

# Cluster Chronicle

*"A community of Episcopal congregations sharing the love and power of the Risen Christ in our communities through worship, evangelization and apostolic service."*

## *If there be any virtue*

Paul exhorted the Philippians to rejoice, think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure and of good report, and if there be any virtue---anything to praise---praise it. A national day of praise was established by President Lincoln in 1863 the midst of the death and destruction of the Civil War.

He invited fellow citizens "to observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father and...commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

The proclamation (authored by Secretary of State William Seward) pointed out that "wealth and strength" diverted from industry to national defense hadn't stopped "the plough, the shuttle or the ship". He said the country had every reason to expect "new vigor and strength, and to grow in size and population with a large increase of freedom". He credits the Most High God for these gracious gifts and while we are being punished for our sins, "nevertheless remembers mercy".

Almost 160 years later, November 2021, what would a contemporary proclamation of thanksgiving sound like? War, disease, moral decay, "lamentable civil strife," geographical and political division still produce widows, orphans, mourners, sufferers and the homeless the world over. Can America still claim to be vigorous, strong, productive and progressive?

And will Americans celebrating Thanksgiving 160 years from now be able to say that we, in our time, increased freedom for all? That we lived and taught and supported peace, harmony, tranquility and unity? If there be any virtue---Truth, Honesty, Justice, Purity---praise it, stand up for it, advance it, live and teach it and every day give thanks for a merciful God.



## October retrospective



*Homecoming Sundays* were celebrated by Our Saviour and Epiphany Oct. 3 and 10 respectively, with special thanks for the gift of community. Attendance was good and worship and coffee hours full of festivity and fellowship. Fr. Derrick's pictures of some of the highlights capture the essence of the occasions.

*Trails and Treats* was a community collaboration including Epiphany and the Urbana United Methodist Church. Volunteers distributed candy to over 1000 participants at Melvin Miller Park October 30. Sunday School info and an invitation to Carols, Candles and Cocoa were also available. Photos below record Diane Cummings, Paddy Barr, Jamie Fetz and Mary Neal Miller preparing candy, Heather Angus giving out treats and Jamie and Mari Fetz sharing candy and appreciating the technique of a red-nosed volunteer. Thanks to donors of cash and candy, bag stuffers and treat passers! Photos courtesy of Fr. Derrick.





## *Til we meet again*

It was a good day in the neighborhood when the Ed and Nancy Hardin moved to Urbana. Married just two years, they had left everything familiar to begin Ed's new position with United Feeds. "God was in charge," Nancy recalls. Their son John was a week old when they had a warm welcome from the Church of the Epiphany. Nancy remembers, "Doors kept opening, and I often felt the leading of the Spirit."

Nancy had trained as a teacher, taught at an elementary school near her home in Illinois and did a one-year stint at the American Community School in London, England. While there, she received regular epistles from Eddy Hardin, a young Purdue University graduate associated with an Iowa feed and grain firm. The friendship flourished and Ed and Nancy were married in 1981.

Ed's farm background, knowledge, congenial nature and sense of humor made him a good fit for United Feeds. Nancy was now mother of two and a special needs teacher and those years demanded hard work and tested faith. But the Hardins and Epiphany supported each other.

Ed served as vestryman, senior and junior warden, Community Meal coordinator and founder and trustee of the Champaign County Youth Choir. Nancy, inspired "to do something more for the church," contacted Clinical Pastoral Education professionals about preparing for a chaplaincy. But felt an inner call to the priesthood.

After months of agonizing debate, study, reflection and encouragement from her family, Nancy opened door number 3 which led to the priesthood *and* a chaplaincy. Eleven arduous, prayer-filled years later, she humbly and joyfully received Holy Orders. Rev. Nancy served as parish priest for Trinity Church in Troy, supply priest for the Cluster and chaplain of Mercy Memorial Hospital and McAuley Center.

Doors opened, Nancy said. But it took courage to walk through. Nancy and Ed have sought God's will and responded with faith, competence and integrity. Ed's stroke was an extra-curricular event and required every bit of their stamina and faith. Age and health and a beloved granddaughter led the Hardins to seek a retirement home closer to Paul's family in Delaware. A suitable property was not available there so they opted for Marysville, a short 17-mile drive to Nora Ann's house. Godspeed Ed and Nancy, "May the Lord watch between we and thee, while we are absent one from another."



## *A new vision of truth*

Somebody said it's not what you read but what you re-read that is revealing. An obsessive reader and re-reader, I had, at an early age, all but memorized *Little Women* and other books of that genre. A few of those childhood stories are still on my library shelves---old and dear friends---and I still read them.

One such volume, *Lovey Mary* by Alice Hegan Rice, belonged to my mother. Published in 1903, the small, dark green, hard cover shows use. An inexpensive book but interior pages are fine quality paper, ivory with age, well designed with wide margins, a dignified font and 17 full-page, delicate, black-line drawings by an unnamed illustrator.

It represents a popular genre of unsophisticated moral literature reminiscent of the priceless McGuffey Readers. Each story was an example of the ideal where wrongs are righted, the innocent avenged, the good rewarded, the bad punished, forgiven and redeemed.



*Lovey Mary runs away with Tommy*

Desperate for love, the title character, 13-year-old Lovey Mary, has run away from a city orphanage, taking a little boy she is devoted to. They hide away with an impoverished, but and cheerful widow living on the fringe of the city in a bleak district of decaying cottages with a view of a railroad track. It shelters several generations of the destitute, working

poor and dependents.

Mary meets Miss Viny, whose stunning expanse of flowers and herbs contrasts magnificently with the blighted neighborhood. Miss Viny is a Christian with a green thumb and she introduces Mary to her life's work as representatives of the organized church.

"This here is a denominational garden. I have every congregation I ever heard of planted in it, said Miss Viny. I've got no favorite bed---I care for 'em all alike. When you come to think of it, the same rule holds good in startin' a garden as does in startin' a church.

"You've got to study what sort of soil you have to work with, then sum up all the things you'll have to fight against. Next you choose what flowers are going to hold what places. That's mighty important in churches, too, isn't it? Then you go to planting---the thicker the better, for in both you've got to allow for some falling off. After that you must take good care of what you've got and be sure to plant something new each year.

"Lovey Mary followed Miss Viny down the winding path where new beauty awaited at every turn. These are the Baptists, said Miss Viny waving toward a bed of heliotrope and flags. They want lots of water; like to be wet clean through.

"These geraniums are Methodist; they need lots of encouragement in the way of sun and water. Phlox are Methodist, too; no set color, easy to grow, hardy and vigorous. Needs fresh soil every few years.

"Are there any Presbyterians?" asked Lovey Mary. Yes, indeed. They are a good, old reliable bed. Look at those roses and tiger-lilies and dahlias. They knew what they were going to be before they started to grow and they'll keep on being what they are to the very end.

"Miss Viny crossed the garden and stopped before a bed of stately lilies and azaleas. "These are the Episcopalians, she explained. tony, reverent and poetical. Lilies hate to be disturbed, they like some shade and there's nothing can touch them when it comes to beauty. All the other beds are proud of them. Why look at weddings and funerals. Don't we call on Episcopalians and lilies on those occasions?



"And here, said Miss Viny, are the Unitarians. You may be surprised to see them here along with the orthodox churches, but if the sun and rain don't make any distinction, I don't see what right I have to put them on the other side of the fence. The first ones here are sweet-william, as rich in bloom as the Unitarian is in good works, constantly sowing themselves and every plant putting out a flower.

"Aren't there any Catholics?" asked Lovey Mary. Of course, don't you see those hollyhocks and snowballs and lilacs? They cover a lot of space and bring cheer and brightness to the whole garden when it needs it most. And those ferns over in that corner are Quakers, they like coolness and shade and quiet and are just the same all year round.

"Now these herbs---lemon verbena, sage, mint, lavender---are all true Christians. Just by being touched they give out an influence that makes the whole world a sweeter place. It's a wonder isn't it? All sort of plants and all sorts of Christians: some stand for sunshine, some for shade, some for beauty, some for use.

But there's one thing that all flowers have to fear and that's the canker-worm, Hate. If it once gets hold, no matter how good and strong that plant may be, it eats right down to the heart.

"How do you get it out, Miss Viny?" pursued Lovey Mary. Prayer and perseverance. If the



*"This here's a denominational garden."*

Christian will do his part, God'll do his. Like what I'm trying to do for my flowers, God does for his churches. The sun, which answers to the Spirit, shines on all and the rain, which answers to God's mercy, falls on all. I just watch and plan for them, shelter and love them and, if they do their part, they're bound to grow."

Such fiction is considered hokey literature, but it feeds our hunger for justice and, as someone recently said, "heaven help us if ordinary people cease to feel that appetite for the ideal. It may never be realized but must be the goal---the gospel---this vision of the world that ought to be."

## *Mark your calendars for December services*

### **Advent Worship and Enrichment Series based on Handel's Messiah**

Wed., December 1, 8 and 15 the Messiah Lutheran Church in Urbana will co-sponsor a free Advent series to help us prepare for the annual celebration of Christ's birth! Here's the schedule for each date:

6-6:45 p.m.---a simple meal (optional)

7-8 p.m.---meditative worship and discussion on Handel's Messiah.

Each week we will listen to selections from the Messiah and explore how this music can help us prepare for the Christ Child, the history of the Messiah and the scripture on which selections are based. Sign-up information will be shared soon.

### **Christmas in the Village, December 11**

Our Saviour will participate in the traditional community-wide holiday event. Our Saviour vestry is exploring ways to be involved, so please share your ideas. We'll also welcome your help.

### **Christmas Eve Celebrations**

Come experience the joy of Christ's birth at one of our festive Christmas Eve services:

The Church of Our Saviour, Mechanicsburg, 5p.m.

The Church of the Epiphany, Urbana, 7:30 p.m.

Musical selections will be offered thirty minutes prior to each service. All are encouraged to come early. More details to be released soon.

## *“The best laid schemes of mice and men...”*

...gang aft a-gley,” declared Scottish poet Robert Burns in his poem *To a Mouse*. Epiphany volunteers will verify that plans did go astray (but no mice were involved) for the October 20 Community Meal. They regret that, once again, food supplies were insufficient, and the committee had to close early.

However, 40 hearty suppers of lasagna, garlic bread, pickles and one of Paddy Barr’s homemade cookies went home with guests with heartfelt apologies to those turned away. They were urged to come again at 5 o’clock for the November 17 meal, the third Wednesday of the month.

The October food was prepared by Mercy Memorial Hospital, one of the program’s longest and most generous partners. We thank Bob Jenkins of the hospital staff for delivering the still-warm meals and Sharon Applegate, Paddy Barr, Laura Milton and Mary Neal Miller for greeting guests who drove up to the Kenton Street entrance and relaying to them the requested number of boxed meals.

The unseasonably warm and sunny evening made socializing with supper guests especially pleasant. Special thanks to Joyce who permitted us to share a picture of her children. May God bless the food, those who consume it and those who provide and prepare.



*Joyce’s family smiles in anticipation of a Community Meal*



*Sharon bags Paddy’s homemade cookies.*



*Paddy in the Pink poses with daughter Jackie who came by after her workout.*



*Laura, left, and Mary Neal fill an order.*





## *Sunny and chili with cornbread*

Ninety 90 folks savored hot chili and cornbread served during Our Saviour's Community Meal October 27. Fruit, cookies and chocolate brownies a la Kay Keller rounded off the hearty, seasonal supper. The chili entrée was provided by representatives of the Champaign County Democrat Club, a first-time Community Meal sponsor. This example of practical politics represents the American democratic system at its best.

Volunteers represented various segments of the community: former Mechanicsburg Mayor Greg Kimball, current Village Council President April Huggins-Davis, Council Zoning Inspector Dusty Hurst, his niece Sydnee Hurst and Mechanicsburg Public Library Director Rebecca Wilden.

Servers from Our Saviour included Community Meal Coordinator Amy Boeck, Sarah Bradford, Jodi Compton, Gary Lantz and Fr. Derrick. Serving both chili and chilly, Amy Boeck reports that several coats from the outerwear boutique went home with happy new owners. Thanks to coat donors, local Democrats, faithful volunteers and those who came to share food and the grace of God.



*Left: Sydnee Hurst, April Davis, Sarah Bradford, Rebecca Wilden and Greg Kimball assemble chili suppers for Community Meal guests; Right: April readies cups of the hot, hearty, home-made chili.*



## *Coated with love*

Don't be beguiled by an unusually warm autumn; winter temperatures are on the way! And Our Saviour's annual boutique of warm outerwear is already available to anyone for the asking. Jodi Compton, manager of this project is accepting donations of clean, gently used coats, snowsuits, jackets, hats, mittens, gloves and scarves.

There is a special need for coats in Plus sizes (extra large) for men and women and for children in all sizes. Cash is also welcome to purchase items and sizes not donated or to restock. Make checks payable to Our Saviour and earmark for Coats.

The collection can be viewed during Wednesday night Community Meals, from 10 a.m. until noon November 20 and from 9 a.m. until noon December 11. For more info, contact Jodi at 937-689-3986 or Cluster Administrator Amy Boeck at 740-610-5234.

*Jodi Compton coordinates the winter outerwear project.*



## *Chuck helped change the world*

The Region of the Americas has been polio free for thirty years. Cases have decreased world-wide by 99%, from more than 350,000 to 22 recently reported in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Epiphany's Chuck Stadler is a member of a very exclusive club that has helped to defeat poliomyelitis. Chuck and fellow agribusiness men and women of the Urbana Rotary Acre of Corn Club annually donate income from an acre of corn to Rotary International which provides polio vaccinations for children worldwide.

We stand in the shadow of folks like Chuck Stadler and the Acre of Corn club who have believed and publicly and tangibly supported the eradication of a disastrous disease, enabling another miracle.

On October 27, 2021, the Chicago Board of Trade posted an average price of \$5.64 for a bushel of corn. It's estimated that in 2021 yield will be 176 bushels per acre, and each Acre of Corn Club member will be donating close to \$1,000 or more.

## *November altar flower donors*

### EPIPHANY

- Nov. 7 Ruth Vance, in memory of George F. Vance, Jr.
- Nov. 14 Michael Sebright, in memory of Mel and Linda Sebright.
- Nov. 21 Jeff and LuAnn Channell, in thanksgiving for their family.
- Nov. 28 Jim and Karen Boian, in thanksgiving for their family.

### OUR SAVIOUR

- Nov. 7 Vicki and Larry Rammel, in memory of the Rammel Family.
- Nov. 14 Carol Floyd.
- Nov. 21 Kay Keller, in memory of Waite Keller.
- Nov. 28 Mr. and Mrs. Wing, in memory of the Buxtons and Risens; Mary Wing, Brandon Dees and Joel Bostick.

### THE CHRONICLE

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the earth cannot continue to offer  
its harvest without  
faithful stewardship

