

# 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,

Your cluster council met last week and decided that communal worship will not take place until July 5<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. Between now and then, they will monitor statistics. It was a clear decision for them to make. The economy may be re-opening, folks may be out and about, but the virus has not changed. Champaign County may have not (yet) been hit hard with the disease, but beloved local folks like Marshall Porter are fighting for their lives. To honor those who have had this illness, we will be vigilant at not spreading it, not in our churches, not in our towns, and not in our world. We think globally, and act locally.

And we do this as the feast of Pentecost is upon us! But we can gather strength from the feast and abide in its deepest meaning. All those years ago, the crowds were out and about, celebrating the Jewish festival of the giving of the Law, a good and glorious act of gratitude. Jesus' followers were in a house together, maybe doing their own "sheltering in place." And the Spirit of God enters the house, the Holy Light goes on, and suddenly everyone is hearing their native language being spoken by folks who have never known it before. God opens up the church in a way no one expected, opening up minds, hearts, and mouths. And this was only the beginning! Disciples are filled with the Spirit, gather strength, spread the message---and all are convicted by God to drop their prejudices and be in new relationships with people they are just beginning to understand.

Saying yes to this Spirit of God is what makes it possible for God's love and new life in Christ to spread so quickly. Had the disciples said no to the gift of other languages, to being with others, to having their old ways reformed, the movement could have withered and died.

How will the Spirit alight on us, and what will it ask of us? I believe it will act the same old way and ask us to cure the same illness it asked us to cure the first time. For there is another illness in this land, a disease so contagious, so fatal, that it has been sickening and killing countless people and twisting this land since the first Europeans landed on these shores. It has been around since the dawn of humanity. That disease is racism. As these past weeks and months have shown, it kills and kills and kills, even as people name it and film it and speak out against it. "But wait," you say, "it has not affected us, not in our towns!" But start digging a little, beloveds. Consider your black neighbors as they shelter in place after Eric Garner and Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor and so many others have died from this fatal contagious virus. Like all who have had COVID19, they can't breathe. And sadly, long after there is a vaccine for COVID19, racism will still be spreading, poisoning, and killing in our world and in our towns.

*(Con't on Page 2)*



*Rev. Elizabeth Hoster*

*(con't from Page 1)*

As shown on that first Pentecost, God wants something very different from people of faith. The purpose of the giving of the spirit that day was not for folks to keep it for themselves, but to hear God at work and speak with and understand folks who were different from them. God gave them the gifts of hearing and speaking and understanding. God gives it to us still.

Will we continue to spread *this* illness, or will we stop it? Will our words and actions allow all to breathe? It's clear what God wants from us. This Pentecost, let's see *this* pandemic globally, and act locally. Let us do so, so that all may have life, and have it abundantly.



## *July 5 is tentative day to begin Sunday services*

At its May 26 Zoom meeting Cluster Council agreed to make July 5 the tentative date for resumption of Sunday morning worship services at Our Saviour and Epiphany. This will be in full compliance with requirements and recommendations from Bishop Breidenthal and the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

Council will meet again in June to review conditions and affirm or reconsider the decision. Amy Boeck, Cluster Administrative Assistant, reminds congregants that "when churches re-open, many changes and adjustments will have to be made in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. The Council and your fellow parishioners will appreciate your understanding and cooperation in making those adjustments.

"During this time of closure, please be reminded that you can view Reverend Elizabeth's sermon on Facebook at 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings. No Facebook account is needed to access the page. The link will be given via email on Saturday, and you can watch on any internet device. In addition, you can join Cluster Zoom gatherings Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. An invitation bearing the link is always sent prior to the get-together." Thank you and please stay safe and healthy, Amy Boeck, NMVEC Administrative Assistant.

## *Honoring fathers*

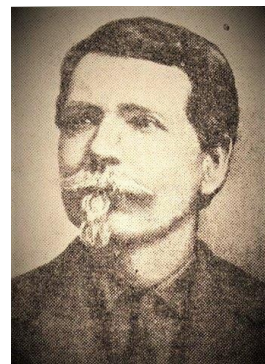
It is not surprising that gratitude for fatherly care began as a religious occasion. The tradition is ancient, the Feast of St. Joseph being observed by Roman Catholics in Europe since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It came to the Americas with the Spanish and Portuguese.

Interestingly enough, a day to honor our paternal bonds was instituted by a woman. but it was the 20<sup>th</sup> century before fathers in the United States enjoyed national recognition. Sonora Smart Dodd, daughter of Civil War veteran William J. Smart, was responsible for the founding of Father's Day thirty years ago in this country.

Sonora lived in Spokane, Washington. When she was 16 her mother died. She and her Father raised her young brothers and she forever held him in high esteem. After hearing a sermon on the newly established Mother's Day, she began a successful campaign to give fathers equal billing.

Sonora suggested June 5, her father's birthday, for the event, but in 1910, Pres. Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the third Sunday of June as Father's Day in the United States. It was a national event but not a national holiday. May our lives honor our fathers and our prayers and our fathers name and praise them on Father's Day, June 21, 2020

*William  
John  
Smart*



*Sonora  
Smart  
Dodd*



## *From the Bishop*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we approach the great festival of Pentecost, I want to acknowledge the pain of this celebration against the background of one hundred thousand deaths in this country alone, and the mingled unrest and fear surrounding what our media calls “opening up.” There is plenty of grief and uncertainty to go around right now. But I want to draw attention to another plague that continues to dig its claws deep into our national life: the plague of racial inequity and anti-black violence.

The murder of George Floyd by white police officers in Minneapolis a few days ago is plain to all. I am calling on all the congregations in the Diocese of Southern Ohio to stand firm in opposition to the institutional racism that continues to infect our society at every level. As we observe Pentecost this Sunday, however remotely, let us remember that this ancient Jewish feast marks the giving of the Law from Sinai to the children of Israel, fifty days after their escape from slavery in Egypt. What does that law boil down to? Justice and mercy. The police action in Minneapolis exhibited neither justice nor mercy, and we cannot be silent about it.

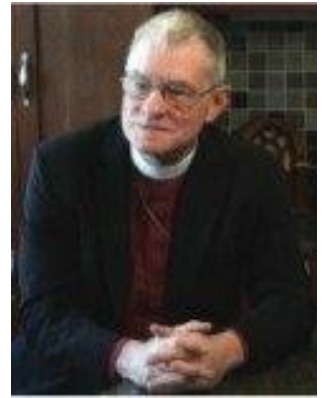
The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was neither a circus event nor a celebration of cacophony, as we often portray it. It is the miracle and great gift of hearing from God, each in his or her language and situation. It is not about noisiness but about clarity. It is about what the triune God is saying to each of us, one by one.

Let us listen carefully this Sunday to what the Spirit is saying to God’s people. Discern the racism within you. Arouse the righteous anger within you against the abuse of power. Open your heart to the ties that bind us to one another in our weaknesses and in our noblest aspirations. Those who heard the apostles speaking to them on that Pentecost after Jesus’ rising were amazed. They said they were hearing about God’s deeds of power spoken in their own language, in the context of their own personal story.

What does that power mean for each of us personally? God’s power is infinite, but it matters most to us when it comes down to our own persistent struggles. Surely for us Americans, the chief struggle that grips us daily is racism, from within us and from whatever direction it attacks us. We cannot deal with this unless we are open to the Spirit of truth, and we cannot dare to be open to that Spirit unless we trust in the justice and mercy of God. Yet help is always there, if we have the courage to ask for it.

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal



*Bishop Breidenthal*



*Reverend Jason Leo*

## *A word from Canon Leo*

From the Diocese of Southern Ohio our kind friend with two first names, Rev. Jason Leo, Canon for Transitions and Missioner for Congregational Vitality, conveyed his best regards to us via a phone conversation with Mary Neal Miller of Epiphany. She notes that he assured Cluster congregants that the search for a part-time Priest-in-Charge is still very much an active priority on his agenda. We are grateful, Canon Leo, for your understanding and diligent efforts on our behalf.



*Community Meal Regulars, from left, Emily Rozmus, Greg Kimball, Dusty Hurst, Jodi Compton and, taking the picture, Amy Boeck, prepare and box meals to be distributed from a street-side table in front of the church.*

## *Our Saviour continues Community Meal*

It was a beautiful May evening made more beautiful for 75 people who shared the monthly Community Meal at Our Saviour. It is still being served carryout style and all precautions are being taken to prevent further spread of contagion as Covid19 still claims lives daily.

Committee members, still in “Pandemic uniform” distributed the boxed meals from a table on the sidewalk in front of the church and invited passersby to share the repast. The appealing supper of bratwurst in a bun, potato salad, fresh green beans, fruit and cookies, was cooked and shared with local folks by Emily Rozmus, Dusty Hurst, Greg Kimball, Jodi Compton, Vicki Rammel and Amy Boeck.

Bill Miller of the Oasis of Mercy Food Pantry and very special friend of Our Saviour whose gifts of provisions and cookery enrich many monthly meals, grilled the brats and brought fresh green beans to be cooked for the Wednesday supper. Amy commented, “Dusty always makes our green beans taste good!”

The outpouring of diners testifies to the appeal of Dusty’s Green Beans and Accompaniments. The gift of a free, ready-to-eat meal from friends at the Episcopal Church maintains an encouraging bit of the once-normal routine of Village life. Our Saviour has offered refuge, comfort and hope for parts of three centuries, a light fueled by love, holding steady through nature’s furies and storms manmade. Thanks be to God.

## Sunday sermons

Rev. Elizabeth comes to us in our homes every Sunday morning while we follow the guidelines designed to protect ourselves and others from the contagion of Coronavirus. By the miracle of technology, face to face, with her strong, reverent, conversational voice, she addresses each of us---individually and as a Cluster---and employs scripture and scholarship to enlighten, encourage and reinforce community in this time of prolonged separation.

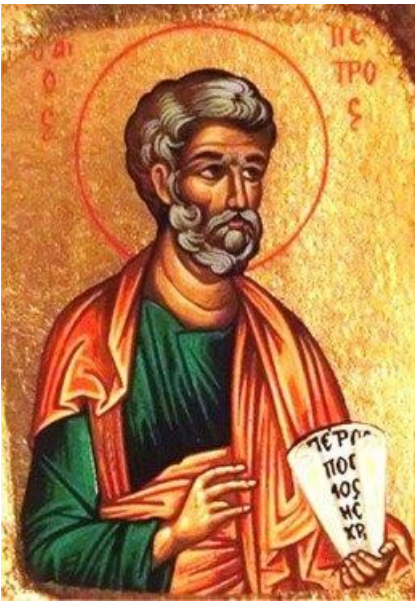
Rev. Elizabeth's Sunday sermons often reveal new viewpoints and add richness and meaning to familiar scriptures and hope and confidence for our congregations. A Sunday reading from the Book of John, for example, found the eleven disciples, after the resurrection, hiding in a locked room for fear of the Jews. Jesus appeared in their midst, twice saying, "Peace be with you." The ten rejoiced, but Thomas was not convinced. Why not?

Rev. Elizabeth reminded us that *Thomas was a twin* and may often have been mistaken for someone else, his brother, giving credence to Thomas' caution. Christ chides, displays his scars and Thomas says, "My Lord and my God." Thanks, Rev. Elizabeth, for this new perspective, your affectionate blessing and parting entreaty to watch and pray.



*Reverend Elizabeth*

## Peter who?



Another of the Sunday sermons included readings from the Book of First Peter. Rev. Elizabeth noted that while the author introduces himself as "an apostle of Jesus Christ," he is not the disciple Peter who denied Jesus as the cock crowed. How can we be sure? Scholars believe that books of Peter were written after the death of the disciple Peter. Others point out that the author appears to have had formal education in rhetoric and philosophy and an advanced knowledge of Greek which would be most unlikely for a Galilean fisherman.

Peter may have been a Greek scholar who lived during the reign of Domitian, AD 81 when it is believed that widespread Christian persecution began. Peter's remarks are addressed "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." This may have been the order in which the messenger delivered them.

They are referred to as "exiles of the Dispersion," and are urged to "live in reverent fear during the time of your exile." Peter urges loyalty to their religion and the Roman Empire and to be steadfast under persecution, following Christ's example in patience and holiness.

Peter has espoused many of the same motifs found in Paul's letters which could indicate that Peter knew the Pauline epistles and referred to them in his own writings at a later time. Another theory involves the "secretarial hypothesis" which suggests that the letters were dictated by Peter to his secretary, Silvanus, who recorded them in Greek. Yet another unproved theory is that the letters were written by a disciple of Peter in his honor and using his name.



NO SUMMER CAMPS and no camp auction. Both victims of the Pandemic. But the condensed fun of a decade of auctions past can be found in the Chronicle photo album. May these choice moments from this unique event tide us over until we gather again.



## *Memorial Day revisited*

An Ohioan, President James A. Garfield, gave the address at the first Memorial Day celebration at Arlington National Cemetery in 1868. It was called Decoration Day then as, after the ceremonies, flowers were placed on the graves. Historians credit the “bearded, affable, eloquent” Garfield with defining the day and why it should be commemorated.

Before he was president, Garfield, a native of Orange, Ohio in Cuyahoga County. He served as a major in the Civil War and was elected to the Ohio legislature and then to the Senate. In 1881 he became the only sitting congressman to be elected president of the United States.

Garfield asserted on that first Memorial Day, “I am opposed with a sense of the impropriety of uttering words on this occasion. If silence is ever golden, it must be here beside the graves of fifteen thousand men whose lives were more significant than speech. This silent assembly of the dead have become voices that will forever fill the land like holy benedictions.

“With words we make promises, plight faith, praise virtue. Promises may not be kept; plighted faith may be broken; and vaunted virtue be only the cunning mask of vice. We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke; but we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens.

“For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue. For the noblest man that lives, there still remains a conflict. He must still withstand the assaults of time and fortune, must still be assailed with temptations before which lofty natures have fallen. But with these the conflict ended, the victory was won, when death stamped on them the great seal of heroic character and closed a record which years can never blot.

“...I love to believe that no heroic sacrifice is ever lost; that the characters of men are molded and inspired by what their fathers have done; that treasured up in American souls are all the influences of

*The Garfield  
monument was  
created by  
Urbana sculptor  
JQA Ward*



the great deeds from Agincourt to Bunker Hill. Could these men be silent in 1861? Read the answer in this green turf. Each for himself gathered up the cherished purposes of life---its aims and ambitions, its dearest affections---and flung all, with life, itself, into the battle.

“The Nation was summoned to arms by every high motive which can inspire men. Two centuries of freedom had made its people unfit for despotism. What other spot so fitting for their last resting place as this under the shadow of the Capitol saved by their valor? Here where all the hope and fear and agony of their country centered. Here let them rest, asleep on the Nation’s heart.”

Now our country lives in the fear and agony of a Pandemic and hope is centered on our heroic health professionals and courageous volunteers who treat the sick and comfort the dying and the precautionary practices of every individual.

Let us too, believe that no heroic sacrifice is in vain, and that our Nation where freedom has made its people ready for any despoiler, will be shored up and saved by the compassion, courage and faith of every American. And that the silent voices of the ever-growing assembly of the dead will descend over our land like holy benedictions.

## *From Our Saviour's Facebook page*



MEMORIES. This charming group posed on Mother's Day 2015. From left, Vicki Rammel, Amy Westfall, Susie Westfall, Gloria Westfall, Kay Keller, Jeanie Girardi, Bessie Fox, Jodi Compton and Amy Boeck. The photographer whose image is reflected in the mirror is a five-years-younger Leo Compton.

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### **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

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RESPECT  
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TO THE DEAD  
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ONLY THE TRUTH**