



# ST. CHRISTOPHER BY-THE-RIVER

## SEPTEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Last month I shared with all of you the story of running an “accidental half-marathon” with my daughter Margaret. At this point in our shared journey through the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that the “finish line” is still somewhere in the distant future. Perhaps it’s time for us to keep up our spirits as we settle into living our lives differently for the foreseeable future by noticing and celebrating the blessings that continue to fill our lives. Gratitude is one of the most powerful practices that we can develop to strengthen our spiritual lives and increase our resiliency for whatever comes our way in the future. Here are some gratitude highlights gathered from life during these past three months.

First, I am so grateful that no one in the parish has died during this time. I am grateful for the many ways that you are supporting each other through phone calls, cards and notes, prayers, and meeting any needs to the best of our ability. I am so very grateful that we have been able to find new ways to continue to serve residents of the Men’s Shelter, whose lives have also been profoundly impacted by the virus. “Welcome Home” boxes have been collected for those able to leave the shelter and move into their own apartments. It is just one of several ways that we have found to support and serve them in spite of the restrictions of physical distancing. We have partnered again with the Princess Basma Center in East Jerusalem in applying to the Diocese for a Global Missions Grant to support their work with families who have a disabled child. I am grateful for Zoom, which has made it possible for us to be together for Evening Prayer, Coffee Hour, and Adult Forums. I am grateful for Becky playing the bells, Deacon Lydia’s Gospel readings, John and Yuri McElliott’s music, and for John Irwin who does the audio-video editing for our Sunday worship every week. I am grateful for the reduction of virus cases in our County and our warm, dry weather which has allowed a return to in-person worship on our back lawn. (I am praying for a long, warm fall!)

I give thanks for being able to baptize Maxwell Yao Amefia in his backyard with family and friends (safely) gathered to celebrate such an important moment in his life as they promised to support his growth in the Christian faith. This summer I also received the transfer of membership into St. Christopher’s of his parents, Annemarie and Djifa Amefia. We welcome you to St. Christopher’s!

My 2020 calendar had begun with five weddings being scheduled over the course of the year. As the pandemic took hold and it became clear that we would not be done with it in a matter of a month or two, wedding dates shifted – and then shifted again. Each of the couples needed to decide what was best for their particular situation. In the end, two couples rescheduled their weddings for 2021 and three couples moved their dates one last time. Molly Nook and Stephen Hildebrandt were married on the front lawn of St. Christopher’s in a joyful celebration with family and friends. Two weeks later I traveled to Columbus to officiate at the wedding of Christine DeBaz and Zachary Splain on a beautiful roof-top pavilion. Both couples found safe ways to share this most important day in their lives with family and friends safely masked. In spite of weddings that did not exactly match what they had imagined, the sacrament was fully present and felt by all.

My gratitude includes what is yet to come: Peggy Reda’s plans for a “distance learning” Sunday School this fall. My plan to add a live Zoom (yes, you can come in your ‘jammies) “Family Worship” time. Continuing our Tuesday and Wednesday book groups. The Bishop’s recent letter regarding how we may return to receiving Holy Communion, which the Vestry and I will discuss prior to making definitive plans. The Vestry’s authorization of a feasibility study for a possible licensed Pre-K program at St. Christopher’s in the future.

God’s message to the prophet Isaiah: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” The practice of giving thanks for what has been, strengthens our trust in God for what is to come. We have had to let go of much that we loved yet God’s blessings continue to flow. God is, indeed, doing a “new thing”. May we look with open eyes and welcoming hearts for the blessings to come.

In Christ’s Love,

Ann+

## SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Charley Marston

This past Sunday morning, August 23, Sue and I joined 35 of our fellow parishioners for a beautiful service on the west lawn of the church. Under a partly cloudy sky and a perfect temperature, with the river and sparkling trees and garden in the background, Mother Ann, Lydia Bailey and John Irwin, accompanied by Yuri and John McElliott, delivered Morning Prayer. It was so good to be back participating in a live service. The service was so well received that we will continue with this 9:00 venue for at least the next two weeks. There is room for more people to safely spread out.

It is encouraging that Cuyahoga County has been downgraded from red but, although the risk of catching the virus is lower, we remain cautious so *remember to bring your own chair, prayer book and mask and register to attend.*



It has been a long-standing tradition that, as the school year begins, we have "Rally Sunday". While the cookout portion may not be a good idea, this year, a special service is possible. Weather permitting, we have picked September 13th as the date. The outside service will include extra special musical entertainment and maybe more. Details will be forthcoming as they are finalized so save the date and keep checking News and Notes about this and all of our activities.

This morning was such a pleasant experience, especially since we were back together with many of our friends. Hopefully, there will be many beautiful Sundays in September and October so we can continue this new tradition. This pandemic is still around and many of us are avoiding crowds, so even if you aren't able to attend in person, please join our Zoom activities and know you are in our thoughts and prayers.



### RALLY SUNDAY

SEP 13

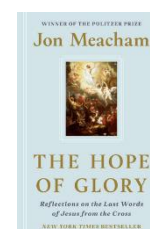
10:30 AM - OUTDOOR  
SERVICE

BYO Picnic lunch  
following the service



### ADULT FORUM

Starting Sep 8 & 9, we will be discussing the book *The Hope of Glory* by Jon Meacham. Please see the News and Notes or last page of this newsletter for Zoom meeting information.





## VESTRY MINUTES, JULY 2, 2020

Tom Matthews, Clerk

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

The meeting came to order at 6:08 PM. Mother Ann opened the meeting with a prayer.

Mother Ann followed with a review of the minutes from the June 6th meeting. Becky Everett moved they be approved. Mary Holmes seconded the motion. A vote was taken. Motion Carried

A financial review was the first order of business. The review was brief without Mary Murray, but overall the results for May and Year to Date are acceptable.

Mother Ann led a discussion for the first re-opening services planned on July the 5th. At the time of the meeting 26 attendees were planning to attend which represented 18 pews. Mother Ann also reviewed who will be leading the services July 7-11th and 13-27th and mentioned that we still need a greeter the 19th. She closed this topic that we will be closely monitoring the pandemic and will suspend services if cases spike.

Mary Holmes reviewed a possible standard report format that can be generated from Servant Keeper. With this format, we should be able to easily submit records for updates and additions. Mary then discussed a new service opportunity - the possibility of providing a high-quality pre-k program. All agreed that this is a very interesting opportunity for a variety of reasons. Jim Pender mentioned that we used to have a similar program in the 70's and reviewed many of the positive outcomes. Mother Ann followed this discussion with a review of the continued effort and progress being made for Virtual Sunday School ideas.

Mother Ann then updated the group on the plans for the 4th of July. Thanks to Charley Marston and the Klinginsmiths, the church is all set for decorations.

In the Junior Warden update. Becky Everett reported that the side yard project is progressing very well. Becky mentioned the brick wall by the fire lane is the next project and that she is in the process of getting quotes. Lastly, Becky mentioned options for the lamp post are being considered.

For the last topic of the meeting, Mother Ann mentioned that last year the Parrish sponsored a grant application for the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) which was awarded. With this, the AFEDJ inquired if the Parrish could sponsor a grant this year. Mary Holmes moved to support sponsoring, Becky Everett seconded, all agreed and the motion was passed.

The next Vestry meetings is planned for July 30th.

Mother Ann led a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45PM.

### 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

## COMPASSION AND THE STEPHEN MINISTRY

Kathy Pender, Leader

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Stephen Ministry continues to meet twice a month for ongoing supervision and education.

We have read many of Henri Nouwen's writings. He was a Dutch-born Catholic priest, professor, and pastor, who gained international renown as the author of over thirty books on the spiritual life. He is known as one of the great spiritual masters of our time since his death in 1996.

Nouwen speaks of Compassion throughout his writings and especially for those of us who are caregivers or helpers. This is something that has been stressed in our Stephen Ministry sessions as we meet and visit our Care Receivers. Here is one of Nouwen's daily meditations:

### COMPASSION

*"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."*

Henri Nouwen

Part of the training for Stephen Ministers is to begin to know themselves better.

We have done a lot of reading and writing in our Stephen Ministry sessions reflecting on our own feelings and spiritual growth. It is important that we understand our own reactions to situations and our own beliefs in order to be helpful Stephen Ministers to others. Part of our training is to practice these skills by acting out with practice exercises depicting different types of situations that might happen in real life. These might be talking to someone who might be dealing with the loss of a family member through death. It might be someone who is lonely and feels isolated and needs someone to talk to. Perhaps it is a person who just found out that they have a serious illness and are very anxious and fearful and would like a person to talk to and support them while they go through the illness.

As you can imagine one of the most important qualities and skills that a Stephen Minister must develop and innately understand is "compassion". The dictionary defines compassion literally as "suffering with another". The bible speaks of God's compassion---He had so much that He sent His one and only son to demonstrate what it means to be compassionate.

Reflect on Psalm 86:15 "But you Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

Compassion can be hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely and broken. It means we need to show our presence. As Stephen Ministers we have learned that we need to sit with our fellow man, not knowing what to say but knowing they need to be there, can bring life into a dying heart.

Is there someone who inspires and challenges you to become more compassionate? Reflect on what makes them different. Let yourself be challenged and follow their example. In these uncertain times we can all look forward to practicing some "compassion".

We need to walk with one another during these difficult and unstable times.



### 9-11AM Via Zoom

Kathy will inform the group if and when in person meetings will resume.

**September 14**

**October 5**

**October 19**

**November 2**

**November 16**

**December 7**

On Dec 14 at 11:30 AM there will be a Christmas Lunch and Gathering at Kathy's home.

One of my fondest memories of childhood was spending time with my grandmother, listening to the stories of her time growing up. I loved to sit and listen and watch her eyes light up as she told me stories about her parents, siblings and cousins. By far, the most infamous story was about the time she and her brother drove the family car into the potato patch one night when her parents were out. In fact, I remember going to that farm in Willoughby, seeing the property that used to be hers, and imagining that car abandoned in the potato patch.

This gift of tale-telling as a person enters the golden years helps a person to grow older gracefully as he/she passes on personal history, family history, regional history, and world history to the upcoming generations. More often than not, however, the younger generation doesn't seek these answers from the older generation. They don't understand that older people could be guides, and they could learn something from them. Younger people miss the clues to the past which the elderly possess. They don't take the time to hear why things happened the way they have. They miss out on these nuggets of wisdom.

In her book, The Gift of Years, Joan Chittister calls on the older generation to pass on these stories, giving the younger generation these traditions, memories and character. The stories handed down tell us who we are and where we came from, forming a bridge between both the past and the future. Without these stories/influences, this history is lost forever.

When the elderly are asked to share these stories, we gain more meaning from them. These life lessons make us stronger and wiser as they bind us together. When the elderly are allowed to be the tale-bearers, they become the proof of the authenticity of the past. When we don't listen, then we have to learn the hard way – by ourselves.

*"The burden of tale-telling is to think that by avoiding our responsibility to be part of the living history we will stay forever young. By not telling those who follow us the stories of what it took to get here, we fail the harvest of our own life and the plowing day of theirs. The blessing that comes with tale-telling is the awareness that we have now done our duty to life. We have distilled our experiences to the point that they can become useful to someone younger."*

-Joan Chittister

## Flower Dedications

- August 2 Laura & Ed Cole and Dove & Harvey Schluter and Pam Kunkemueller by Randy, Debbie & Whitney Cole
- August 9 The Kloppenburg & Conley Families by Sally Conley
- August 16 Our Parent, Bill & Marie Cicerello and John & Helen Stanislaw
- August 23 Cora Belle Battles by Jane & Ramon Battles, Sheila Bates by Stuart Bates and Family
- August 30 Paul & Ann Marie and Bill & Jackie by Tom & Paulette Matthews



1 Betty Tone  
3 Paulette Matthews  
Stacey Miscko  
4 Debbie Cole  
5 Ron Miscko  
7 Lily Klinginsmith  
Conrad Selnick  
8 Alison Selman

13 Samuel Mitchell  
14 Deborah Brown  
15 Fran Sarkisian  
17 Peter Holmes  
18 Christine DeBaz  
Mary Holmes  
19 Larry Bennett  
Andrew Clark

20 Evin McMullen  
21 Toly Gmandt  
Jan Tuttle  
25 Melanie Reda  
29 Hudson Champ

Dear St. Christopher's Family,

How I have missed you all! I hope this letter finds you still coping and looking forward to the time when we can safely be together and even hug one another. In this difficult and very challenging time let us remind each other that we are not alone, that God is with us and offering strength and joy. I have found joy and gratitude in moments that I might have missed were I not so desperate for the light and love sometimes.

We cannot meet for Church School yet, but Mother Ann and I would like to continue our lessons as much as possible. So, we will mail envelopes of activity sheets and other fun suggestions that will help keep our faith alive and well for us all. We hope you enjoy the packets that will follow our curriculum, as much as possible. They should come in the mail about once a month, beginning in September.

Our "Weaving God's Promises" curriculum continues in its rotation. Our theme this year is "Weaving Our Faith" with our stories including the Garden of Eden, Cain & Abel, Tower of Babel, the Adventures of Abraham, the Life of Jesus: Birth, Miracles, and the Parables. We will also remind ourselves of the Seasons of the Church. It is easy to forget the seasons as we have lost much of the rhythm of our lives, but there will be fun reminders!!

Parents and grandparents, you are, of course, welcome to participate in our lessons!

If you are interested in receiving a monthly packet, please email me at [prseverin@aol.com](mailto:prseverin@aol.com) with the name, age and address of your child(ren).

May God bless you and embrace you with all the love that is never-ending!

## Bargain Box Canceled

Both the SEP 2020 *and* the APRIL 2021 Bargain Boxes have been canceled

## Kindly keep up with your pledge during this shutdown

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](http://www.stchrisbytheriver.org)

Help us collect housewarming packages which are given to shelter residents who have reached their goal of leaving the shelter and moving into their own apartments. In order to help with this transition, they need the following items, purchased new:

laundry soap	can openers
dish soap	bar soap/body wash
cleanser	shampoo
spray cleaner	toothpaste/tooth brush
paper towels	toilet paper
deodorant	plastic containers
dish towels	dish rags

Please place any donated items (in boxes or bags) into the brown storage container, marked Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, next to the side door of the church. Thank you for your generosity and help with this important ministry! God Bless you all!

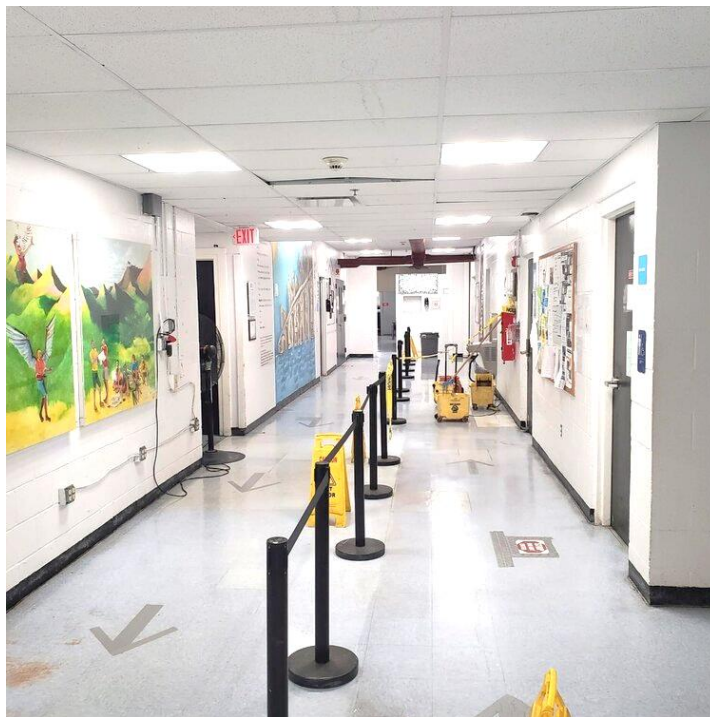


## New COVID protocols at the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside

[Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry](#) (LMM) has operated the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside since 2005. We are the largest Shelter in the State of Ohio, typically serving 400 people a night and 3400 unique individuals per year. Handling crises is not new in our line of work: homelessness itself is a crisis. Over the years we have witnessed recessions, housing bubbles burst, high unemployment rates. However, we have been confronted with a new and unknown threat to pile onto an already vulnerable population – Covid19. This disease has affected every person around the globe. However, those who are homeless are [more likely to be infected and die from this disease](#).

In late March, the entire homeless services [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC) in Cuyahoga County rose to the crisis of coronavirus and immediately put plans into action. The [Office of Homeless Services](#) (OHS) and [The Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) quickly stepped in and helped us launch short term solutions, including gift cards to assist in diverting people from congregate shelters to friends and family. Additionally, three hotels have been operating as satellite shelters in effort to provide necessary social distancing not possible in a full congregate shelter. Since the end of March 2020, we have reduced the LMM Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside census by 65%, and served over 400 unduplicated people in hotel rooms.

In addition to hotels, many changes in Shelter operations have been implemented including cordoning off hallways to allow six-foot distance, installing Plexiglas shields at the front desk and in the shuttle bus, scheduled hand-washing reminders, ongoing sanitation of surfaces. We even took down a chain-link fence which separated the parking lot of the Shelter and our greenspace on our adjoining side lot to encourage more free movement outside. Additionally, we provide masks for all clients and staff at the Shelter and hotels. The community has really come together to help during this time. County Emergency Response Department, volunteer ["Sewing Ladies"](#), [United Way](#), [The Cleveland Foundation](#) and corporate



America, [Yellow Cake](#) and [Case Western Reserve University](#) (to name a few) all stepped up with fabric and disposable mask donations for clients and staff.

Distance and masks are critical to combat the spread of this disease. Since March, a dedicated team of MetroHealth staff have partnered with LMM and other homeless services providers to assist in strategy, screening, and testing of Shelter staff and clients. Metro has been vital as a partner and continues to share up-to-date Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations and guidelines and is a continued presence in partnering with LMM to risk stratify to reduce transmission of the virus in our Shelters.

Because of the virus and associated economic fallout, homelessness is projected to increase 40-50% according to a [Columbia University study](#). CARES Act funding has provided opportunities for solutions and innovation for serving those who are homeless. Despite the predictions of huge increases in homelessness, we remain committed to serve those in need. Even in the midst of Covid, we continue to provide a shelter bed to anyone who presents for one.

This piece was written for the Campus District e-news by Erin Kray, Associate Director of Housing and Shelter at the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside

ST. CHRISTOPHER  
BY-THE-RIVER  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
[www.stchrisbytheriver.org](http://www.stchrisbytheriver.org)

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

The Rev. Ann Kidder, Rector  
[stchris.motherann@gmail.com](mailto:stchris.motherann@gmail.com)

**Sunday Services**

Outdoor Service at 9AM.  
Find our weekly worship on  
[YouTube](#).

**Parish Office**

Currently closed to visitors.  
440-423-4451  
[stchrisbytheriver@gmail.com](mailto:stchrisbytheriver@gmail.com)

September 2020 Newsletter

## St. Christopher by-the-River

### Opportunities to Study, Worship, and Chat Together

#### **OUTDOOR SERVICE! SUNDAYS at 9AM**

August 30, September 6, 20, 27

**RALLY SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13**

Outdoor Worship at 10:30AM  
Followed by a BYO Picnic Lunch

- You must make a reservation to attend (40 spots available)
- You must make new reservations for EACH Sunday
- Bring your own chair and Prayer Book
- Wear a mask
- Keep 6 Feet apart



#### **Evening Prayer**

*Thursdays, 5:00*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7573658691>

#### **Adult Forum**

*Tuesdays, 10:00 AM*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87135403656?pwd=TVNmS1ZIN2J4OFd0K0gxOFhvSHdDZz09>

*Wednesdays, 9:00 AM*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89570520435?pwd=MzBBRHIPVDFTRUFoVUdhRFUybltQT09>

#### **Coffee (Half) Hour**

*Sundays, 11:30 AM*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87998417516?pwd=ZS80OWVsMnNsQlItRVhkQWJxSmk5UT09>