst, and is palpably working amongst us at St. Christopher’s. There is a deep longing to not only be thankful and grateful for the ongoing pivoting and resilient work that has been done to maintain and strengthen relationships, but to also lean into and imagine the possibilities of greater sharing of love as followers of Jesus.

We are moving quickly from the seasons of Advent and Epiphany—*from the coming of God in to our world in the person of His Holy Son Jesus*--to a time of deeper understanding of who Jesus truly is and what his ministry and mission to the world fully entails. We will soon walk through Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent—bearing witness to the life, death on the cross, and glorious resurrection of Jesus. The **Transcendence** of Jesus Christ is the embodiment of our faith and hope and love towards God and one another.

God is effecting a **Transformation** in our lives as we bear witness to his love and compassionate care for all creation. We have been resilient and faithful and engaged in all facets of ministry in our community. We have learned new ways to do our work—and we have been gracious to each other in the things that were unsuccessful, as well as those that have worked out well. The world urgently needs to share in the experience of Christ’s love and it is up to each one of us share this Good News. I am forever grateful to each of you for your patience and prayers as we walk the Way of Jesus together.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Peace and all things good.

Randy+

Music Notes



Karla Cole

Director of Music Ministries

When you hear the name Thomas A. Dorsey, do you think of the legendary bandmaster, Tommy Dorsey and his brother Jimmy, and the big band with a string of hits a mile long? I always

did. For a long time, I was confused by the dude that wrote all the big band music on one hand and was the Father of Gospel Music on the other. It took me a while to figure out that there were two Thomas Dorseys. My mom was a huge fan of the Dorsey Brothers. She and her sister saw them at the Val Air Ballroom in West Des Moines when Frank Sinatra ("Swoon-atra, my dad always called him) was the singer. For Christmas one year she gave me an enormous book of Big Band hits and would often ask for "I'll Never Smile Again" or "Marie". Or "String of Pearls", that was her favorite; but I think she was getting her trombone players confused, as that one was a big Glenn Miller hit. So yeah, Tommy Dorsey, trombone player, band leader and composer, radio and tv host, thrice married, drunken-brawling Irishman, micromanaging control freak. Whatta guy.

There was another Thomas Dorsey, though, who couldn't have been more different. Born only six years before that other Dorsey, Thomas A. Dorsey was also born into a musical family. His mother played the church organ, his uncle was a choir director, and his father was an itinerant preacher, who took young Thomas with him to many churches and tent revivals. He developed an affinity for the piano and organ, as well as for creating melodies and writing songs of his own. As a teenager in Atlanta, he practiced long hours and studied informally with local musicians, developing skills in improvisation and music reading. He played gigs in juke joints and brothels and immersed himself in the blues. He moved to Chicago for the opportunities, learned the language of the new jazz style and did some composing and arranging for Paramount Records. He fronted a band that accompanied the charismatic "Ma" Rainey, who specialized in songs about lost love and hard times. Dorsey married during this period and "Ma" hired his new wife as her wardrobe mistress so that the newlyweds wouldn't be separated while they were on tour.*

Eventually turning from the rigors of the performance circuit, and returning to the church of his raising, Dorsey began writing sacred songs in that blues style that he had been immersed in and that had been gaining in popularity throughout the 1920s. But the "established" black churches in Chicago used hymnals and sophisticated liturgical music by classical composers. Personal expressions of clapping and stomping, or improvising melodies and rhythms were not encouraged. But fortunately for our Thomas, one of his earliest gospel songs was performed at the National Baptist Convention in 1930 to such acclaim that he sold 4000 printed copies on the spot. With the choir director from the Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, he formed a choir to specialize in singing spirituals and indigenous styles such as these gospel songs. At their premier performance, the choir director danced up and down the aisles and Dorsey got so excited that he couldn't sit still at the piano and stood to play, while the congregation added to the lively and joyous performance with shouting and clapping of their own. In attendance was the pastor from Pilgrim Baptist Church, Chicago's second largest black church, who saw the way the congregation responded to the music and hired Dorsey as their own music director. He would go on to popularize this gospel blues style, write at least a thousand gospel songs, and become known as the "Father of Gospel Music."

But life always comes with bane and blessing. And just as his career was taking off and he was in demand for revivals and conventions, and had that Pilgrim Baptist position that gave him authority and security, his wife, Nettie, and their newborn son died. His sorrow was compounded by the fact that he'd

gone to a revival in St. Louis and hadn't been there when they died. Out of his overwhelming grief came perhaps his best-loved song, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." A quick tour of YouTube will give you historic performances by Thomas Dorsey, himself; Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley, Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Jennifer Holliday at John Lewis' funeral – the list is long. Perhaps the most moving for me was the Boston Children's Choir in a virtual choir performance with the singers all in a grid and in the center were photos. The first was George Floyd, the next Breonna Taylor, and on and on. Yes, Philando Castile was there, too. There are too many to show, too many to count, after all the song is only so long. But the impact is huge.

Not long ago, a quintessential Episcopal lady – the wardrobe, the lipstick, the attitude – told me that "Precious Lord" was her favorite hymn, and I was very surprised by that. I didn't think of these gospel hymns as being the favorite hymns of Midwestern Episcopalians. But over the course of my adult lifetime, we have become so musically multicultural. I think nothing of a service that begins with a Bach chorale and ends with a swinging spiritual and has who-knows-what in the middle. All of these things are the fervent expressions of Christians across the span of history who were children of God, just like us. And that's it, isn't it? All are children of God. In this time of great strife in our country, it's easy to become entrenched in believing what we know to be right. And harder to remember that your neighbor, with the sign for the other candidate in his yard, is a child of God. That lady breathing all over the place with her mask hanging below her chin is a child of God. And when people behave in ways that aren't very godly, they're still children of God. It's tough to remember some days, but it's true. And the sooner all the people who call themselves Christian come to that notion, the better off we'll all be.

Grace and peace,
Karla

*If you have a Netflix account, by all means watch "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom". It's based on the play by August Wilson, who had a long association with St. Paul and the Penumbra Theatre. The movie stars the Oscar, Emmy and Tony Award winning *tour-de-force*, Viola Davis and features the electrifying final performance of Chadwick Boseman, who died shortly after filming. If you don't have a Netflix account, find a friend who does!

Footprints FEBRUARY 2021 News from Children's Ministries



Marion Hunner

**Children's Ministries
Director**



Sunday School: We meet on Zoom at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. As we head into February, we are finishing up our exploration of baptism – what it looks like in the Episcopal church, the baptism of Jesus, and our own baptism stories

Family Worship: We meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month in person (outside, masked, and socially distanced), where Fr. Randy leads us in interactive storytelling and engages the children in celebrating the Eucharist with him - using individual patens and small cups (with grape juice!) Each child then gets to distribute the Eucharist to their family. In January we dug up treasure boxes filled with sections of the liturgy, then each family was responsible for the section that they discovered. In February we will be preparing for Lent.

Youth



Chad O'Leary
Director of Youth Ministries

WALKING INTO LENT

Over the past several weeks, our members of our youth group and I have been working on new and creative ways for our community to lean into our call for prayer and almsgiving of the Lenten season. We would love you for you to learn more about these opportunities by watching [THIS](#) short video. It will inform you on what they are and how to access the resources that we are putting together.

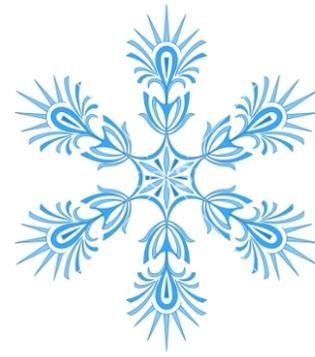
Part of our project, as described in the video, is assembling a devotional with a different reflection for each of the 40 days of Lent from members of our community. We are still in the process collecting and assembling those entries and **we need more volunteers!** If you are interested in being part of this collective voice of the parish, we'd love to have you. Please reach out and I can share with you what days of the Lenten season we have yet to fill.

Thank you!

Much Peace on the Journey,
Chad

Snow Shoveling Helpers Needed

Please let us know if you can help.



GOOD NEWS! We have hired our snow plowing service to do the sidewalks and entryways when they are here to plow (2 inches or more). Volunteers are needed only for the lighter snowfalls, and mid-day snow clean up.

SO... Please call or email the office and let us know if you can take a week of Shoveling the sidewalks. We'll do a week of Monday-Sunday. I think mid-April is a safe place to stop the planning. :) Please email or call Ruth in the office and let her know what week(s) you are available. office@stchristophers-mn.org or 651-633-4589 (M-Th). Remaining dates are:

February

1-7

22-28

March

1-7

8-14

15-21

22-28

29-4

April

5-11



FEBRUARY Calendar Highlights!

7 Sunday - Epiphany 5

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

8 Monday

6:45 PM Finance Committee Meeting - via Zoom

10 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

12 Friday

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

14 Sunday - Last Sunday after Epiphany

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

15 Monday - President's Day Holiday

6:45 PM Vestry Meeting - via Zoom

17 Wednesday - ASH WEDNESDAY

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship -Parking Lot

21 Sunday - LENT 1

10:30 AM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

22 Monday

e-Traveler Deadline for March

24 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Parking Lot

28 Sunday -- LENT 2

10:30 AM 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



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

As of this writing, I am getting ready to have a hip replacement! It is scheduled for early March. When that happens, there may be shorter office hours for a while, and volunteers answering the phone. Please be patient. I look forward to returning to the office a more nimble me!

Ruth Thillen
Parish Administrator

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

VESTRY:

Michael Sirany, Sr. Warden; Christopher Mayr, Jr. Warden
Allison Jensen, Clerk; Jean Crow, Treasurer

Ross Ackerman, Patrick Ahern, Erin Bowman;
Ann DePaolis-Jones; Josh Kattelman; Alexander Kun;
Jeanna McLoughlin; Leslie Norton; Al Reedstrom

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

Recorded Services for each Sunday are on our website and on Facebook

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

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STAY CONNECTED

