

St. Christopher's

# e-Traveler



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## From the Rector



**The Rev.  
Randy W. Johnson**

**Rector**

### Why Are We Here?

The past several weeks have been a time of tremendous busyness and leaning into new, and sometimes novel, ways of doing life. I know that most all of you have been challenged by how to “do life” in ways unimagined just a scant few months ago. A dear friend of mine recently sent me an email of encouragement, with a compassionate and caring message. She asked if I was familiar with sewing machines and the workings of bobbins- especially when they run out of thread sometime along the seam. Many times, you don’t even notice the bobbin has run out before you realize it.

The note gave me pause to take stock of what I am doing and why...taking a moment to care for myself and breathe, and reconnect with joy. Part of the reflective moment caused me to consider what I want to do more of—those things that give me feelings of deep connection and feed my soul.

Author and University of Minnesota senior fellow, Richard Leider, wrote a piece in the most recent Minnesota Alumni magazine. He contributed to a discussion to how we can focus on living a more meaningful and intentional life. He suggests when you wake up, but before you get out of bed, pause two minutes. (*Don’t touch the cell phone!*) Think about your upcoming day and about the person you really want to make an impact on. Make a commitment to do that, even if it’s as simple as sending them a kind text or a brief phone call. Then pause and take three deep breaths to center yourself before you

start the day.

Leider also posed 10 questions to help us identify what really matters most to us in order to help unlock our sense of purpose. He suggests asking yourself these questions:

1. Why are you?
2. Why do you get up in the morning?
3. What keeps you up at night?
4. When are you most alive?
5. What does being successful mean to you?
6. How might you apply gifts to a pursuit that is of deep interest to you and help others?
7. What can you do to make a difference in one person's life today?
8. What is your sentence? (summarize yourself in a 140-character Tweet)
9. If you say yes to living purposefully, what do you say no to?
10. If you met an older version of you, what sage advice would your older self give you?

I ask that you answer these ten questions twice—once through your own individual and personal lens, and a second time through the lens as a member of our St. Christopher's faith family and follower of Christ. My prayer is that when you answer in both ways, you discern and discover that you are living a purpose-filled life in which Jesus is the lens. If your vision is a bit fuzzy or out of focus, I encourage you to seek focus by identifying more fully with our Lord and Savior, seeking ways to live into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation. Through the lens of the resurrected Christ, we focus His life-giving light to a common point—loving and serving through you and into the world.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.*

*Randy+*

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## The Deacon Discusses



**The Rev.  
Janet MacNally**

**Deacon**

### **From the Fifth Floor**

Easter Sunday afternoon, I received two text messages from Chicago, moments apart. The first was from my daughter in law, with a picture of a lamb roast about to go into the oven for their Easter dinner. The second text came

from the floor behind her kitchen, and was a short video of a family-room-sized Bounce House with the tag from my son, "\$250.00 worth of parenting sanity!" I played the video and watched as my two granddaughters, ages 4 and 2, bounced and slid in the new addition to the family room. My son could be heard saying to the oldest "Rowan, can you say 'Happy Easter' to your grandparents?" To which Rowan, bouncing to a flat on her back position, called out "Happy Easter! This is the Easter Miracle!" Okay, it's not the empty tomb, but to a four-year-old, in the time of Covid-19, a brand new indoor sized bounce house is a miracle all the same. Right? All of which brings me to the point that nothing this Easter was normal.

For this self-proclaimed liturgist and "high church baby," this year's Holy Week was anything but normal. The liturgies of the Triduum have always been among those I treasure the most. There is something I always find extremely powerful as I walk with Christ and my faith community on those three most holy of days. A journey that covers all emotions from the fellowship of a holy feast, to the confusion and fear of arrest, to the terror of the cross and death, to the wonder and perplexity of an empty tomb, and finally to the amazement of the resurrection of Jesus. It is a great deal to pack into three days, yet without those three days, for me at least, things seemed out of step, not quite right. Yet through it all I had to remind myself that I had it on the best of authorities that come Easter Sunday morning, the good news would be that the tomb was empty. To be honest, even in times such as these, all we have to do is take a look around us and we will find evidence of the empty tomb, of resurrection. The trees are budding and plants in our gardens or yards are making that valiant attempt to push up through still cold ground to reach the warmth of the Spring sunshine. It is as the hymn proclaims "every good gift of the year, now with its Master returns!" It is our reassurance that on that morning the tomb was indeed empty.

As we made our way around the world these past few months, I made note of things that I thought would, as they say, "preach." One of the most striking things I saw was in the city of Darwin, the capitol of the Northern Territory. Darwin marks two events that significantly impacted their history. The first was the Bombing of Darwin on February 19, 1942. Knowing that the military installation in Darwin held not only Australian troops but troops from the United Kingdom and the United States, the Japanese launched this attack on Darwin just a few short months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was similar to that attack in surprise and scope, and there are remnants and remembrances over much of Darwin. A great many buildings in the town were either destroyed or severely damaged, including Christchurch, the Anglican presence in Darwin. While the building remained upright, there was some damage to walls and the church's stained-glass windows were blown out. The building was requisitioned by the Navy and served as a sick bay until it was returned to being a church in 1946.

The second event concerns the church and was the arrival of Cyclone (we would say hurricane) Tracy that came on shore at Christmas and stayed from December 24 thru 26 in 1974. This time, the church which now held the distinction of being a cathedral, was almost completely destroyed. All that remained was the original entrance to the church, the west door and frame. I would imagine that the cathedral clergy and parishioners must have had the same feelings of despair that the women felt on the early morning as they approached the tomb. Feelings of loss and sorrow would be familiar to both

groups. And then the miracle occurred. The tomb was empty.

Resurrection! For the members of the faith community, the citizens of Darwin and an architect, a somewhat similar example of resurrection was about to occur. Using that original entrance and door, a new cathedral, white, sweeping and raising to Heaven were constructed. Today, this is Christchurch Cathedral, Darwin.



Resurrection! From the ashes of what once was and is no more has come something the tells of the Good News in Christ by its presence within the community.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask and be well.

Blessings,  
***Deacon Janet***

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**The Rev.  
Mary Rowe**

**RETIRED Assisting Priest**

After weeks of transitioning to a sequestered life style, my husband and I are now in the throws of transitioning to Moab. Life on so many levels seems unreal and out of my control.

Blessings,  
Mary+

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**Music Notes**



**Karla Cole**

**Director of Music Ministries**

## **Music Notes**

I've written before about musical earworms, and how very persistent they can be. My favorite, best example is from the old television series *Cheers*. Set in a bar, the patrons come in and out, the staff go back and forth from the bar to the back of the house – all while whistling a tune, trading it back and forth. That's going on like crazy in the Cole house right now, and it might be going on in yours, too. Usually, the ditty is from an ad on television or the bumper music from NPR, but we all know lots of hymns and they're as likely as anything to be the earworm here in our house. I've been working on the Ordination and Consecration of the next Bishop, to be held June 6<sup>th</sup> (and yes, it will be virtual), so I have the many, many hymns rattling around in my head that were considered for the service. And they keep popping out. Yesterday it was *King of glory, King of peace*, today it's *Take my life that I might be*. I guess there are worse things.

To be clear, a hymn is really just the text – it gets set to a specific tune, or sometimes not. If you have a hymnal at home with you, there's a tune name and some numbers at the bottom of each hymn. The tune name is often the place the tune was found or written – for example, Truro (*Christ is alive, let Christians sing*) or Down Ampney (*Come down, O love divine*) are towns in England, and Houston (*I want to walk as a child of the light*) was written while driving, as the composer moved her elderly mother to Houston, Texas. The Welsh tune names are the best – almost unpronounceable, lots of consonants and a serious dearth of vowels. Cwm Rhondda is perhaps the most famous – *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah*, or Hyfrydol – *Alleluia, sing to Jesus*. See what I mean about the consonants?

So those numbers at the bottom of each hymn seem strange, but if you look at lots of hymns, you'll see some recurring patterns: 11.12.12.10 or 77.77. Each number is actually the number of syllables in each line. Sometimes you see CM or SM or LM – Common Meter, or Short or Long Meter – these are patterns that occur so frequently as to need a shorthand designation rather than the number of syllables. So why bother with this stuff? Well, knowing the number of syllables allows us to interchange texts and tunes. Sometimes you find a wonderful text that appears with a tune that is unfamiliar or difficult to sing (there are several in our hymnal), so you can find an alternate, a more familiar tune that will magically fit the text you like. There are lots of tunes that have multiple texts. If we go back to our Welsh hymns, *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah*, Cwm Rhondda can also be sung to *God of grace and God of glory*. *Alleluia, sing to Jesus*, Hyfrydol can also be *Love divine, all loves excelling*.

Have I left you with an earworm? Oh, good. Hymns are great that way. I think the earliest hymnwriters had something going on there of a didactic nature. You may not always remember all the words, but the tune will carry you through, and the spirit of the text will be recalled as that tune rattles around in your head. Simplified Christian Education! So, while we are hanging out in the wilderness, I would encourage you to sing. Or hum. Maybe you can even get your housemates to pass the tunes back and forth! Those tunes are our rich heritage, and every time we hear or sing them, they are a reminder of God's great love for us and the timeless connection we have to all the Christians who have gone before.

Happy singing!  
Karla

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## Footprints APRIL 2020 - News from Children's Ministries



**Marion Hunner**

**Children's Ministries  
Director**



Usually I use this space to let everyone know what is coming up in Children's Ministries. At this point we should be looking forward to our final Children's Chapel for the program year on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Patrick has been providing guitar music for this monthly event, and this would have been his last opportunity before he leaves for college in the fall. We would be finishing up our tie blankets for the graduating high school seniors. And we would be preparing for our final Sunday School class and Recognition Sunday on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Since it is clear that none of those things will be happening as planned (although I hold out hope that we may be able to do some of them later), I thought that instead I would share with you what Children's Ministries looked like in April, with social distancing.

Just before Palm Sunday, Carol Duff and I delivered supplies to several families who wanted to make Empty Tomb Gardens. This is something that we traditionally do in Sunday school, but this year everyone got their own! Each Friday the families receive an email and resources for family activities that go with that week's scripture.

The families and I have a private Facebook group where I post activity ideas 2-3 times a week. We also share pictures with each other on this platform. We have been meeting every Sunday on Zoom – and last Sunday Fr. Randy joined us! It has been wonderful to connect with the children and have them connect with each other. I usually share a story and we talk about what has

been going on in the previous week.

Like everyone, in their own context, we are doing our best to remain connected with each other and look for where the Holy Spirit travels beyond the church walls in to our every day lives.

--Marion

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**Chad O'Leary**

**Director Youth Ministries**

### Life After Corona?

Yesterday, during one of the seemingly thousands of Zoom calls as of late, I was asked a question by one of my students that stopped me in my tracks. She asked, "What do you want your life to be like when this pandemic is over?" Questions from 16 year olds are oftentimes quite profound (but sadly quite easily dismissed) but this one especially hung with me. I think that this is because I have been in survival mode as of late -- and hadn't even stopped to think about how this experience might be truly transformative. Having just walked through Holy Week and the resurrection promise of Easter, it seems especially appropriate. And, the ideas racing through my head are liberating -- but, will require some serious un-learning and refocusing.

The context of my story lies in the fact that I am an American stuck between Gen X and millennial generations -- and not fully identifying with either. Like Xers, I have dreamt big and categorized the American Dream as home ownership, job security, and financial security. However, like millennials, I have carried the continued dread of finding a future where it is likely that I won't be as successful as the generations before me. I have come to realize that finding peace amid these two diametrically opposed views has to be my post-pandemic journey. And, in many ways, I am on the leading edge of a generation of people who are experiencing a world very different than that of their parents and grandparents.

My Christian faith has led me to be a person of hope. But my post-pandemic life will be learning how to refocus that hope from personal accomplishment to systemic change for our collective future. I had placed hope in home ownership. However, today we sold the home that we love, to pay down our student loans. We have both been working multiple jobs to increase our income to pay off such debts but as our income rose, our income-driven payment also increased. Paying a mortgage and \$800/month in student loans is not sustainable, and with this realization came an intense feeling of failure and shame for not being able to accomplish what my parents and grandparents had. Job security has also been a continual struggle. I was the

first class to graduate from college after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and I have now tried to make my way as a young adult through two very significant downturns in the economy, having lost a teaching job that I loved in the 2008 recession. This has brought about a feeling of failure in not being able to lock into a job where I can grow over the course of my career, like my parents and grandparents. It has become apparent to me that my hopes, as currently established, are hardly achievable given the reality that I have come to see. This feeling of falling short and just not being able to achieve what was available to previous generations has provoked another epidemic -- anxiety -- through our younger generations. I see it every day in my friend circles and when listening to my students and in the youth of our parish. And, I haven't even mentioned global climate. *Houston, we have a problem here!*

Yet, a part of my upbringing was also embracing the radical message of a dude named Jesus, and the commitment that he had for shaking up systems of oppression. We have a model for this. It is my feeling that young adults (including myself) don't want pity but instead simply wish to be authentically heard -- and to *name* the problems of society that we have felt but now lay fully exposed during this pandemic, rather than simply going back to our old lives. What would Jesus do? This idea of turning away, choosing "we" instead of "I" and seeking renewal is at the heart of the Jesus movement. I believe that systemic change and social justice come from our ancient Christian tradition of sharing stories -- not by blocking people on Facebook or refusing to vote to prove a point. It involves vulnerability. And, so this reflection, my own little "small-g" gospel, is my first step toward embracing my own post-pandemic future. I will not be going back to how life was before. I choose something more, for me and the young people that follow behind me. Do you?

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### **ONGOING EVENT: KICKIN IT WITH CHAD**

Zoom in on Wednesdays between 7:00-8:00PM to hang with Chad and your St. C's peeps. Jump in for 10 minutes or chill the whole hour. BYOB. I'd love to hear from you!

Chad

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## **Green Team**

MAY 2020

Thanks to modern day technology, we were able to come together as a group to continue work towards our common goal of a green earthly home.

Earth Day, an annual event celebrated on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection, has been in existence for 50 years! First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries. In honor of its 50th anniversary, the Green Team has purchased the book "Drawdown, the Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming" by Paul Hawken, for the Cap Hanson Library. Be sure to check it out!



Here are some other happenings:

Started planning for this year's Giving Garden (last year we donated to Keystone food shelf over 700lbs of fresh produce)

Watch for our yearly Adopt a Highway clean-up date, and help beautify Hamline Avenue

## An End to Waste

Let us pray for an end to the

Waste and desecration of God's creation

For access to the fruits of creation

To be shared equally among all people

And for communities and nations to find sustenance

In the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it

Into our care so that, in obedience to you,

We might serve all people:

Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom,

and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all;

That, trusting in your bounty, all people may be

Empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.

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## Pulse of the Parish, April 2020

The Vestry met on April 20, 2020 via Zoom.

The financial picture is stable for the moment. We are at 25 percent of the year. Expenses are at 23.77 percent for the year and income is slightly over 30 percent for the year, including prepaid pledges. Pledges are being mailed in, along with the normal bill pay and automatic deposits. The Vestry thanks those members for continuing to be faithful in their giving.

However, we are going to see income drop as the building use has stopped due to the pandemic. Further, we have seen a loss of slightly over \$50,000 in Pooled Investment Funds (PIF) due to the recent stock market decline.

The Vestry discussed ways to help ease our financial situation, including taking advantage of the Payroll Protection Program in the current stimulus legislation passed by Congress. We anticipate being able to apply for those funds shortly. The Vestry voted to grant the Senior Warden the authority to pursue that and other financial programs that may come from the state or federal government that will provide us some assistance in this tough time.

The Vestry also talked about current efforts to keep the community together, including the telephone calling tree, the Zoom Family Nights with the Sunday school group, and the choir having meetings via Zoom, as well as the Finance Committee and Green Team meeting via Zoom. The Vestry also discussed other ways of using our Zoom subscription, including game nights, Bible study groups and/or book clubs. If someone is interested in forming a bible study group or a book group, please contact Kathy Ackerman at

[katjones37@yahoo.com](mailto:katjones37@yahoo.com).

The Vestry discussed the work Fr. Randy, Karla Cole, and Ross Ackerman are doing in taping and posting Holy Eucharist services. Fr. Randy reported that effort is going to continue as long as the shutdown continues. The videos are available on a newly created YouTube channel and links can be found on the church's website and on Facebook.

The Vestry also discussed possibilities for how we are going to proceed once state officials, as well as ECMN, signals that in-person services can begin again. The general consensus is that the return to services will be more of a gradual process than a complete restart, and, likely, masks will be required for all services. We will put out a call to ask everyone to begin the effort to have masks available. Further, we are asking parishioners who sew or are crafty to make masks that can be handed out at the door on the first Sunday that in-person services are allowed. All masks can be dropped off at the church on Wednesdays, when both Fr. Randy and Ruth are in the office. We hope to have approximately 100-125 masks available for those who need them.

We encourage parishioners to start thinking about inviting friends and family members who might be interested in attending. We want to bring our famous hospitality out into the world, especially at a time when it is needed most.

SHOUT-OUTS go to Marion Hunner and Chad O'Leary for their hard work in reaching out to their families and students. Also, a shout-out goes to Ross Ackerman, for his work in filming the Eucharists and creating the YouTube channel.

The next Vestry meeting will be held on May 18, by Zoom.

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## MAY Calendar Highlights!

**10 Sunday** - Happy Mother's Day!

**11 Monday**

**6 PM** Finance Committee – via ZOOM

**12 Tuesday**

Meals on Wheels – *Offsite*

**18 Monday**

**6:45 PM** Vestry Meeting – via ZOOM

**25 Monday – Memorial Day** (*office closed*)

**26 Tuesday**

**e-Traveler** Deadline for June

**28 Thursday**

**5:30 PM** Community Dinner – *tentative*

**31 Sunday - Pentecost**

**Please note:** Due to the COVID-19 protocols in place at the end of March as we prepare this edition of the e-Traveler, most 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.

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## Last Words



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

Well, April was pretty quiet for all of us. Easter was low-key. The weather has been kind, though, and everyone seems to be enjoying being able to get outside. We've gotten some long-postponed yard cleanup done, including getting the picnic table torn down and ready to pass on to our "next generation" when we can visit later (hopefully soon).

My friend was going through old photos during our extended stay-at-home, and found this silly gem from the early 90's. (A friend was renewing her wedding vows.) The lady on the

right is Sharon, former church secretary at Holy Apostles, and the cute guy on the left is my husband, Mike. The "kid" in the middle is me - you'll see the smile matches the other picture here. :)

Stay well!

Ruth Thillen

Parish Administrator



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## St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

### **VESTRY:**

Kathy Ackerman, Sr. Warden; Mike Sirany, Jr. Warden  
Allison Jensen, Clerk; Suzanne Hitchcock, Treasurer

Erin Bowman; Barbara Hovey; Ann DePaolis-Jones; Josh Kattelman;  
Alexander Kun; Tom Linder; Jeanna McLoughlin; Al Reedstrom; Lisa Spiro

### **STAFF:**

Ruth Thillen, Parish Administrator  
Chad O'Leary, Youth Ministries Director  
Marion Hunner, Children's Ministries Director  
Karla S. Cole, Director of Music Ministries  
Rev. Mary Rowe, Assisting Priest  
Rev. Janet MacNally, Deacon  
Rev. Randy W. Johnson, Rector

### **Our Regular Schedule**

#### **Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist**

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**

10:30 AM Children's Chapel (*First Sunday ONLY*)

11:30 AM Fellowship

**Wednesday:** 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

### **Office Hours:**

Monday - Friday 9 AM - 4 PM

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