



ST. CHRISTOPHER BY-THE-RIVER

MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Pandemic Reflections

The April 18 NY Times included a special section titled, “Transformation: How the pandemic birthed an awakening for many Americans.” Introducing the special section the authors wrote: *“Certain moments in life have the power to shift our core sense of being. The death of a parent. The birth of a child. An incurable disease diagnosis. The coronavirus pandemic and all it has wrought is such a moment. Everyone knows someone who got sick or died or lost a job. Everyone has a personal ‘before’ and ‘after’. It has been a collective near-death experience, for those lucky enough to survive. People have found themselves close to life’s deepest questions, those forced by an apocalypse. Questions about how we live, how we suffer, and how we make meaning of our short time here on this earth. Through it all, the world has not stopped. The killing of George Floyd. The Capitol siege. More mass shootings. For some, facing trauma feels too hard. Others have found unexpected resilience and courage, rage or stillness. Transformation was forced on some, and for others it was chosen. For many, the suffering of this past year has birthed an awakening. The questions of how we have changed will be with us in the months, and years, ahead. The process of reflection is just beginning. Where it takes us remains to be seen.”*

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded of a host of emotions. When the pandemic struck there was so much to learn. We had to renegotiate every task that previously required we leave our home space. In the face of an unknown virus that threatened our lives, we got in touch with a vast capacity for resourcefulness and creativity. Even Luddites, like me, learned how to zoom for work and to share meals with loved ones far away. We gave generously to food banks, worshiped via YouTube, and took on the task of sewing masks and checking on isolated neighbors.

But as we experienced the virus’ deadly consequences and adjusted to months of physical distancing and masking, we found ourselves living a frustrating “groundhog day”existence. In a recent article in the NY Times, the psychologist Adam Grant, gave this way of living a name, calling it “*languishing*”. Grant says, “Languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness. It feels as if you’re muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield. And it might be the dominant emotion of 2021.” Given this reality it’s no wonder we long to restore connection with others.

One of my spiritual guides, Fr. Richard Rohr, helps me put these “apocalyptic” times in a framework of faith, writing, “It’s not the end of the world. Listen closely, it’s the end of worlds—our worlds that we have created. It’s not a threat. It’s an invitation to depth. It’s what it takes to wake people up to the real, the lasting, to what matters.” The Greek word for “revelation” is *apokalypsis*, which is often misunderstood as “end times”. The actual meaning is an *unveiling* or disclosure of deeper truth and meaning. In other words, the past year may feel like “end times”, not because the world is actually ending, but because our sense of normalcy and control has been so upended. There is no doubt that the devastating impact of the coronavirus coupled with other events beyond our control, have shaken our foundations, including our faith.

But, it’s not only the difficult truths about unwanted limits on our freedom that have been unveiled, but also the hopeful truths. While the temptation to despair or just to return to “normal” is great, the gospel writers tell us, to take heart even in the midst of wars and earthquakes, “All this is only the beginning of birthpangs.” (Matt 24:8) The promise of apocalypse is new life, not death.

In this Easter season we are invited to receive and trust the hope and promise that God offers us in these times.” Scripture reveals that in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, God has definitively removed the veil and shown the world what God’s reign actually looks like. A giving away of self that answers the violence and self-centeredness of the world with forgiveness. A power made perfect in weakness, suffering evil to disarm and swallow it up in the ever-greater divine love.

As we come back to worship together outdoors, we give thanks for more and more of us receiving vaccines and that our continuing disciplines of masks and social distancing are having a positive impact in lowering the spread of new infections. We maintain these disciplines as a witness of our faith, a means to care for our neighbors until the day comes when epidemiologists tell us they are no longer needed. As we imitate Jesus in loving God and our neighbors, we will be empowered by his Spirit to embody his prayer that “God’s kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven.”

Yours in this Easter promise,
Fr. Richard.

VESTRY MINUTES

-Tom Matthews

MARCH 24, 2021

Present: Father Richard Israel, Elise Bennett, Charley Marston, Judy Holmes, Becky Everett, Mary Holmes, Sandra Redmond, Ron Lee, Tom Matthews

The meeting came to order at 5:35 pm. Father Rich opened the meeting with a prayer.

Review and approval of the February 25th and 28th meeting minutes was the first order of business. For the minutes from the February 25th meeting, Becky E. moved to approve the provided draft, Elise B. seconded, a vote was taken and the motion passed. For the minutes from the February 28th meeting, Becky E. moved to approve and Elise B. seconded, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

A review of the budget results through February was the next order of business. Overall, the results are acceptable in part due to the 2020 pledge payments that rolled over into 2021 as well as good progress of receipts of 2021 pledges. Mary Holmes moved to receive the Financial report, Charley seconded, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

The third order of business was an update from the Pre-K Investigative Task Force from Mary Holmes. Mary reviewed the members of the Task Force and the progress they have made over the last few months. She mentioned that after all of their work and progress that indicated a general positive support for the Pre-K school proposal, the group thought it best to confirm the fundamentals that prompted the Pre-K proposal - primarily that there is need for the school and that there will be sufficient market demand. To facilitate this confirmation, the team is conducting a survey in the surrounding community. Also, the group wanted to confirm consensus from the Parrish and related key stakeholders, via a survey, that the required space sharing and facility modifications align with the churches mission and plans.

Resuming In-Person Worship, was the next order of business. Following guidance from Bishop Hollingsworth, Father Richard and the Wardens provided the following proposal for resuming in-person worship.

Beginning April 18, 2021 (3rd Sunday of Easter) Father Richard and the Wardens propose resuming in-person Sunday worship outdoors (weather permitting). Although it is likely that Cuyahoga County will still be at Public Emergency Level 3 (Red) at that time, we believe that with the increase in numbers of people being vaccinated we can safely return to outdoor worship using guidelines recommended by the Diocese of Ohio:

- o Wearing of masks
- o Physical distancing
- o Sanitizing
- o Restrictions regarding singing by congregation or soloists
- o No sharing or distribution of food
- o Contact tracing

In addition, we will require those attending to register in advance via Flocknote, bring their own chairs, and Prayer Books.

A weekly virtual worship service will continue to be offered for those who are not comfortable with returning to in person worship and in case of inclement weather that does not allow for outdoor worship.

Upon review, all agreed the provided proposals recommendations and requirements was sufficient for starting up in-person services. The group then worked through necessary steps and required processes and decided that April 18th made sense for the first outdoor service. Based on the discussion and review Ron L. moved to proceed, Sandra R. seconded, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

Becky E. provided a review of ChurchNext and proposed that with the recent advancements in technologies and societal skills with tele learning that ChurchNext may be better positioned for adoption. The group agreed. Becky will provide a link for the Vestry to review for further discussion at a later meeting.

Father Rich then reinforced Vestry outreach to the parish to assist with catching up/checking in with parishioners as well as assisting with communication of the changes such as the return to worship.

Charley M. noted that we will have palm crosses available for pick up for Palm Sunday and reminded the Vestry to consider and provide proposals for the dedication for the Historical Marker

Tom M. recommended we add a donation link to the newsletter to facilitate easier donations.

The next Vestry meeting will be April 28th at 5:30pm. Father Rich then led a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53PM.

Vestry

Charley Marston Senior Warden
Becky Everett Junior Warden
Tom Matthews Clerk
Mary Murray Treasurer

Class of 2023

Becky Everett, Ronald Lee,
Sandra Redmond

Class of 2022

Judy Holmes, Mary Holmes,
Charley Marston

Class of 2021

Elise Bennett, Tom Matthews,
Sean McMillion

Northeast Mission Area Council
Representative

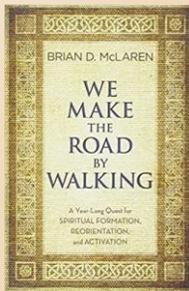
Laura Cotton, 2021

JUNIOR WARDEN -Becky Everett

I would like to thank all of you who took the time to complete the survey that was sent out regarding the idea of establishing a Pre-K here at St. Christopher's. Your honest and thoughtful responses were very helpful to the Task Force as we determined what the next steps should be with regard to this endeavor. The information we received from the church survey, a village survey and hours of research and discussion has helped us to reach our recommendation to the Vestry. At this time, the Task Force has concluded that it is not in the best interest of the church to proceed any further with the idea of a Pre-K at St. Christopher's. It is too big of a commitment for the church to take on. Having made that determination, the Task Force has recommended that the Vestry consider the alternative service ideas that the survey respondents offered. Please stay tuned for further information on this, as we have definitely felt the energy which has been generated by this process. We look forward to discovering how St. Christopher's will continue to seek new roles in giving service to the world around us!

We Make the Road by Walking

by Brian McLaren



Each week's reading is very short (3-5 pages), plus two or three Scripture passages. Please read both the chapter and the Scripture passages. At the end of each reading are some suggested questions for meditation/discussion. Each

week is a separate "stand alone" reading so if you miss a week you can easily join in when you return by doing the reading for that week.

May 4	Chapter 37: The Uprising of Partnership
May 11	Chapter 38: The Uprising of Stewardship
May 18	Chapter 39: Whatever the Hardship, Keep Rising Up!
May 25	Chapter 40: The Spirit is Moving! (Pentecost Sunday)

FLOWER DEDICATIONS APRIL 2021

In loving memory of:

- Joan, Arthur, and Garrettson Hellman by Peter, Sunnie & Whitney Hellman
- Don & Madeleine Mitchell and Larry Doerr and Jean Doerr by Kathi & Jim Mitchell
- William M. G. Fletcher and Barbara Ames Fletcher by Ted Fletcher & Ann Kidder
- J Robert & Joan K Cotton and in celebration of their first great grandchild, Henry Cole DiSalle by Laura Cotton



How Can You Donate Online?

Simply go to our website

www.stchrisbytheriver.org!

Click the Donate button!



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

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

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

440-423-4451
stchrisbytheriver@gmail.com

Sunday Services

10 AM Outdoors, see below.
Find our weekly worship on [YouTube](#).

Parish Office

Staffed T-W-TH 8:30-2:30

May 2021 Newsletter

During Mother Ann's sabbatical, the Rev. Richard Israel is serving as St. Christopher's sabbatical priest. He can be contacted by email at stchris.fatherrich@gmail.com.

If you are in need of pastoral care, please call Charley Marston (Senior Warden), Becky Everett (Junior Warden), or the parish office.

St. Christopher by-the-River

All recorded services may be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu_QqAANDzOu-Bwf8gh-t6Q



IN PERSON
SUNDAYS at 10 AM
Weather Permitting

Determination will be made each Thursday prior to sending the News & Notes

RSVP from News & Notes, on our [website](#), or call Becky Everett.
Wear masks, Social Distance, Bring your own chair & Prayer book.

Faith & Fellowship

The following are offered via Zoom:

- [Book Group](#) Tuesday 10:00 AM
- [Thursday Evening](#) Prayer 5:00 PM
- [Thursday Evening](#) Fellowship 5:30 PM
- Sunday morning [Family Worship](#) 12:00 PM



Mtg Dates
May 17, 24
June 14
June 28



May 11 & 25
6:00 PM
Zoom

Please contact Kathy Pender for more information or to register and receive the link.
(440-463-7378)
kp@momshrink.com