



ST. CHRISTOPHER BY-THE-RIVER

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

It has been five weeks since we were able to gather for public worship and we have now gone six weeks without receiving the bread and wine of Holy Communion. **We are hungry!** We are hungry for being together in our shared holy place, for greeting each other with a handshake or hug, for milling about at coffee hour, working shoulder to shoulder preparing for Bargain Box or serving a meal at the men's shelter. We are hungry for our family members from whom we are now separated by generation or household. We long to embrace our elders and our grandchildren. We long for shared meals with family and friends at restaurants or in our homes. We miss our co-workers and the blessings of a regular paycheck. For those able to work from home, in spite of technology it's not the same as being together. We are hungry, most of all, for God in all the ways that we have been used to knowing the Divine Presence among us.



This morning I was in a bit of a funk – yes, me too – and I called Ted for a bit of encouragement. I shared my frustrations, which primarily focus around our present inability to gather for public worship. I am grateful for Becky Everett playing the Carillon on Sunday mornings – I see how much it has helped people to feel a bit less isolated. I am grateful that Yuri and John McElliott have provided music for our recorded services of Morning Prayer and that John Irwin has the technical know-how to put the pieces together and post it to YouTube each week. A number of you have emailed me with your appreciation that all this is happening. And yet – I worry that a recorded service creates a passive experience of performer/s and audience rather than inviting us to join in communal and active worship. I am also profoundly aware that many of you either do not have an internet connection or do not know how to access opportunities to gather online; whether YouTube for the Sunday recorded service or Zoom for Thursday Evening Prayer.

If you have read the pastoral letter from Bishop Hollingsworth, which was emailed on Friday, April 24th, you will know that we are not likely to resume public worship for some time yet. (If you do not have email, you should find a copy of Bishop Hollingsworth's letter included in this newsletter.) When we do resume public worship (hopefully at some point this summer), it will be with us wearing masks, continuing to keep six feet between us, etc. As I said, this morning I was in a bit of a funk. Ted said something that I have been chewing on ever since; "How did the people of Israel deal with their time of exile in Babylon?"

By way of some background: This turning point in the history of the Jewish people began with the Chaldeans conquering Jerusalem in 598/7 B.C. and the deportation of an estimated 10,000 people to the Chaldean capital of Babylon. Their descendants did not return to Jerusalem until the Persians, led by Cyrus the Great, conquered the Chaldeans in 538 B.C. Cyrus released the Jews to return to their homeland and instructed them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. (Why he did this is a fascinating story – for another day.) So, the exile lasted a total of some sixty years and none of the adults who were exiled would likely have been alive at the time of the return. Additionally, it was not until 516/5 B.C. that the Second Temple would be completed and dedicated. So, for sixty years in Babylon and an additional twenty-two years after the return to Jerusalem, none of their traditional ways of worshiping God were possible.

What did they do over the course of those eighty-plus years? During their time in Babylon, the community of exiles did their best to "keep the faith" by turning toward those practices that did not require the Temple in order to worship God. The Torah (the first five books of the Bible) took its final shape during this time. The deep, old, pre-Temple practices became more central. They kept the Sabbath, continued the practice of circumcision, and emphasized the daily study of scripture and prayer. These practices would form the basis of

worship in synagogues during Jesus' lifetime and, following the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D., continues today. Even though the Temple was eventually rebuilt, and the sacrificial system was reestablished and practiced for roughly 585 years, it was the exiles' way of "keeping the faith", developed out of necessity, that has ensured the continuation of Judaism into our own lifetime.

So what might the experience of those whose worshiping life was upended so many millennia ago have to offer us, exiled as we are from our sacred place and our own cherished ways of worshiping God? Turning to the earliest years of what would become the Christian Church, we find keeping the Sabbath, as well as daily study of scripture and prayer, to have continued on from our Jewish roots. Circumcision "in the flesh" was replaced with "circumcision of the heart" – marked by the permanent nature of our baptism and our consequential transformation toward a life of sacrificial service and love. What we experience as Eucharist, or Holy Communion, began as an Agape ("Love") meal, contributed to and shared by whoever could gather around the table. Cheese, milk, and honey, as well as bread and wine are mentioned in the earliest liturgical description that we have. The food was blessed and shared among those present and at a certain point, the story of Jesus' last meal with his followers was recounted. Songs about Jesus and love were sung and Jewish scripture (the Gospels had not yet been written) or a letter from one of the Apostles or other itinerant Christian teachers might be read. The order of all this varied.

The day will come again when we can gather at the Altar to share the Bread and Wine of Holy Communion. In the meantime, we can choose to make every meal, whether eaten alone or in the company of others, an occasion for giving thanks to God for all the blessings that fill our lives. We can remember Jesus' calls for us to love others as he loves us. We can read and study scripture to learn more about the faith that we claim as our primary identity. We can practice the way of love through prayer, service, and giving to help meet the needs of others. Finally, we can continue to be People of the Resurrection who, in the face of death, trust that death is not the end of the story. In other words, we can live as those whose hope is in God, who raised Jesus from the dead and who has promised to do the same for all of us.

In Christ's Love,

Ann+



Well to say that this Easter season has been the most unusual in my lifetime would be a statement of the obvious. What may not be so obvious is the way all of us have reacted to the call to protect ourselves and others by staying home and being very careful when venturing out. Our compliance with this request seems to be working as illnesses and deaths are occurring at levels far below original projections. As of this writing, we have no reports of any of our parishioners contracting the virus. We at St Christopher's continue to be very busy. Although the Vestry retreat was canceled, I wish to highlight a few noteworthy endeavors: Mother Ann has had an intense month. Most importantly, following many conference calls with the diocese she sprang into action and with the help of our incredible video producer, John Irwin (so far he has kept his many many many hours of preparation a secret) and Yuri and John McElliott, she recorded our services for all to see on our website. Our Jr. Warden has reported on building activities and the flood, but more noteworthy is her spreading fame as a carillonneur. The number of cars wanting to park on the street to hear her play Sunday mornings exceeds spaces available. Many park on the other side of the river and walk over. I also want to offer a special thank you to our treasurer, Mary Murray. We were notified that churches could qualify for the U S government Small Business Payment Protection Program. Mary didn't waste any time. Within 48 hours the Vestry Zoomed approval and Mary filed for our participation. While I hear that the program is oversubscribed, thanks to Mary's alacrity, we have been notified that we will be receiving some funds. As a result, with the expectation that everyone will continue with their annual support, we are continuing to pay full salaries to our faithful employees. There is no question that this sequestering has saved lives and that we will need to be careful as we venture out and return to a more normal routine but I am hopeful that I will see you in church sooner than later. In the meantime, come hear Becky and sing some songs with us. Finally, Gates Mills has a monthly publication called "The Pink Sheet". We are repeating what I recently wrote in for those who missed it or live elsewhere. Best Wishes



...from the Pink Sheet

Dear fellow villagers:

Are you stuck in your home with little to do? Are you wondering what you can do to break the boredom? It's Springtime! Here is my suggestion for a healthy, perfectly legal walking tour that many villagers have never done:

- Drive into the village and park in front of the Historical Society building on Old Mill Rd.
- Leave your car and walk across the old inter urban railroad bridge. As soon as you get to the other side, turn left down the steps into The Arboretum.
- There are several paths you can take which will bring you out into Mayor Karen Schneider's inspiration which she was kind enough to name "Marston Park".
- Wander around and contemplate the various things to do as the weather warms - play bocce ball, tennis, learn the popular new sport- pickle ball, dream about a gathering with family and friends for a picnic in the new Kalberer Pavilion (there are numerous things for kids to enjoy).
- While wandering around, for a little extra work out, you might try the exercise stations by the river at the back of the park.
- Once you are done having fun, exit up the steps onto the village green to the library and then head back to the bridge.
- As soon as you reach the other side turn right down the steps in front of St Christopher by the River church and then stroll back toward the river. You'll find a bench to relax for a while. You might spy the Blue Herons and other birds which nest along the river and see fishermen catching Steelhead trout which are abundant in the area.
- Due to the virus, the church is temporarily closed but you might say a prayer for HE is always present and listening.
- As you exit out the front heading back to your car, take a selfie with the church in the background (it is one of the most photographed churches in the Western Reserve).

Have a great day and maybe I'll see you there!

Friday, April 24, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

First and most importantly, please know that each of you and those you love are in my prayers daily. My appreciation and admiration for all you are doing to remain connected pastorally and spiritually with one another, and with the communities you continue to serve so faithfully, is without end. The lay and clergy leadership exhibited during this challenging time is encouraging and inspiring, and every day there are reports of the difference you are making within and beyond your congregations. How you are living through this pandemic and its consequences witnesses powerfully to the resurrection of Jesus.



With Governor DeWine's announcement of a three-phased "reopening" plan scheduled to begin on May 1, we are all imagining how it might inform our own decisions about our common life, work, and worship as the body of Christ. As the descriptions and directives of Phase 1 continue to emerge, it is clear that what we are currently doing is in accordance with both the federal and state guidelines. While religious institutions have been excluded from the ban on gatherings of a certain size in Ohio, our Christian responsibility to the safety and security of others mandates that we err on the side of caution and adhere to what medical and scientific professionals define as best practices.

Those of us who have family members who have contracted COVID-19, and that includes me, are painfully aware of how vulnerable all of us are to this virus, and that, moving forward, our vigilance must not be compromised, especially for the sake of those who are most susceptible. Thirty-five percent of communicants in The Episcopal Church are 65 years old or older. Two thirds are 50 or older. It would reasonably follow, therefore, that half of our communicants should continue to shelter in place at least through Phase 2. As well, schools and organized youth activities are directed to remain closed through Phase 1. With this guidance, and a clear understanding of our moral and gospel responsibility to act first for the benefit of others, all congregations of the Diocese of Ohio will continue the suspension of public worship until further notice.

Most of us had imagined, for some time at least, that on a particular date and time, perhaps of our own choosing, we would be able to gather as we have in the past and celebrate in a grateful and triumphant way our victory over, or at least survival of, the novel coronavirus. We are seeing now that our emergence, if not out of this, at least in to what lies ahead, will be less precise and more humble. As a society used to a high expectation of certainty, we are being challenged and called to live into greater ambiguity and at a yet undetermined cost.

I know how hard this is, particularly for those who yearn for the pastoral services of our faith and tradition. My father-in-law died on Good Friday, and not only were we unable to travel to be with him in his final days, we are unable to gather as family and friends and do those familiar things we have long relied upon to process our grief and affection. Likewise, I am in a number of conversations with couples planning to marry who are coming to terms with the fact that their celebration of matrimony will differ substantially from what they had for some time imagined. And we have candidates for Holy Orders whose ordinations will be unlike any they or we have experienced previously.

If we are to be realistic, these examples represent the tip of the iceberg. We will learn new ways to be the church and to carry out the practice of our faith, but whatever our reopening, it will not open up onto the landscape where we were before. To that end, we are continuing conversations with clergy and lay leaders about how we will move forward into this new reality, taking into account the complex pastoral, spiritual, liturgical, and financial implications with which it presents us. The power of evil would have us be anxious and disheartened, for that will leave us vulnerable to contention and division. But, we are Easter people, and this is a time to be energized by the prospect of new life. This is a moment in which we may well come to understand the promise of resurrection more as the first followers of Jesus did and replicate in our own lives the courageous faith of our spiritual forbearers.

As we move ahead, questions of when and how will continue to be explored in detail. Members of the Bishop's Staff have been working tirelessly to collect, interpret, and provide resources pertinent to all aspects of parochial life, relying

on the contributions of clergy and lay leaders from across the Diocese. The collaborative spirit of so many is a testament to the collegiality and strong fabric of the church. As we imagine gathering for worship, formation, and service in the months ahead, we will need to ask searching questions about whether we do so for those who can take the risks or wait until it is safe for all. Might small congregations begin sooner than large ones? Young ones sooner than older ones? In gathering for worship, how do we handle the Eucharistic elements, if at all? Can some partake and others not? Do we act as one body, or meet individual needs and desires? How do these values inform the parochial context? How do they play out in the diocesan context? How do our practices for gathering for worship, virtually and in person, inform our gathering for youth programming and summer camp, and vice versa? How do we explore the implications of potential changes in financial resources? What will it cost us in our giving and spending practices – as individuals, congregations, diocese, and wider church? How do we imagine the practice of ecclesial governance in each context?

Each of these questions, as do countless others, reflects the extraordinary opportunity given us in this time to reflect, redirect, and recommit ourselves to the life of corporate faith, being the body of Christ in the world. The Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Mission Area Deans, Trustees, and other groups have been engaging these discussions, and more such conversations are being planned. Most of these questions do not have simple, clear answers, and will take the combined wisdom and sacrifice of many to discern what is the next right thing. I have every confidence in God that we will find a variety of roads forward. There is rarely only one approach; God is not that stingy. The challenge is our willingness to walk together.

As we continue to explore the next steps, there are a number of things that warrant mention now.

Weddings

If it is necessary to celebrate Holy Matrimony at this time, please limit participants to the priest, the intendeds, and the two required witnesses. A subsequent celebration of the marriage may be held at a future date, if and when circumstances for such public worship allow, in the spirit of the celebration of a civil marriage. Please contact me with any questions.

Funerals

Please continue to abide by the direction that, if interment is necessary, only a minimal number of immediate family (ten or fewer, including the priest) may be present for a graveside service outside, observing current norms of distancing. A memorial celebration of life may be held at a future date, if and when circumstances for such public worship allow. Again, contact me with any questions.

Clergy Conference

For the annual Clergy Conference scheduled for May 12-14 at Geneva State Park, we will not gather in person. I ask all required participants (actively serving parochial clergy) please to hold that time open. We will not use all of it, but we are as yet uncertain how much time and when will be needed for virtual gathering. Additional information will be forthcoming. As we have found with other such meetings, more extra-parochial and retired clergy may be able to participate in a shorter, virtual format.

Ordinations

Candidates for Holy Orders who have completed their pre-ordination formation and been approved by the requisite ecclesial bodies will be ordained in the presence of the canonically required participants. We will do all we can to provide access for others to participate online, which may well make it possible for many to be a part of these important services who might previously not have been able.

Summer Camp

As with schools and organized youth activities that are currently closed, camp is not permitted in Phase 1. Whether the restrictions and procedures in Phase 2 will allow us to provide summer camp at Bellwether Farm this year is still unknown, but the summer camp and Bellwether staffs are preparing for all possibilities. As soon as details become more clear, registered campers, their families, and the wider public will be notified.

Bellwether Farm

Farm life continues unabated in terms of birthing lambs and kids, fattening pigs, collecting eggs, seeding and planting vegetables, and installing four new colonies of bees. Seventeen gallons of maple syrup have been processed and

SPECIAL LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

bottled for Chef Lonny's culinary creations. The dining hall remains shut down, as do all restaurants, but plans continue for when the facility will again be available for public use. It is possible to visit the farm for a hike in the woods and fields, respecting physical distancing and using masks, homemade or otherwise. Please call or email the Bellwether office in advance to let the staff know of your desire to visit. As soon as reopening is possible, and there is clarity under what conditions, all will be notified.

Trinity Commons

Trinity Commons and the Cathedral itself remain closed to the public. All diocesan staff are working from home with effective procedures for receipt of mail and email, and access to voicemail and necessary databases. Each office has established its own schedule for being in the building for limited and essential tasks, in collaboration with appropriate Cathedral and Commons staff.

Diocesan Convention

At this time, it is not imaginable that we will be able to gather as four hundred lay and clergy delegates and staff in one place (save perhaps First Energy Stadium or Progressive Field) in November. We are currently reviewing the canonical and secular requirements that pertain to Diocesan Convention and the governance of corporate entities in Ohio to explore how to accomplish our work virtually. The dates will remain Friday and Saturday, November 13 and 14. At this time, it is uncertain how much of which day will be needed.

We are not alone in facing the future of a church that is yet to be revealed. It has ever been thus; only now is it for us more starkly evident. Across The Episcopal Church, all of these challenges are being experienced and the corresponding opportunities being explored. In weekly Zoom conversations with the bishops of the fourteen dioceses of the Province of the Midwest (Province V), as a member of the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice, on wider church task forces and committees, and in the countless conversations with lay and clergy leaders that I and our staff colleagues engage in every week, we are finding generous companionship in sharing insights, resources, and encouragement. Throughout all of God's creation, from the sub-atomic to the intergalactic, loss always leads to newness. We can have confidence that this is a time when our vocation to be Christian comes alive in ways many of us have neither experienced nor ever expected. That indeed is the stuff of new life, what the resurrection of Jesus promises us, and that for which each of us is created in God's imagining.

I was reminded recently of Winston Churchill's Mansion House speech in November of 1942, after British forces had defeated Rommel, driving the German troops out of Egypt. In our battle against the coronavirus and its consequences, his words seem apt:

Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

Let us hope that this end of the beginning will lead us, in patience, humility, and courage, to the newness God dreams for us and God's church.

It is a singular privilege to be in this together with you.

With gratitude and affection,

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.
Bishop of Ohio



All Volunteering and
Food Pantry
donations are
suspended for May

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

Becky Everett

Greetings to all of you! I hope you are all surviving the shelter in place order we've all been dealing with for the last 6 weeks or so! Hang in there! God willing, soon we may see the light at the end of the tunnel!

As some of you may know, the river paid us an up close and personal visit a few weeks back, bringing some water and mud deposits into the basement of the church. I got a call from Mother Ann at 7:30 in the morning one Sunday in March letting me know about the flooding. This was the beginning of a very long, stressful, tiring day. If it hadn't been for a handful of wonderful, dedicated, hardworking individuals, we would have been in big trouble! My first call was to Charley Marston. He and Sue arrived shortly thereafter with portable sump pump, hose and squeegee in hand. My next call was to Mike Klinginsmith to see if he had a shop vacuum to help with water cleanup. He was quick to volunteer to go purchase a portable sump pump and would be there in less than an hour. My last call was to my husband, Chandler, asking him to find the shop vacuum in our basement and bring it down to the church. At the same time all of this was occurring, our sexton, Luis Calvo appeared, and we all went to work!



I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to these five individuals who dropped everything to come help! I truly don't know where we would be without them! I was reminded of just how much of a family we have at St. Christopher's! We can count on them come Hell or high water (pun intended)! After a few days of sorting out plumbing issues with one of the drains in the basement, running dehumidifiers constantly and monitoring one of the sump pumps, the water issue was resolved, but there was still a big cleanup and disinfecting job to be done. Luis and Lucy Calvo came to the rescue here, cleaning, disinfecting and putting all the Bargain Box items back in an orderly

fashion! My gratitude goes out to them as well!

On a different note, I am waiting to hear when our second phase of the landscaping project will be complete. Unfortunately, with the COVID 19 issue, the company is working at about 50-75% capacity, so we will continue to be patient. I am hoping to have all the planting and final mulch application done by the end of May.



I hope to be seeing all of you back at church as soon as it is safely possible to do so! St. Christopher's is not the same without all of your bright, smiling faces there on Sunday mornings! Until that joyous day occurs, please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. Be safe and stay healthy! God Bless!



January 22, 2020 St. Christopher-by-the-River Vestry Meeting Minutes

Elise Bennet, Acting Clerk

Present: Mother Ann Kidder, Elise Bennett, Becky Everett, Mary Holmes, Sean McMillion, Mary Murray, Jim Pender

The meeting came to order at 6:05 PM. Mother Ann opened the meeting with a prayer.

With regard to the Agenda, Mary Holmes asked if she could be added each time so as to give everyone an update on the long range planning progress. Ann agreed and will add it to future agendas.

The October 24th Vestry Minutes were unanimously approved after Jim Pender moved to approve them and Mary Holmes seconded it. The December 19th minutes were unanimously approved with a minor clarification. Elise Bennett moved to accept them and Becky Everett seconded.

The date of the February Vestry meeting falls on Ash Wednesday, February 26th, so alternate dates were suggested. It was agreed upon to meet Weds Feb 19th at the usual 6pm time.

Mother Ann mentioned that we received a gracious thank you note from Church of the Redeemer for the Jubilee Funds we sent them. She then gave us an update on the dishwasher “hunt” for the rectory. The goal is to find a company that sells, installs, removes/disposes and also repairs when necessary.

Becky reviewed the nominations for 2020 suggested by the Nominating Committee. They are: Mary Holmes, Charley Marston, and Judy Holmes for the Vestry and Peter Batcheller for NEMAC.

Becky recapped the furnace problems we have been having but have seemingly fixed.

Jim Pender gave an update on Stewardship and the need to find out the long term history of parishioners’ giving with a continuous record of the flow so that we can maintain continuity of giving and a profile of the donor. A discussion ensued as to what Servant Keeper can and cannot do. If it cannot give us a history of giving and profile of the donors then maybe we should research other products. We do know that it separates Membership from Donation History so it may be that it just will give us the information in a different format than we envisioned. Mary Zup will be asked to call them and get some answers. Mary Holmes will compare Mary Murray’s spreadsheet to what Servant Keeper has and will talk to both Mary Zup and John Irwin who has been educating himself on the software.

Mary Holmes spoke about our 5 year plan to enlarge the congregation and giving as well. We need a plan and programs while also getting old and new parishioners together. It is encouraging that the Sunday school numbers have increased so far with the new schedule. Mother Ann mentioned that the welcoming between parishioners also seems to be working well.

Mother Ann has contacted Bellwether Farms for the Vestry Retreat hopefully on Mar 13-14 or Mar 20-21. She has not had a confirmation yet on either date but will email us when she does.

Mary Murray reviewed the year-end financial report and 2020 budget she had just received from Tellerd. We ended up the year \$11,000 to “the good” even with some expenses that were higher than budgeted. Mary would like to vote on the 2020 budget at the next meeting in February so would welcome feedback after everyone reviews this report.

Mother Ann closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

Vestry

Charley Marston Senior Warden

Becky Everett Junior Warden

Tom Matthews Clerk

Mary Murray Treasurer

Class of 2022

Judy Holmes, Mary Holmes,
Charley Marston

Class of 2021

Elise Bennett, Tom Matthews,
Sean McMillion

Class of 2020

Becky Everett, Mary Murray,
James Pender

Northeast Mission Area Council

Representatives

Peter Batcheller, 2020

Linda Webb, 2020

A Message about Strategic Planning

Mary Holmes

By the time you read this, there will have passed six Sundays that we have not worshiped together. This time apart has included Holy Week and the celebration of Easter, our most important reminders of why we are Christians and how we should live as followers of Jesus. Thanks to Becky Everett, our Junior Warden, our carillon has rung out with song every Sunday and many of us have gathered (safely) to be cheered by its sound. And a special thanks to John and Yuri McElliott who are providing the music for our beautiful You Tube services.

The newsletter reminds us that our gifts and pledges are still needed to keep paying the bills, but I want to challenge everyone at this time to go digital! I am so happy I did this in 2019 because I don't need to think about how my contribution will be received. Waiting until the end of the year or until we can worship together again is not the best way to sustain our church.

Putting my contribution on line also helped me think hard about the work that St. Christopher's Parish does caring for each other and the larger world, the learning provided to us in worship and other ways, the spiritual home it gives us and our families. In reviewing my other expenses, the value of these intangible benefits seemed higher to me than I had realized. My challenge to everyone at this time is:

Go to www.stchrisbytheriver.org

Click on the "Giving" option at the top of the home page. Or "make a donation" if you are on a cell phone.

Set up your own personal Log In with your email and create a password

Go to online donation. From there you can set up a weekly or monthly donation amount. But before you select an amount, think about the future of St. Christopher's. Will we be a stronger, growing parish ready to welcome newcomers to our shared faith? Will we recommit ourselves to the on-going outreach of the Women's Guild and shelter volunteers and more? Will we be a place where children and adults alike can learn and grow in their faith journey? And will we rejoice in the opportunity to worship and sing together? Let your hopes and dreams for St. Christopher's inform your contribution.

We are so fortunate that with a computer, we can hear the scripture, listen to Mother Ann's sermons and enjoy music and art as we worship at home. Let us pray that when we can finally gather in our church, we will be stronger and more committed than ever to the faith that sustains us.



COVID-19 and the Reality of Easter

Rev. Deacon Lydia Bailey

Woven into this Easter season of 2020 are the overwhelming facts of COVID-19. This pandemic has opened us up, in varying degrees, to our inner poverty. No amount of health or wealth or technology or counseling can buffer us from the threats of this virus. We are not self-sufficient, nor have we ever been, if we want to get right down to it. This pandemic is good for bringing out such thought.

But there's an alternative theme which our activity at St. Christopher's is centered around. It's the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. Ultimately, isn't this the narrative we hinge our lives on? Not that we don't get unhinged at times, or sunk in despair over the reality of loss. But the narrative of Jesus Christ keeps drifting back as our deepest anchor – the power of love over death.

Even in COVID-19, we *know* somewhere deep inside, that kindness and compassion have the last word. That nothing is more lasting than learning to care for others; making things right for someone who is having a hard time; of living carefully with the natural world, amongst all those other creatures who are emerging as our human world is in quarantine. Isn't this what *finally* makes us happy and secure - this power of love?

Parishioners at St. Christopher's have been assimilating the way of Christ in how you've served at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry's Men's Shelter where I work. Loving your neighbor as yourself has played out in the most natural and essential ways...with laughter and "service with a smile" in the kitchen, with thoughtful support in the computer lab, with "shoulder to shoulder" respect in current events discussion groups, and in the most gentle give & take while doing an art project.

Now the shelter's volunteer program is on hold for who knows how long as we observe social distancing. But St. Christopher's parishioners have devised ways to continue service. Mary Holmes had access to fresh produce which she delivered direct to the shelter. One parishioner took it upon herself to sponsor a full meal for 400+ men; then another parishioner, at \$500 each. Cognizant that nutrition is more important than ever right now, this is what Jesus means to love our neighbors as ourselves. Many of you have emailed cards of support which I've relayed to shelter residents and staff; selfies which say you miss those shelter workers who are on the frontline, caring for those who are homeless.

The potential toll of the Coronavirus is not taken lightly at the shelter. Cuyahoga County, along with national agencies, stepped up with funding. They have offered off site locations for shelter residents to stay; offered gift cards for those who can leave the shelter and appropriately be reunited with their families. Office of Homeless Services and all the shelters in Cleveland (called the *Continuum of Care*) are working with the CDC on the best measures concerning living quarters and food preparation. Metro Health Hospital, with its nationally recognized Department for Infectious Diseases, is onsite doing Coronavirus testing of shelter residents weekly, and in touch with shelter staff daily on client surveillance. Care Alliance Health Care for the Homeless doctor & nursing teams are in the shelters and acting as outreach teams on the streets for those who are shelter resistant, working in tandem with all the other health providers.

As for me, I am working from home, coordinating ways volunteers are remotely helping the shelter. Volunteers have been making hundreds of face masks for clients and staff. Additionally, I've been temporarily assigned a new role: to assemble information from all those shelters on the Continuum of Care in Cuyahoga County- as it pertains to their COVID-19 efforts. Eight to ten providers are sending me updates which I combine into a document on a weekly basis, so their efforts can be yet more coordinated. I am happy to assist those who are already over-stretched in work.

This has offered me a humbling glimpse into the coordination of *care* in Cleveland. While sitting in on Zoom conference calls, or reading updates, I am witnessing a no-nonsense devotion of shelter workers and directors of agencies in their response to the pandemic. I wish I could convey to you all these small and large acts of professional caring! What it leaves me with is this: here too is resurrection life. Below the challenges of COVID-19, I see it is Christ's way of love that is having the final say-so.

I look forward to being back with you at church and at the shelter at some point in the future. Staying in touch with you is part of my well-being as I am fond of you. The well-being of those at LMM Men's Shelter is now tied to our own, and so I wanted to send you these updates. Won't it be a homecoming of sorts when St. Christopher's is once again at the shelter!

A Message from Church School to the children and their families

Peggy Reda

Mrs. Reda, Mrs. Matthews, Mrs. Cole and Miss Melanie miss you very much and we hope that you are practicing saying your prayers each day! We know that this time has been very different for you. We hope that you are having fun being with your families. Remember that God loves you very much and try to think about all the wonderful stories we learned that prove how great and strong He is!

We will see each other again soon in class and in church. In the meantime, here are some ways to continue learning about Jesus and God!

<https://www.childrensbulletins.com/covid19-childrens-activities-for-churches>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAB_EMvwUjs&t=396s

May God bless you and keep you safe. With love from your Church School teachers!

Flower Dedications



- March 22 Harry & Esther Larsen and Wilbur & Lois Holmes
by Tom & Mary Holmes
- March 29 Zeke VonDrasek by Charley & Sue Marston
- April 5 Health Care Professional who are addressing this
pandemic by The Matthews Family
- April 12 Joan Alburn & Arthur Hellman by Kate, Peter &
John Hellman
- April 19 My parents Jacob & Sylvia Palis by Linda Webb
- April 26 The Dempsey & Treco families by Di Treco



- 1 Finley McMillion
- 4 Larry Smith
- 5 Bridget Manning
Jean Ramsey
Denise Weber
- 6 Whit Champ
- 7 Jim Lamantia
- 8 Charlene Currutt
Lena DeBaz
Dan McMullen
- 9 Jennifer Blossom
- 11 Nancy Clark
- 13 Renee Kolecki
- 14 Whitney Cole
Gladys Loth
- 15 Tyler Mansfield
- 16 Russ Lincoln
- 17 Brandon Gray
- 19 Ryan Zittkowski
- 20 Stella Schmidt
- 22 Barb Scovil
- 26 Evelyn Smolik

Gathering to hear the Carillon.



Please keep up with
your pledge during this
shutdown

Even though we are not able to meet in person,
St. Christopher's depends on their members
donations during this time. Checks may be
mailed to PO Box 519, Gates Mills, 44040 or you
may give electronically through our website:

www.stchrisbytheriver.org

ST. CHRISTOPHER
BY-THE-RIVER
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
stchrisbytheriver.org

7601 Old Mill Rd.
PO Box 519
Gates Mills OH 44040

The Rev. Ann Kidder, Rector
stchris.motherann@gmail.com

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:00 a.m. Nursery Care for 10:15 service
10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II

Parish Office

Currently closed to visitors.
440-423-4451
stchrisbytheriver@gmail.com

May 2020 Newsletter

St. Christopher by-the-River



Please watch our web site for up to date information on when they will resume.

Opportunities to Study, Worship, and Chat Together Online

Thursday, 5:00 Evening Prayer has been meeting via Zoom. If you would like to join us, email me at stchris.motherann@gmail.com or call my cell phone at 207-664-4041 and I will send you an invitation and a link that will allow you to join the Evening Prayer service.

I would also like to offer a study opportunity (like the 9:00 Sunday Forum) and a virtual Coffee Hour (not necessarily on Sunday mornings). If you are interested contact me by email or cell phone (as above) and we will figure out a schedule that works for as many as possible.

Connect with us

- Carillon Bells Sundays 10:15 a.m.
- Thursday Evening prayer via Zoom
- Sunday Morning Prayer on [YouTube](#)



For Those Without the Ability to Join Us On-line

Now that the weather is becoming reasonably mild, I would love to come for a “dooryard call” so that we can see each other face to face (from six feet away) for a brief visit. Please do call me at 207-664-4041 and let me know if you would like me to visit. If you live in assisted living or a nursing home, I will not be allowed to enter until that restriction has been lifted by the Governor but I am always happy to chat with you and pray with you over the phone.