

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."

Dear friends in Christ



Rev. Elizabeth Hoster

Even a few weeks ago, we had no idea how this new reality would affect our lives. So much that we took for granted has been put on hold. Now we know: we cannot rely upon the buildings or Sunday worship to "be the church." Now it is more clear than ever before: WE ARE THE CHURCH. We are the body of Christ.

As we approach Easter, we face the reality that it is going to be very different. We approach Holy Week with a sharper sense of our own mortality. This gives us the profound, paradoxical blessing to notice, love and give thanks for each moment in time as we have never noticed it before. The snoring of the dog, a loved one's voice on the phone, the squirrel digging acorns in the yard, the soup found in the back of the freezer; each ordinary discovery is now a gift shot through with wonder and gratitude.

This new-found awareness of time in this life may give us even more appreciation of the great gift given to us in life beyond life. Our Lord defeats death once and for all by looking it straight in the eye and walking through it. He knew fear, and he knew loneliness, and he walked through it first so that we would not walk through it alone. As He was raised, so will we all be, no matter what.

May you find Easter in this moment. May faith overcome fear. Be safe, be well and be not afraid.

Elizabeth reminds us

We may be physically distanced, but we do not have to be spiritually distanced. We will have Sunday worship each week online at 9:30 on the NMVEC Facebook page. Then we can join worship at the Cincinnati Cathedral at 10 a.m. or the National Cathedral in Washington, D. C. at 11:15 a.m. We will continue to use these resources for Holy Week (Maundy Thursday 7 p.m. and Good Friday, noon, at both churches) through at least May 1. We will also gather Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom, an easy to use (I promise) online tool, that will enable us to see each other as we talk.

Please be sure Cluster Administrator Amy Boeck has your current contact info---phone number, email and postal address. If any of these have changed, notify Amy at nmvec@ctcn.net or call 1-740-610-5234. We will send a weekly invitation to the Wednesday evening Zoom group.

If you or a loved one gets sick, contact the church prayer line! We may not be able to be present physically, but we can be there in prayer and comfort and pray together over the phone or by email. Stay tuned and stay connected as we continue to support each other and know God's love and support in new ways.

From the Bishop

After his mid-March conversation with clergy and wardens concerning the Coronavirus threat, Bishop Breidenthal made the difficult decision to request that all congregations suspend public services for the time being. He explained in his letter to the parishes that Title 2, Canon 1 which states our obligation to provide and participate in Sunday worship does not necessarily mean a physical group meeting, and that, in the present health crisis, technology such as Zoom meetings, Facebook and online broadcast services can be utilized. Public classes, adult forums and bible study are also to be done remotely. He noted that Christ Church Cathedral services are broadcast live as is his Lenten Series at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday.

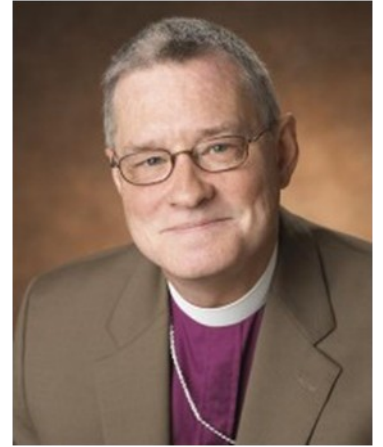
He added that the crisis does not excuse us from serving those who need our care, and that together, in common ministry, we must continue to feed the hungry, provide space for 12-step groups, keep in touch with the sick or isolated and devise ways to worship remotely in community. He urged clergy and laypersons with helpful knowledge or experience to share it through social media and to send it directly to the Diocesan Office of Communications at ddreisbach@dioshio.org. He concluded his letter thusly:

“In this season of social distance, let’s not forget that nothing can distance us from the love of God. May this challenging inspire us to find creative and effective ways to be Christ’s body in the world. Please know you are in my prayers, as I know I am in yours.”



Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal
Bishop of Southern Ohio



Need help?

It’s only a call or an email away! **Ed Hardin** has sent word that if Epiphany congregants need assistance—groceries, supplies, mail—anything, please call him at 937-239-1517 or email him at ed.hardin@jbsunited.com

Amy Boeck is also taking appeals for aid. You can reach her at amyboeck@gmail.com or call 1-740-610-5234. You can also contact her via the Cluster email at nmvec@ctcn.net. Also, **John Wing** is ready to lend a hand to any of Our Saviour’s housebound congregants. His email is johnwing@gmail.com We can never be grateful enough for folks like Amy, Ed and John, in times like these. Keep them in your prayers.

When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theatre
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.

When this ends,
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way---better
for each other
because of the worst.

Laura Kelly Fanucci



Epiphany offers curbside service

Epiphany served the March Community Meal as carryout only. But the carrying out was done by Life Recovery Catering, a new meal provider, and Epiphany volunteers Ed Hardin, Mary Neal Miller, Heather Angus and Diane Kremer.

The menu featured comfort food---beef and noodles, mashed potatoes and homemade apple pie! There were also mixed vegetables, dinner rolls and a cake centered with cheesecake. The meals were boxed in the kitchen, toted up to the Kenton Street entrance and handed to someone in each car as it pulled up to the curb. All done in the rain.

Plans for April Community Meals at Cluster churches will be announced.



Life Recovery Catering staff: l to r, front, Forest Saylor, Lisa Brandel, Rose Trydle; back, Heather Bailey, Amber Jenkins, Kevin Whiting and Nichole Williams.



They cater for the best

Life Recovery Catering was started about a year ago by Recovery Zone Director Lisa Brandel and Assistant Director Rose Trydle. It utilizes the services of about five people from Recovery Zone. "It's meant to help springboard you off into life," says Lisa. "Our programs offer a second lease on life with a loving, supportive family atmosphere and a sense of accomplishment from society." The group recently made a meal for the Urbana funeral of a young soldier. On Veterans Day, they prepared food for 200 veterans and first responders. Lisa said, "It was great. We served sheriff, fire and police departments and the VFW."

Forest Saylor of the catering service said, "I pulled in (to Recovery Zone) three or four times before I went in. I met Lisa, she helped me with my anxiety right away. I'd had a house fire that killed four of my pets. They saved a cat and my old dog, but after the fire, I couldn't get out of bed in the mornings. "Now I've got something to live for. It's so satisfying to help people. I delivered food to an elderly lady in Mechanicsburg. She asked, 'What tribe are you?' My dad was full-blooded Blackfoot, I told her, and gave her the box of food. She cried and hugged me, and---I'm such a baby--of course I cried too. I told Lisa, 'No amount of money could ever give me that feeling.'"

Journey of recovery

Recovery Zone of Champaign and Logan counties "pro-vides a safe and encouraging environment for anyone seeking support in finding or managing recovery from mental health and substance use disorders."

It is headed by Director Lisa Brandel. She issues an invitation to drop by for a group, a meal or a cup of coffee, No appointment needed. Our staff members are all in recovery and there is always someone. there who knows the struggle.

This resource offers daily peer support, food, friends, fun and connections to services that can aid understanding of mental health and substance use disorders and teach coping skills and how to manage symptoms.

Seasons of the Church Year

Fourth in a series by Heather Angus

EASTER

The date

Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox. The sequence of all Sundays in the Church Year is based on the date of Easter. The liturgical color for Easter is white, again signifying joy in the resurrection of Our Lord.

We know that the date of Easter is associated with the Jewish Passover. In scripture, Jesus' last supper with his disciples is described as the Passover meal: *Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.*

The gospel stories

The four gospel Easter stories differ slightly in their detail. But all agree that the empty tomb was discovered on Sunday by one or more of Jesus' women followers. He was laid in the tomb on Friday just before the start of the Jewish Sabbath when no work, such as preparing a body for burial, could be done.

Mark 16: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Just after sunrise on the first day of the week on their way to the tomb, they asked, who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?

When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Matthew 28: At dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became as dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 'He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

"Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him."

The women hurried away, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell the disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them. "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Luke 24: On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground. The men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!

Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

John 20: Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

So, she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple had reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was lying in its place, separate from the linen.

Finally, the other disciple also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (teacher).

Other traditions

In modern times, scholar Brent Landau notes, Easter is quite similar to other major holidays which have evolved over the last 200 years. In all of them Christian and pagan elements have continued to blend. Pagan ceremonies in the Northern Hemisphere celebrated the re-birth of nature, the return of the land to fertility and the birth of young animals. These are the origins of the Easter eggs that we still hunt for. Of course, the bunnies, chocolate and otherwise, are another sign of fertility.

The use of painted and decorated Easter eggs was first recorded in the 13th century. The church prohibited the eating of eggs during Holy Week, but chickens continued to lay eggs and the notion of specially identifying those as “Holy Week” eggs brought about their decoration.

The egg, itself, became a symbol of the Resurrection. Just as Jesus rose from the tomb, the egg symbolizes new life emerging from the eggshell. In the Orthodox tradition, eggs are painted red to symbolize blood Jesus shed on the cross (from Britannica).

Easter in the Cluster

Fragrant white lilies and the pinks, blues, yellows and lavenders of spring bulbs grace the white linen-draped altars at Our Saviour and Epiphany on Easter Sunday morning.

Organists Sharon McCall and Sam Zook literally pull out all the stops performing arrangements of glorious classic compositions and original works and accompanying congregational singing of triumphal Easter hymns.

At Epiphany a small wooden cross, handcrafted by church members at least a century ago, is adorned with little pots of purple pansies which children are invited to take home.

Our Saviour’s Easter egg hunt has also become an annual tradition.

Our Saviour serves a multitude

On a pleasant Spring-like March evening, a contingent of Our Saviour's Community Meal Committee, Amy Boeck, Emily Rozmus, Jodi Compton and volunteers Tony Rozmus, Dusty Hurst and Jay Keely boxed full meals of pork chops, green beans, baked beans, fruit, dinner rolls and pie or cookie, and placed them on a make-shift buffet table set up outside the church side door.

There they were distributed with greetings of good cheer and stay well, to 72 guests who came to pick up meals. Vicki Rammel delivered another 24 meals for a total of 96 people fed following Governor DeWine's mandate for leaving home only to offer and receive food and necessities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

All the food except the fruit was donated by Bill and Kay Miller of Oasis Food Pantry in Mechanicsburg. Every morsel was gratefully accepted by Our Saviour and gratefully consumed by Community Meal guests during this stressful time in our county, our country and the world.



Jay



Emily



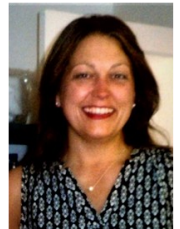
Amy



Vicki



Dusty



Jodi

Yes, we can

A recent op-ed questioned whether Americans “have the social solidarity to stave off the worst possibilities of the coronavirus pandemic?” Bill Rivers, speechwriter for former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, answers “Yes, we do,” and reinforces it with a bit of history.

“When the revolution began, British troops occupied Boston and Washington’s poorly equipped army encircled the city. The colonists had their own muskets but lacked cannons and the normally resolute Washington was stunned speechless when he learned how little gunpowder his men had. Without artillery, there was little hope of driving off the invaders and the inexperienced army was vulnerable to counterattack.

“Enter Henry Knox, a 25-year-old Boston bookseller. He had no military training and no previous combat experience. But what he lacked in experience he made up in grit and initiative. Knox led an expedition to retrieve cannons at recently captured Fort Ticonderoga in northern New York state. They disassembled 59 artillery pieces, loaded them onto boats and made the 30-mile trip down Lake George in the dead of winter just before the lake froze solid.

“It took nearly two months for the 60 tons of cannon to be hauled on horse-drawn sleds over 300 miles of rivers and mountains to Boston. Knox’s team reassembled the artillery on high ground above the city. On St. Patrick’s Day, 1776, after days of punishing cannonades, Washington’s ragtag army forced 11,000 the British to evacuate Boston by sea.

“Washington suffered severe defeats after that, and Americans should expect a hard time ahead on the virus. But we should not doubt our own reserves of goodness, creativity and grit. Endurance amid crisis is not just for the patriots of 1776. Or the pioneers who headed west. Or the immigrants who arrived on Ellis Island. Or the Greatest Generation that fought World War II. It is for us, in our own time. There is an old strength in the American people that lies deeper than political party and is available to us now, today. It rises like an underground aquifer when a tectonic shift occurs, as it has right now. America, this is our moment.”

Why he didn't do it

“For a while again, I couldn’t pray. I didn’t dare to. In the most secret place of my soul wanted to beg the Lord to reveal himself in power. I wanted to tell him that it was time for his coming. If there was anything at all to what he had promised, why didn’t he come in glory with angels and lay his hands on the hurt children and awaken the dead soldiers and restore the burned villages and the blasted and poisoned land? Why didn’t he cow our arrogance?...

“But thinking such things was as dangerous as praying them. I knew who had thought such thoughts before, “Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Where in my own arrogance was I going to hide?

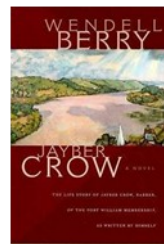
“Where did I get my knack for being a fool? If I could advise God, why didn’t I just advise him (like our great preachers and politicians) to be on our side and give us victory? I had to turn around and wade out of the mire myself.

“Christ did not descend from the cross except into the grave. And why not otherwise? Wouldn’t it have put fine comical expressions on the faces of the scribes and the chief priests and the soldiers if at that moment he had come down in power and glory? Why didn’t he do it? Why hasn’t he done it any one of a thousand good times between then and now?

“I knew the answer. I knew it a long time before I could admit it, for all the suffering of the world is in it. He didn’t, he hasn’t, because, from the moment he did, he would be the absolute tyrant of the world and we would be his slaves. Even those who hated him and hated one another and hated their own souls would have to believe in him then. From that moment the possibility that we might be bound to him and he to us and us to one another by love forever would be ended.

“And so, I thought, he must forebear to reveal his power and glory by presenting himself as himself and must be present only in the ordinary miracle of the existence of his creatures. Those who wish to see him must see him in the poor, the hungry, the hurt, the wordless creatures, the groaning and travailing beautiful world. We are too tightly tangled together to be able to separate ourselves from one another either by good or by evil. We all are involved in all and any good, and in all and any evil. For any sin, we all suffer. That is why sin is endless. And God grieves and Christ’s wounds are still bleeding.”

Jayber Crow, a character in
a Wendell Berry novel,
is the speaker in this narrative,
excerpted from *Bread and Wine*,
Readings for Lent and Easter,
from *The Plough Publishing House*.



Wednesday evening coffee hour Pledges being accepted

Another online gathering is set for 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 1. Through the miracle of something called Zoom, we will be able have coffee and see and talk together from our computer screens. We hope to make this a weekly event. Amy Boeck, our devoted Cluster Administrator, is now the epicenter of news, information and technology and she will explain how to do this. So check emails often.

Our parish treasurers, Susie Westfall and Shary Stadler, have graciously arranged to receive, record and bank pledge checks if congregants wish to keep current with their giving. This is completely voluntary. Checks for Our Saviour should go to Susie Westfall, 80 S. Main Street, Mechanicsburg, OH 43044. Pledges for Epiphany may be sent to Shary Stadler, 2890 N. Route 560, Urbana, 43078.



Seeing stars

Leading roles in the March Mechanicsburg High School musical comedy, *Once Upon A Mattress*, were played by Our Saviour's Will Boeck and Leo Compton. The play was adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, *The Princess and the Pea*, with music by Mary Rodgers and lyrics by Marshall Barer.

The production takes place in the castle where reigns a mute monarch, played by Will, his tyrannical queen, their languid son and a wacky guest princess auditioning for bride-to-be.

Court jester is brought to life by Leo who entertains resident and visiting royalty. The musical premiered on Broadway in 1959 and was the debut of film and TV personality Carol Burnett in the role of Princess Winifred.

Leo Compton, left, and Will Boeck

THE CHRONICLE

A publication of the Northern Miami Valley Episcopal Cluster

230 Scioto St.

Urbana, OH 43078

Printed by



1333 N. Main St.

Urbana, Ohio 43078

