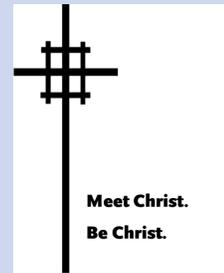


St. Christopher's

e-Traveler



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From the Rector



**The Rev.
Randy W. Johnson**

Rector

New Things *by Fr. Randy+*

I caught myself wallowing in a rut earlier this week. It was once again “*O-Dark-Thirty*” in the morning—still not even a whisper of the sun rising in the east. My car was shuddering in the sub-zero cold as it hesitantly accelerated down the entrance ramp to the freeway—I prayed out loud that the Peterbilt truck driver behind me would grant me grace to merge into the traffic lane...*Nothing New...*

I parked in my usual surface lot downtown St. Paul, fed the parking meter, and began my daily eight-block trudge through the minefield of ice chunks, salt slush, and mountains of snow at the curb lines—the rugged palisades blocking access to the sidewalks unless you were nimble as a mountain goat clinging to a cliff side...*Nothing New...*

I fired up my computer to see once more the ongoing litany of state-wide requests for COVID assistance from healthcare and long-term care facilities for staff and supplies, demands for additional PPE, vaccinators, and lab testing personnel...*Nothing New...*

Something’s got to change—*but where does it begin?* We can look to Holy Scripture for direction and answer.

*“Forget the former things;
Do not dwell on the past.*

*See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
And streams in the wasteland.”(Isaiah 43:18-19)*

As we enter our third year of strain and stress beneath the yoke of COVID pandemic, the words of Isaiah may feel disconnected from our present reality. It seems as though the pandemic has dragged on forever—the continual uptick in numbers of those stricken with illness and dead have lost their sense of urgency—it is almost as if our shock has been numbed to the point that *“it is just more numbers...”*

Zoom meetings, distance learning for students and educators, arguments about vaccinations, mask mandates, and unrelenting demands for *“personal rights”* has left us exhausted—compassion fatigue has set in deeply. Murmurs abound that more waves of new variants may be staged to come our way!

It can be tempting to assert that nothing has changed, even though we just turned another page on the calendar a couple of weeks ago. Nothing indicates that the rescue cavalry is on the horizon, poised to sweep in something new—something to give hope and relief. What *“new thing”* can we possibly expect from God when everything around us feels mind-numbing and agonizingly familiar?

My mom tells me, *“It all makes me weary.”* Dear friends, Isaiah has a word for us—the weary. The above passage from Isaiah 43 asks us if we are able to *“perceive”* the new thing that God is doing. It is both a question and a challenge to look about us with clear eyes, to look at things in a different light, and to wonder.

So I ask you the question: *“Where is God doing something in your life?”*

Is it a challenge or opportunity, a conversation or friendship, an opportunity or a crazy surprise? Maybe it is something that interrupts your routines of life, makes you pause and think, and then adapt or change course. Many times, I find that it is found where I least expect it. Even in its most simplistic form—*I discovered the joy of wearing flannel-lined pants in the -17 temperatures this past week!*

In the midst of everything that is swirling around us, Isaiah has a word for us—the weary. God is continually making and re-making our circumstances, our world, and our individual lives. Do you perceive it?

We can trust in God’s promise to be with each of us in the disappointments and hardships, the traumas and the heartaches. We know this to be true—God will have the last word and it is a word for the weary—the promise to make all things new.

God’s blessing and grace on your journey.
Randy+

Music Notes



Karla Cole

**Director of Music
Ministries**

Okay, the choir is back under a rock again. We've got one member with a positive test and a few who aren't comfortable coming out with the rampant Omicron variant. So, we're taking a little break. Hopefully the rates of infection will come down soon and we'll be back in business by Lent. The section leaders will continue to be present on Sunday mornings to offer their dulcet tones. And all shall be well.

Also, unless the infection rates go through the roof, Rolf Krogstad and I will present a **Sunday afternoon programme on February 13th at 3:00 pm**. Rolf is a violist and jokes about how little solo music there is for viola, as opposed to tons of it for violins and cellos. "So we have to steal it," he says. These particular **Stolen Moments** are an unaccompanied cello suite by J. S. Bach, a clarinet sonata by Johannes Brahms and a little piece of medieval chant by Hildegard von Bingen. Like I said, stolen. Rolf is doing the heavy lifting here – I'm only playing the Brahms. Well, Brahms is never just an *only*. Bloody great fistfuls of notes in crashing chords one moment and suddenly very thinly textured, tender little melodies the next. It's a workout in mature pianism that can easily equal the demands of his works for solo piano. And then there's also his fascination with German folk music and eastern European gypsy melodies. All are on display in this sonata for ~~clarinet~~ viola and piano. In the television series *M*A*S*H*, the insufferable Charles Emerson Winchester III was known for his love of classical music and his unforgettable quote, "ah, Bachhhh!". While I love Bach as much as any musician, I'd have to disagree with Charles. For me, it's "ah, Brahms!" But you can hear both on February 13th.

Thank goodness February is a short month in which the daylight rapidly increases and there's chocolate. We will soon be through this patch and on to better, warmer things!

Blessings and peace,
Karla

Footprints FEBRUARY 2022
News from Children's Ministries





Marion Hunner

**Director of
Children's Ministries**

During the Annual meeting we made laundry packs for Keystone Community Services by putting detergent pods in ziplock bags and labeling them. Keystone's clients appreciate receiving enough detergent to do a few loads of laundry.

Sunday School: Due to the high COVID numbers and general family burn-out, we have put Sunday School on hold for the time being.

Family Worship: All are welcome to join us at 4pm on the first Sunday of each month. We enjoy a family friendly, socially distanced, interactive worship service. In February we will take a field trip around the building and learn how to set the table for Eucharist.



Annual Meeting

During the annual meeting, Marion, Carol and the kids worked on two different service projects: dividing laundry pods into small ziplock bags for Keystone Community Services, and coloring flowers & butterflies in preparation for our upcoming donation drive for our adopted refugee family. We also had a snack and watched last year's Christmas Program, ***Do Not Be Afraid***. The kids really enjoyed seeing themselves and their friends from a year ago!



Lent is Coming!

Would you like to join our Lenten Devotion Project? Here's how it works – There will be a blog on the St. Christopher's website, and each morning a new devotion will appear based on the readings for the day. Where do these devotions come from? They come from you! If you are interested in writing a devotion, contact Marion@stchristophers-mn.org. She will assign you a date and send the readings to you. We are collecting them NOW so that the blog can be set up and run smoothly throughout Lent. There are 40 days in Lent, so don't be afraid to jump in. It could be a prayer, thoughts about the readings, or a personal reflection about Lent. There is no required format (or length) – just share what comes from your heart.

Do you like to Color?

Marion is looking for some folks to color butterflies and flowers that will be used for the donation drive when we get our refugee family. Email her for more details: marion@stchristophers-mn.org

St. Christopher's Solar Array Is Performing Well

As some church members may recall, back in early 2014 St. Christopher's entered into discussions with Sundial Solar about the possibility of installing a solar array on the south facing roof of the nave/sanctuary. Over the next 18 months, meetings were held with Sundial and members of the Green Team, vestry and clergy to discuss details of the proposed array. On Earth Day after the Sunday service, in April of 2015, a presentation and question/answer session was given to the congregation in the Parish Hall by Sundial Solar.

Installation was started in the Fall of 2015. After several delays related to solar panel availability and inverter compatibility to the grid were resolved, the St. Christopher's Solar Array was energized in March of 2016. After a full year July 2016 - July 2017 electric performance evaluation of the array was completed some deficiencies were identified. In 2018, follow up meetings were held with Sundial to review the performance issues and possible solutions. In 2019 a secondary array was added on the west side flat roof, at no extra cost. Since that time, the array has been performing within expected parameters. All maintenance is being done by Sundial Solar free of cost.

So what are the benefits of St. Christopher's Array?

1. **St. Christopher's benefited almost \$12,000 this past year from the Solar array.**

Annual Made in Minnesota Rebate. (lasts for 10 years)	\$7025
Net meter saving: elec usage - array prod.	Lower billing
Reduced Peak usage charge.	Lower billing

Comparison of St C's electric bill with 2015 (the last year we had no input from the array) are as follows: \$11,372 (2015 annual electric bill) and \$6473 (2021 annual electric bill) = \$4899 saving. Also add the Made in MN (MIM) reimbursement of \$7025 and we have a total savings of **\$11,924** for 2021. Going forward, results may vary due to weather and Covid19 impacts

on building use.

1. Community Recognition: Over the years since our array was installed, St. Christopher's has received a number of calls asking for tours and information about our solar array. Local churches, synagogues, community centers and senior centers have seen our array from highway 36 and taken the time to call our church office. The simple cross visible in the middle highlights the possibility of using a solar array to enhance a building's aesthetic appearance; this is of interest as well. A frequent question I hear is, doesn't the cross reduce your array power generation? The answer is no, because you can always put those panels somewhere else, like a flat roof.
2. A statement of values: St Christopher's has always been interested in making our community a better place. The solar array makes a statement that we as a faith community are committed to a sustainable clean energy future.

Joel Norton, Green Team.

Hearts and Hands

Thanks to everyone that was able to join us in January. We put together 10 charming birthday bags that Jane had organized, for Keystone. Some of us were outside our comfort zone as we colored the birthday cards she had created. Along with the birthday bags, we delivered 31 pairs of socks, 18 hats and 3 pairs of mittens to Keystone.

For February, we will meet a week early on Thursday, February 10, at 10:30 am to put together Valentine bags for our homebound parishioners. We'll also tie some youth fleece blankets. Mark your calendars!

Pulse of the Parish

Vestry meeting held on January 17, 2022

The purpose of this report is to inform you about the work and actions from the January 17th Vestry meeting.

Fr. Randy opened our meeting with the powerful Rev. Martin Luther King Jr prayer he shared at January 16 services. Ann DePaolis Jones read the Vestry Covenant followed by the approval of the December 20th meeting minutes. Senior Warden Mike Sirany welcomed incoming new junior warden Karen Hartman to the meeting.

Since a few of the Vestry members were absent from the December meeting, Senior Warden Mike Sirany gave a year end review our faith family finances and the budget with a handouts detailing our surplus -thanks to an unexpected gift, savings from staff salaries and costs, forgiveness of the PPP loan, and unused building maintenance funds. He also review the fourth quarter Episcopal Church of Minnesota Trustees handout detailing our Pooled Investment Fund with \$365,183 balance to start the year; \$412,603 balance at start of fourth quarter; and \$475,950 at end of December.

Since we exceeded our target goal for the pledge drive, thank you again for your generous participation in the appeal, and surplus carry over in 2022. Fr. Randy going full-time on salary and medical beginning in April, and give our staff a four percent raise since they didn't receive one last year. Finance recommended that Vestry approve the budget to which we voted and did. .

As for new business, after review by staff, finance team and wardens, Mike signed a contract for a temporary construction easement for Northern States Power (Xcel), gas line along Hamline, they need a staging area, meaning our parking lot starting April 1 and going until Nov. 1, 2022. They need a staging area, meaning our parking lot, starting April 1 and going until Nov. 1, 2022. They will pay us \$2,000 per month to use the parking lot during that time. During the State Fair, if they are using the lot; they will pay us for any parking spots we lose. They will repair and restore the lot to the original condition.

The Finance team discovered we had two discretionary Rector accounts, one being an unused checking account for the Rector. The fund is used for needy folks off the street who stop in for assistance. Since these folks don't usually have bank accounts to deposit checks, Fr. Randy purchases gift cards for gas or groceries to give them. After discussion, the Vestry voted to move funds from the checking account, close it, and have the funds go to the rector's dedicated account.

It was reported that with the CDC recommendation to use N95 masks, finance team member Tom Linder recommended purchasing some for clergy and choir to Finance and they approved the purchase.

Mike gave a brief overview of Sunday January 23 activities including one 9:30 service, and annual meeting to follow shortly after.

Ross Ackerman updated the vestry on our Refugee family sponsorship, sharing that there was such an outpouring of help by the council of churches' congregations that all the Afghan families are already assigned, so we will not be getting an Afghan family right away but we will likely be helping a refugee family nonetheless. Marion Hunner has list of what is needed to help.

In the Rector Report, Fr. Randy read Bishop Loya's letter to clergy regarding the high covid19 rates and saying that he trusts the clergy in the diocese to do what they feel is right for their congregations and circumstances.

With Vestry Liaison Reports, children's ministry liaison Erin Bowman shared that Children's Ministries Leader Marion surveyed families about what they wanted to do with educational programming, taking into account the Omicron variant. With the option of going back to Zoom instruction like last year, the families decided to put Sunday School on hold for the time being. Fr. Randy and Marion will continue family services outside on the first Sunday of the month at 4 p.m.

Buildings and Grounds Liaison Chris Mayr reported Jeff Jensen discovered that a blower in the parish hall furnace wasn't working properly, and thanks to him and Mark Brilowski, they were able to repair with minimum cost.

Shout outs: Mike gave shout outs to retiring vestry members Erin Bowman, Josh Kattelman and Al Reedstrom. Chris gave shout out to Mike for his leadership and expressed thanks to new Vestry members Cheryl Bailey, Madisen Crow, and Eric Hedican.

Chris shared that the new Vestry will meet Saturday February 19 at 8:45 a.m. in the parish hall for a spiritual retreat led by the same Wood and Waters Retreat coordinators from last year. Following that session, a brief Vestry business meeting will take place with the review and the approval of the diocesan parochial report.

Outgoing Vestry member Josh Kattelman closed the meeting leading the Compline.

Please feel free to visit with me or any of our Vestry members after today's service if you have questions or comments. The minutes of the meeting will be available after they have been approved at the next Vestry meeting, Saturday February 19. Thank you!

CALENDAR for FEBRUARY



1 Tuesday

8:30 AM *Private Spiritual Direction - Gathering Room - to 5 PM*

11:30 AM *Meals on Wheels - Offsite*

2 PM to 6 PM - *Cello Lessons - #218/219*

3 PM *Private Spiritual Direction - Library*

6 PM *Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band Rehearsal - Parish Hall*

2 Wednesday

10:45 AM *Private Spiritual Direction - Library*

12:15 PM **Holy Eucharist** - Church

3 PM to 7 PM - *Cello Lessons - #218/219*

6:30 PM *Roseville Wednesday AA - Gathering Room*

3 Thursday

9:00 AM *Private Spiritual Direction - Library*

3:45 PM to 7 PM - *Cello Lessons - #218/219*

4 Friday

3:45 PM to 6:45 PM - *Cello Lessons - #218/219*

5 Saturday

11 AM *Flute Lessons - Music Room*

6 Sunday - Epiphany 5

8 AM **Holy Eucharist**

10:30 AM **Holy Eucharist**

4 PM **Family Worship**

7 Monday

10:00 AM *Private Spiritual Direction - Library*

3:15 PM to 7 PM - *Cello Lessons - #218/219*

8 Tuesday

10 AM SG Peer Group - Gathering Room

1 PM Private Spiritual Direction - Library

2 PM to 6 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

6 PM Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band Rehearsal - Parish Hall

9 Wednesday

11 AM Private Spiritual Direction - Library

12:15 PM Holy Eucharist - Church

3 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

6:30 PM Roseville Wednesday AA - Gathering Room

10 Thursday

10:30 AM Hearts and Hands - Parish Hall

2 PM Private Spiritual Direction - Library

3:45 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

11 Friday

3:45 PM to 6:45 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

12 Saturday

11 AM Flute Lessons - Music Room

13 Sunday - Epiphany 6

8 AM Holy Eucharist

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

3 PM Gift of Music - Karla & Rolf

14 Monday - Valentine's Day

3:15 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

6:45 PM Finance Team - Parish Hall, in person

15 Tuesday

8:30 AM Private Spiritual Direction - Gathering Room - to 5 PM

6 PM Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band Rehearsal - Parish Hall

16 Wednesday

12:15 PM Holy Eucharist - Church

6:30 PM - Roseville Wednesday AA - Gathering Room

17 Thursday

3:45 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

18 Friday

3:45 PM to 6:45 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

19 Saturday

8:45 AM Private Spiritual Direction - Library

8:45 AM Vestry Retreat & February Meeting - Parish Hall

11 AM Flute Lessons - Music Room

20 Sunday - Epiphany 6

8 AM Holy Eucharist

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

1:30 PM GSVLOC Rehearsal - Parish Hall

21 Monday - Presidents' Day - Office Closed
3-8 PM Cello Rehearsal - Church
3:15 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

22 Tuesday
8 AM Private Spiritual Direction - Library
11:30 AM Meals on Wheels - Offsite
6 PM Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band Rehearsal - Parish Hall

23 Wednesday
12:15 PM Holy Eucharist - Church
6:30 PM - Roseville Wednesday AA - Gathering Room

24 Thursday
12:30 PM Quiet Bag Refill - Room 218 - to 2 PM
3:45 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

25 Friday
3:45 PM to 6:45 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219
5-8 PM Cello Rehearsal - Church

26 Saturday
11 AM Flute Lessons - Music Room
12-7 PM Holmes Cello Event - Church

27 Sunday - Last Sunday after Epiphany
8 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Put Alleluias to bed!

28 Monday - e-Traveler Deadline!
3:15 PM to 7 PM - Cello Lessons - #218/219

Please note that some of our outside groups have returned to meeting in the building. Some of those groups are now on this calendar to avoid over-scheduling. Always check with the church office before scheduling a meeting.

Last Words



Ruth Thillen
Parish Administrator

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

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Annual Meeting on January 23rd - it was a fun meeting with loads of optimism. February brings plenty to consider before we move into Lent in March. Keep your eyes out for our weekly Parish Mail emails, so you don't miss a thing!

VESTRY:

Chris Mayr, Sr. Warden; Karen Hartman, Jr. Warden
Allison Jensen, Clerk; Jean Crow, Treasurer

Ross Ackerman; Patrick Ahern; Cheryl Bailey;
Madisen Crow; Eric Hedican; Ann DePaolis-Jones;
Alexander Kun; Jeanna McLoughlin; Leslie Norton

STAFF:

Ruth Thillen, Parish Administrator
Marion Hunner, Children's Ministries Director
Karla S. Cole, Director of Music Ministries
Rev. Marilyn Baldwin, Assisting Priest
Rev. Randy W. Johnson, Rector

Our Regular Schedule:

Recorded Sermons for each Sunday are on our website.

Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary
9:30 AM Sunday School (Not on First Sundays)
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary

Wednesday: 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 9 AM - 4 PM

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STAY CONNECTED

