

St. Christopher's

e-Traveler



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From the Rector



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

"It's a real page-turner!" by Fr. Randy

It is rapidly changing, the weather is becoming cooler, and frequently blustery winds blow from the Great North. The fall foliage is becoming a brilliant blending of red, gold, and rust, and we are beginning to crave those ever-present pumpkin spice hot drinks while wearing our warmest sweaters and socks. It got me craving the chance to curl up in a soft chair with a good book—I mean a **real "page-turner!"**

I rarely have the opportunity to follow up on this desire to just sit and read for pure enjoyment these days. The demands of work and home seem to consume every waking moment, along with the additional pressure I put upon myself to get all things done—*it is like trying to put 15 pounds of potatoes into a 10 pound sack*. My mom says the pace of activity *"is enough to just make you weary!"* Since I do not have the time to read for enjoyment right now, I thought it might be interesting to ponder the elements, *the basic building blocks* of **"a real page-turner,"** and how each of us might incorporate them to write our uniquely personal stories as we experience together this crazy year 2020.

I am challenging each of you to begin journaling or writing a short story that captures what has been going on during this year of COVID-19, the impact it has made on your life, and to reflect on how this experience has shaped your present and future life. Maybe we should begin a project to post some of your own **"page-turner"** stories to share with your faith siblings as a blog: **"Dear St.**

Where should we start? It is best to start at the beginning; So...what makes a story “a real page-turner?” There are four main elements that make a story really stand out: **character, plot, setting, and tension.** Balancing these elements is the first step in making your story amazing.

Character: In your story, you should have at least one character your reader can root for. The presence of a character the reader wants to see succeed drives the story forward and gives that character depth and humanity. We need a character we can attach ourselves to so we can feel involved in the story. The character must want or yearn for something. We have many characters to choose from—ourselves, family and friends, good or bad, large or small, young or old, powerful or weak, of flesh and blood, or of spiritual elements. We often ask, “*Where is God in all of this?*” I suggest that God is the main character in our stories as God yearns for the best for all of us...to become more fully in relationship with us, by walking beside us through hardships and joys. *God is ever present with us and is not done with us.*

Plot: It is the sequence of events inside a story which impact other events through the principle of cause and effect. Let your characters drive the story and let the plot naturally evolve. What happened, when and to who, and how did it impact us at the time, and into the future? Is this something we can control, or is it something we must adapt to or reform (*or re-form*) in ourselves and our faith community?

Setting: The settings you visit really need to shine, as it gives your story texture and depth, and makes the time and place real through carefully shared details. Beyond telling us where the action of the story is happening, the setting reveals the moods and emotions of the characters which the reader can cling to. Where is the issue playing out; the places we have been, and the places we are moving towards?

Tension: We often refer to tension as conflict, but essentially what it means is the element of your story that drives the action. Conflict often means confrontation or altercation, so to me, tension is more accurate because there need not be any resolution or winner in the story. Tension is the element that raises our concerns and makes us wonder what will happen next and how we will respond to those events. We have not yet been able to determine where the corner or pivot point in the COVID-19 pandemic is going to be. How has it impacted us—our emotions, physical and spiritual health, and our hopes for the future? Where do we stand in the wake of shining a convicting light upon systemic racism, social justice issues, and violence perpetrated against people in our streets and neighborhoods? Who will we be as individuals and as followers of Jesus—*What Did Jesus Do* and *What Did Jesus Say*? What will be our plan, our response, and our focus? Will we join the Holy Spirit to bring forth what is new? How does this fit into your story?

So put on the kettle and warm sweater. Curl up in a soft chair, grab a favorite pen or pencil and a pad of paper, and begin writing your own story. Although few of us are likely professional writers, we do have a template and guide in the Holy Scriptures when it comes to helping us write our own story. Over the centuries and generations, it has always been our story. And believe me, it is “**a real page-turner!**” And also believe me as I tell you, by telling and sharing

your own story, you have created “*a real page-turner.*”

Blessings on your journey.

Randy+

Music Notes



Karla Cole

Director of Music Ministries

This pandemic has been hard on creative types. I've talked to a lot of friends who've made plans to learn new literature, or learn to play a new instrument, or write a scholarly tome – and just haven't been able to achieve those goals. I feel their pain. My Muse, as I call her, has been AWOL for a big chunk of this season of quarantine. Her job is to provide inspiration for these eTraveler pieces, bright ideas for ways to make music when we can't be together, motivation to practice or even a new fingering so I don't crash and burn in the middle of a difficult passage. And she hasn't always been there when I've needed her. I'm finding her rather fickle. And that sort of thing is being widely reported amongst my musician friends as well. Finding the inspiration and motivation to play or compose is elusive, never mind that the rehearsals have been cancelled, the venues shut down, the audiences dispersed.

An organist friend in Los Angeles just got back into his church to practice this past week. A violinist friend has had to cancel almost an entire year of recitals. My friends who play in orchestras are preparing to play seasons of virtual concerts without a live audience. My choral conductor colleagues are frantically trying to figure out how to facilitate a rehearsal on Zoom, which isn't working very well, or perform virtually, which is highly dependent on the conductor's facility with technology. As you might guess, the younger folks have lots more facility and greater success with making things happen, while those of us of a “certain age” have pretty taxing learning curves to conquer.

Maybe this struggle to create something beautiful and meaningful in the face of trial is really just a human reaction to stress. For there are many wonderful pieces born of great sorrow – the *Kindertotenlieder* of Gustav Mahler after his daughter died of scarlet fever; Paul Hindemith's *Trauermusik* on the death of George V of England; Herbert Howell's *Hymne Paradisi* for the loss of his son to polio are just a few that come quickly to mind. Perhaps the composer whose music was most steeped in sorrow was Frédéric Chopin, for fragile health and sadness followed him all his life. He was a Polish ex-patriot living in Paris, haunted by the deaths of family members and the violent Russian suppression of the Polish Uprising. Additionally, a tempestuous relationship with George Sand taxed his emotional and physical health. And yet, his compositions are

some of the most beautiful music ever written, all born of his personal trials.

Johann Sebastian Bach was no stranger to sorrow and the precarious nature of life. He was orphaned by the age of ten and ultimately buried his first wife and half of his twenty children. He was one of the most prolific composers in history, writing a significant portion of his music in the service of the church. While serving as organist and choir master at St. Thomas Kirke in Leipzig, he wrote over 300 cantatas on the Gospel readings. The thing that's so amazing though, is not the sheer volume of this music, but that he created it all on demand. If I need something for the 21st Sunday of Pentecost, I root around in the music library or I call up one of the music purveyors in my contact list. I might take a piece of music and rearrange it to fit the day's readings or the forces available, but I certainly don't write it from scratch.

So Bach was a very busy musician. And during his career in the early 1700s, there was much to write about, not just the lectionary readings. In addition to the near constant wars and conflicts, there was plague. We usually think of the bubonic plague as something that happened in the 1300s that killed off half of Europe's population. But it didn't just go away then, it became endemic and crept back over and over again. Last month, we talked about Martin Luther's experience with the bubonic plague in the early 1500s. Bach also had experience with the plague. There were serious outbreaks of it in Denmark, Sweden and Lithuania (1710), France (1720), the Balkans (1738), and Italy (1743). Germans must have lived with some degree of constant dread in those days, for it was all around them. And the plague did not go unnoticed in Bach's daily work.

In his Cantata BWV 25 for the 14th Sunday after Trinity, written in 1723, Bach writes for the Chorus:

*Heal me, dear Lord, for I am ill and weak;
My heart, sorely wounded, suffers great hardship;
My bones are shaken, I have great fear and anxiety;
my soul is shaken as well.*

And then the Tenor sings:

*The entire world is just a hospital, where humanity,
in innumerable great throngs
And also children in their cradles have been laid low with sickness.*

The Bass takes his turn:

*Ah, from where shall I, wretch, receive counsel?
My leprosy, my plague cannot be healed by any herb or ointment
Other than the balm of Gilead.*

The Soprano pleads:

*Open to my pitiful songs, Jesus, your gracious ears!
When there in the exalted choir I shall sing with the angels,
My song of thanks will sound better.*

And the Chorus returns:

*All my days I will praise your strong hand,
with which my plague and laments you have so tenderly brushed aside.
Not only in my mortal days shall your fame be spread abroad:
I will also make it manifest hereafter and praise you eternally there.*

For even in the face of hardship, plague and an unknown future, Bach remained a man of great faith. All of his musical scores bear an SDG at the bottom – *Soli Deo Gloria*, to the glory of God alone. A God who saw him

through his life of trials and hardships so that he could leave his gift of music to posterity.

2020 has been a challenging year, and it has quite a way to go yet. But the fall has always seemed a time of new beginnings for me and I did make a little forward progress in September. With the crisp air and the bright blue of October's sky, I am encouraged to make even more. Here's to leaving distraction behind and conquering that virtual music thing! I hope my Muse is paying attention! If, like me, you have been distracted lately and have forgotten about our listening book, ***Year of Wonder***, it's still there for you. You can pick it up whenever you have a moment, turn to the day's page and learn a little about a composer, make a new friend of a piece of music, and be transported for a little while to another place. A place where we humans can go to be a little closer to God and a little further from our troubles for a little while.

Grace and peace,
Karla

Footprints OCTOBER 2020 News from Children's Ministries



Marion Hunner

**Children's Ministries
Director**



It may not feel like it, but the new program year has begun! It is with great excitement that I share what we are doing with children and families this fall!

Our fantastic Sunday School teachers, Carol Duff and Jean Darnell, are working with me to provide a digital Sunday School experience each week. We are using three different curricula to keep things interesting and exciting on the Zoom platform. On October 4th we will use the Godly Play lesson on Moses to get an overview of some of the major events in his life. Following that, we will have several lessons in which we dive deeper into some of those events. With the help of Darlene Cross's creative ingenuity, we will be providing each child with their very own blank scroll, where they can use pictures and/or words to represent each of the events.

In addition, Fr. Randy offered a family friendly, outdoor liturgy on a Sunday afternoon in September, and we look forward to another one in October. During the family liturgy, Fr. Randy offered a hands-on homily, and he invited the children to help celebrate and offer communion to their own family members.

I must admit that I am very "old-school." It took time and reflection for me to visualize how we might bring meaningful experiences to an audience that is

already “Zoomed Out.” But as usually happens, if I spend time in prayer, open myself to what God is calling me to do, and remember that I don’t have to do it alone, a plan emerged. I am ever grateful to the support that our community offers to me and the families of St. Christopher’s. You may not be able to see them (or us!) these days, but we are feeling the Holy Spirit in and among us.



November 4 is a red letter day for the Kent family. Our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother turns 100 years old! With husband, Millard, and three daughters, Barbara became a member of the St. Christopher's family in the summer of 1959. She served on the altar guild for 40 years, fed the Lions club many luncheons, and volunteered with St. Anne's guild at the Church Home. We are so blessed to have her still with us. Our goal is to shower her with cards, notes and memories. Please send to:

Barbara Kent
4655 Victoria #114
Shoreview, MN 55126

October 14 and 15 Food Drive for Keystone

St Christopher's parish is having a food drive to benefit Keystone Community Food Shelf on **October 14th from 4-7 p.m.** and **October 15th from 12-3 p.m.** Cash donations are also welcome. Like the previous drive, you can drop off donations at the main entry.

Here's a list of most-needed items:

- **Dry/bagged beans (black, pinto, etc.)**
- **Rice**
- **Canned meats or proteins**
- **Peanut butter**
- **Canned vegetables**
- **Boxed dinners**
- **Hormel Compleats, Cup of Noodles, or other heat-and-eat foods**
- **Jerky (frequently requested by our homeless participants)**
- **Bar soap**
- **Toilet paper**

—Al Reedstrom, Community Dinner Chair.

THANK YOU!

Here's a big shout out to **Ebie Richards** for her many years of dedication and commitment to the Meals on Wheels project. At age 93 she decided to retire; she has been driving since **1976**, when the project started with the Roseville Area School District. WOW! Thanks, Ebie, you're a terrific volunteer!!!

Meals on Wheels Needs You!

St. Christopher's will begin delivering Meals on Wheels again starting **October 6th!** We are in need of more drivers, as some of our drivers are not out and about at this time, with the coronavirus. We drive every third Tuesday, and it

takes around one hour. The meals are picked up at the Fairview Community Center on County Road B, and the delivery area is basically the Roseville Area School District. It's a great volunteer activity serving our neighbors, and helps allow them to stay in their homes. If you are interested, please call Sally Brown at 651-483-8232.



OCTOBER Calendar Highlights!

3 Saturday through 9 Friday -- NO access to the Parish Hall, as we are having the floor refinished (stripped and sealed). You can access the kitchen from the Sacristy stairwell.

4 Sunday - Pentecost 18

8 AM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

7 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather Permitting)

9 Friday

1:30 PM Keystone Mobile Food Shelf - West Lot

11 Sunday - Pentecost 19

8 AM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

12 Monday

6 PM Finance Committee Meeting - via Zoom

14 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

18 Sunday - Pentecost 20

8 AM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

19 Monday

6:45 PM Vestry Meeting - via Zoom

21 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship -Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

25 Sunday - Pentecost 21

8 AM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

26 Monday

***e-Traveler* Deadline** for November

28 Wednesday

12:15 PM Outdoor Worship - Kitchen Garden (Weather permitting)

31 Saturday -- Halloween

Please note: Outdoor worship services are still limited to 25 persons (we have been averaging 23-24, pretty close!). 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 October ***e-Traveler!***

I love the changing of the leaves and the crispy sound as I walk through them. I hope the season does not rush too quickly! I am looking forward to hot cider and caramel apples, before I start thinking about baking pies for Thanksgiving!

Even in this odd year, I look forward to the slower evenings when I can read more - and, perhaps, begin writing MY "page-turner!" I even got new glasses to help read easier.

Ruth Thillen
Parish Administrator

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
Colleen Carpenter, Seminarian
Rev. Randy W. Johnson, Rector

Our Regular Schedule

Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist

---Currently meeting outside the Kitchen Garden---

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 (On Hiatus)

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

11:30 AM Fellowship

Wednesday: 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist in the Kitchen Garden

Current Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9 AM - 4 PM

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STAY CONNECTED

