



THE COURIER

The Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, River Hills, WI May 2011

THE RECTOR'S MUSINGS

I remember the first time I fell in love.

I was a teenager (of course!) and Larry Mark was on my mind every single second of the day and some of the night time, too. He was smart and funny and kind and good. My heart went from just sort of paying attention to the details of my junior year of high school to paying almost exclusive attention to him. I didn't know what hit me!

I mean, there I was just minding my own business going about my high school life and, like most teenage girls, wondering if I was loveable and feeling anything but... (High school, for those of you who have been away from it for awhile, is hard for most kids—even if they tell you differently.)

And then one day lightning struck my heart and took it away. In a day my world changed—everything was more beautiful, more embraceable, more *possible*. Larry Mark was in my life and in my heart and with all the passion and fervor of those tender years of high school, I threw myself into loving him. I was transformed.

Honestly, I thought I was maybe sick. I talked with a teacher I trusted about how I was feeling one afternoon after school and she smiled and said, "It sounds like you're in love." Revelation! Ohmygod, I was in love... my heart was just bursting with joy, all my senses were twittering, I was the best Debra I could be!

Everything was different for me and would, in some senses, never be the same.

Resurrection is like that. From the third day onwards, for the world, and particularly for those of us who believe in Jesus Christ, nothing would ever be the same. Because of the Resurrection everything is more beautiful, more embraceable, more *possible*. In the Resurrection we are made anew and we will never, ever be the same because Love beat death; pure Love overcame evil. Pure Love came into the world and the world fell in love.

Resurrection means that there is no loss too big to be redeemed and healed. It means that our hearts, touched as they are by the love of God in Resurrection, are infinitely expansive. We need not fear loving because there is always more love available to us because of the miracle of Resurrection.

Larry Mark and I did not last. He went into the Navy and I, ultimately, went into the convent. And I grieved his loss even as Resurrection was having its way with me and opening new possibilities.

Larry Mark was my first love, but he was not my last. Through our relationship I learned that the death of a love does not mean the death of Love. And knowing that, I was just never, ever the same. Praise God and Alleluia!

Debra+

Warden's Words

Our family's spring break is traditionally the week immediately following Easter Sunday but technically begins Good Friday as schools are closed. We often leave on Maundy Thursday for vacation which results in us inevitably missing most if not all of Holy Week services. Our tradition has been to vacation on Sanibel Island, Florida, which in many ways has become our home away from home as we have been there so often. Every year we say we are going to get up and attend the sunrise Easter service on the beach. And every year I must admit with chagrin that we have failed to wake in time to make it to church.

This year was different for our family. First, we were down to one child with two at college whose break dates did not coincide with their younger sibling's. Second, we had made the daring decision to try somewhere different. We chose to venture to the panhandle of Florida.

The Destin area is considered by many to be THE North Shore spring break destination. Over the years we have received many invitations to vacation with other families in Destin but we have avoided it like the plague. Often the weather can be iffy and frankly we really enjoyed our family time without seeing Milwaukee families everywhere we went. However with the Easter calendar date so late in the spring and the North Shore school district spring breaks scheduled all over the map we thought it would be an optimum time to try it out.

We stayed with some old friends from our former church in Hinsdale, IL. They had built a lovely second home in Inlet Beach and invited us to stay. They moved to Atlanta, Georgia, about the same time we moved to Milwaukee seventeen years ago. We had met through our involvement at Grace Episcopal Church and have maintained our friendship over the years.

As we were planning out the week in Florida, they invited us to attend church with them on Easter and then go out for lunch. "Of Course!" was our response. It appeared that we were turning over a new leaf but our daughter was skeptical that we would actually follow through and make it to church.

We joined them on Easter Sunday at The Chapel at Cross Point. It is a non-denominational church that with a contemporary style service but with southern "church" roots. The building itself is a bright white cozy structure which formerly housed a Baptist church that had shuttered its doors for economic reasons. The senior pastor is a business executive from Atlanta that makes the drive every Sunday to deliver his sermons. He is a local favorite with his laid back style (t-shirts, jeans, 80's hair) and inspirational messages.

We were greeted warmly at the door as we entered. There was a wonderful energy and a celebratory feel from the congregation. From the start of the service however, things were just a bit different. Instead of an organ and choir, they had a group of musicians playing contemporary Christian style music. The Worship Leader was actually one of the musicians and his wife was the principal vocalist with the group.

The service then moved along to the Doxology and scripture reading. The service bulletin called for communion. My daughter looked at me for assistance on how/what to do as they passed the trays of communion wafers and individual servings of communions "wine" (grape juice). We goofed and ate the communion wafer too soon but recouped as the senior pastor led the congregation through communion while he read the Gospel of John 20:19-29—different but quite effective.



I won't give you the blow by blow but you get the gist—it was different from St. Christopher's. Different isn't bad, it isn't good, it is just different. When the service concluded and we headed out the door to greet the pastor my daughter turned to me with a smile and said, "Well, that certainly wasn't Mother Debra!"

I wasn't quite sure how to interpret her statement. Later that afternoon I inquired what she meant. She described the experience that day as "Fun Church" much like my brother's Bible-based church that they attend in Michigan. She felt like she hadn't really been to church at all. She missed the tradition and reverence of the service be it Rite One or Rite Two. She missed Debra's sermons that tied into the readings and meant something and weren't just a story. All from the mouth of a soon to be 13-year-old! I was pretty impressed as I had been prepared quite a different response. Think about it, who wouldn't like "Fun Church"?!

So we had made it to church on Easter. Finally! My daughter may not have felt she had "been to church." Frankly, John and I may didn't feel like we had "been to church" in the traditional sense. We wondered about our friends and why they had left the Episcopal Church. But no matter, they had found a place that worked for them. What I took away from that "different experience" was that Christ and St. Christopher's were with us that day. We were being asked to question, to look into to our hearts, to see Christ in "different places."

What an experience. What a gift. What an Easter to remember.

Alleluia, the Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Debbie Roesner,
Senior Warden

Children's Ministry



Alleluia! A Blessed Easter to all! Our children observed Lent with prayer, fasting, (from some TV or other choice) and giving (using home-made containers). During April we made our own palm branches to welcome Jesus as King. Then we dressed in Bible character costumes for a special Seder celebration to learn about Maundy Thursday. We observed the washing of hands (rather than feet), the rituals of lighting candles (battery-operated), the breaking bread (flat matzoh bread), the eating of bitter herbs (parsley), the drinking of grape juice (rather than wine), and the offering of special prayers. Even the youngest (who asked the traditional questions) seemed to understand the relationship of the Old Testament Passover, the Last Supper, and our worship today.

On Palm Sunday we dressed in costume again and waved our palm branches to lead the procession into church for this festive celebration opening Holy Week. Down in our classrooms we learned the story of the Passion of Jesus and made picture booklets about the events that won our salvation. We prayed earnestly that we and all we loved would come through Holy week to the joy of Easter. May God bless us

all as we continue to celebrate the Easter season with great joy. It lasts fifty days!

Mary Heyn

Qs from the Pews

Dear Priest,

Where did Easter come from? I mean, I know we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, but where did the word "Easter" come from?

Signed, Interested

Editor's Note: 'Qs from the Pews' are taken from questions that come up at Coffee Hour or in conversations with the Rector. If you have a Q to submit for this column, please email the Rector or the office.

Dear Interested,

According to the Venerable Bede (an early and reputable church historian) the word derives from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, Eostre (I am not kidding here!). Christians in England applied the word to the principal festival of the church year, both day and season. Easter is always in the springtime (it always falls between March 22 and April 25 inclusive); that time of new life. Next year Easter is April 8th.

And did you know that, like Christmas, Easter is a *season* not just a day? We are now in the season of Easter, or what is called Eastertide. Eastertide will end with the feast of Pentecost (the coming of the Holy Spirit) on June 12 (and, for us, the bi-annual visit of the Bishop.)

Thanks for the question.

Signed, the Priest

We now live with two truths

Editor's Note: The news of the death of Osama bin Laden came while Debra was away. Here are her thoughts on the situation.

We live now with two truths: Osama bin Laden is dead and the pain of September 11th is still with us.

Some of us are celebrating. And some of us are not.

But I believe that there is no rejoicing on heaven.

Because the God revealed in Jesus Christ is a God of peace, love and forgiveness.

As followers of Christ we seek the grace to know the difference between exacting revenge and striving for justice and peace among all people.

And so we pray.

For all those who lost their lives in 9/11.

For all those who have lost their lives on battlefields.

For all those who continue to risk their lives for our security.

For those we do not love and who do not love us.

We pray to be given the heart of Christ.

Holy Week: A Reflection

As some of you may know, I am an almost-cradle Episcopalian, and my entire religious education as a kid centered around music. I sang in the children's choir, and progressed to the adult choir as I entered my teens. Therefore, the seasons of the church year are marked for me by the music we sing, and nowhere is this more true than during Holy Week. Permit me to reflect on Holy Week through the lens of the music that is such a rich part of our Anglican tradition.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week, and the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The hymn that I most closely associate with Palm Sunday is "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty." This is a rich hymn that tells us of the adoration Jesus receives as he enters the city, yet it also foreshadows what is to come. The final verse beautifully captures what each of us will encounter as we experience Holy Week: "Ride on, ride on in majesty, in lowly pomp ride on to die; bow thy meek head to mortal pain, then take, O God, thy power and reign."

Fast-forward to Maundy Thursday. At St. Christopher's, we begin the Maundy Thursday service with an Agape dinner. Agape is a Greek word, meaning love, and we celebrate the love that Jesus had for his disciples by sharing a simple meal and hearing scripture. And, as always, there is music. We hear, in song, the conversation among Judas, Mary and Jesus, where Judas tells Mary that the ointment she used on Jesus's feet could have been used to feed the poor. Jesus, however, tells them "Today you may do as you will. Tomorrow, tomorrow, I'm going away, but my love I leave with you still." We then process into the church to the Taize chant, "Jesus Remember Me." After the ritual of the foot-washing and a Eucharist – the meal at God's table – we close with another Taize chant, "Stay With Me," as we strip the altar and prepare for the Watch, which calls to mind the question Jesus asked of his disciples: Will you not wait with me one hour? The music at Maundy Thursday is simple, quiet and contemplative, drawing us into the love that Jesus has for us even as he knows that the ultimate sacrifice is fast approaching.

Good Friday has always been, for me, a somber but moving experience. Everything about it is dark – the prayers, the reading of the Passion, the liturgy, and certainly the music. There is no hymn that moves me more, or brings home how woefully short I am of what God is calling me to be, than "Ah, Holy Jesus". The second verse, in particular, seems to resonate with me: "Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee. 'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee: I crucified thee." The Good Friday music, ending with "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" makes Good Friday intensely personal.

The Easter Vigil is a literal movement from dark to light, from sadness to joy. We begin in the Memorial Garden with the lighting of the Pascal fire, once again to "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" But somehow it is less sorrowful in the light of the fire. As Debra said in her Easter Vigil sermon, the Vigil is about waiting – but waiting expectantly. The music we sing reflects that expectation, with each psalm or canticle being a little brighter, a little more hopeful, until we get to the thanksgiving over the water and the renewing of our baptismal vows, when we literally burst forth with "O Healing River". And then the true beginning of Easter: "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." I think one would have to look long and hard to find an Episcopal church community that does *not* have this hymn as part of its Easter Vigil, for it so clearly marks the joyful beginning of our Easter celebration.

And then we arrive at Easter morning. The church is light, bedecked with flowers and reflecting all the joy of this most holy day. And our hymns are no less joyous. In addition to "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today", we sing hymns like "The Day of Resurrection," "He Is Risen," and "At the Lamb's High Feast, We Sing." But, for me, there is no Easter hymn that says Easter like "Welcome, Happy Morning!" Perhaps it is because this was the processional hymn I sang every Easter morning as a child, but for me the words say "Easter" in a way that little else can. "Earth her joy confesses, clothing her for spring, all fresh gifts returned with her returning King: bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bough, speak his sorrow ended, hail his triumph now."

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I hope each of you had an opportunity to experience some, or all, of Holy Week, and that the music spoke to you as it speaks to me. But if you did not have a chance to participate, the good news – the *very* good news – is that we will have a chance to do it over again – music and all – next year. I wish you all “This Joyful Eastertide.”

Bonnie M. Thomson
Junior Warden



St. Christopher's 1st Quarter Budget and Financial Update

St. Christopher ended the first quarter as of March 31, 2011 with a \$6,072 deficit position. Our projected budget deficit for the year is \$86,000 as presented at the Annual meeting on January 24, 2011. Total income for the first three months of 2011 was \$137,524 which was right on target with the budgeted amount of \$137,695.

Our heavy snow fall during the months of February and March resulted in increased snow removal expenses which put us over budget by \$6,958. We also had added expense attributed to our Vestry retreat held March 11th and 12th resulting in an overage for the budget to date for Administrative expenses of \$2,332.

We are ahead to date on Salary/Stipend expenses which allowed us to keep our deficit relatively low at the close of the quarter. Overall our first quarter ended as anticipated if not slightly ahead of projections albeit carrying a significant deficit.

Hannah Pillsbury officially retired from the Treasurer position at the end of February. In the interim, I have taken on the role of Treasurer. Dick Hackl and Diane Andersen have agreed to be the designated counters of our Sunday Plate collections. Thank you to both of them for taking on this important ministry.

Also during the first quarter, the Parochial Report (our canonically required official report to the diocese regarding our finances and membership numbers) has been submitted to the diocese and to the national church offices, and we are preparing for our diocesan financial review early this summer. The canons (laws) of the church require a yearly financial review. If a church does well in the review, then they are often allowed a “mini-review” every other year. Last year was our “mini-review.” This year is the full review.

Your Vestry and Finance Sub-Committee continue to monitor the parish finances diligently. We are always searching for opportunities to contain expenses and explore creative ways to achieve the financial goals of the parish. Stay tuned for further updates throughout the year!

Debbie Roesner
Senior Warden and Acting Treasurer

How Do Sermons Get Written?

Well, first, they do not come off of sites on the Internet!

And second, even though we learn how to write a sermon in seminary, in practice, every priest writes their sermons somewhat differently. Here is how I write mine:

On Sunday afternoon I begin to look at the readings for the next Sunday always focusing on the Gospel reading. I always glance at the Sunday Collect for the day because it tells me how the church sees the theme of that Sunday. I don't always, or even usually, follow the theme, but sometimes it gives me some ideas that I can develop.

By Monday I have begun to look at Commentaries. Commentaries are books that the scholars of Holy Scripture have written to help us understand what the passages of Holy Scripture that our lectionary has appointed for us are really saying. Commentaries look at historical context, literary context, placement within the Gospel itself, etc. We call this process of learning what the text is really saying (as opposed to what it seems *to me* it might be saying) exegesis. Truly, do you really care what I think? Don't you want to know what the text is really saying?

On Tuesday and Wednesday I continue the process of learning what the text is really saying. I might consult a Bible Dictionary, a Greek to English translation (to try and see what the text says in the original Greek) more commentaries, or a Concordance to focus on a word or a phrase and see where it might come up in other places in Holy Scripture. While I am studying (exegeting) the text, I am also doing that to the congregation. And I am looking at the overall context for the sermon—is it Mother or Father's Day? Is it a Baptism?

What does the text say into this specific context? What, of all the possible things that could be said about the text, do I need to focus on for you at this point in our shared history? This is what you pay a Rector for; to think and pray critically about what might be helpful for you to hear from week to week.

By Thursday I either have a good idea about what I am going to write, or I am very, very nervous. Normally, I then actually write the sermon on Friday. Friday is my day out of the office to write sermons, newsletter articles, challenging letters, etc. By Friday evening I normally have my sermon written. I rarely, rarely let it go until Saturday because Saturday is my day off. I am a wreck if I do not have my sermon written by Saturday morning!

From beginning to end it takes me from 6-8 hours to write a sermon. It used to take much longer when I was a younger priest. But I am better these days at knowing what Commentaries to consult and knowing how to read the congregation.

Sermon writing is one of the responsibilities and privileges of being a Rector. I love to preach and I love to preach at St. Christopher's. Thank you always for your responsiveness to my preaching. It is a joy.

Debra+

St. Christopher's Outreach Committee, May 2011 Update

Over the years, outreach efforts have provided avenues for parishioners of St. Christopher's to contribute to projects and programs beyond our walls. During the last few months, the Outreach Committee has spent considerable time and effort analyzing what has been done in the past and considering how we want to focus our efforts as we go forward. Lively discussion and prayerful consideration led us to create a mission statement that will guide our work and act as a filter through which requests will be examined.

Our Mission Statement: The Outreach Committee of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church works to spread the word of God through serving others. We listen to and care deeply about the needs of the people in our immediate community and the world beyond. We will work to inspire the parish to be involved in the outreach ministry, which is firmly grounded in Christ's teachings.

In our current world, there is no shortage of needs, ways we can be involved with others, from our immediate community to international causes including our Diocesan partnership in Jeanette, Haiti. The needs are infinite. Our time, talent and treasures are not.

To provide a way for us to decide how we can maximize the impact of St. Christopher's outreach efforts, the Outreach Committee has decided to identify a focus for the year and use that as our guiding light for decision making throughout the year.

For this year, we have identified hunger, especially related to children, as the area on which we will focus.

Now that we have our Mission Statement and hunger as the area of focus for this year, we are going to try an invitational approach to agencies for financial or human resources support through St. Christopher's. We will solicit proposals from agencies for mini-grants we can give that align with our mission. We will evaluate these proposals for the ones that most closely match our mission and focus.

We are still a work in progress as we try out this new framework. Outreach Committee members want our efforts to really make a difference in the lives of others. We also want to inspire you to be involved in outreach.

Each of us on the Outreach Committee is excited to spread the word of God through serving others. We hope you will join us. As we work through the first round of mini-grant proposals and commit our human resources, we will share details with you including ways you can involve yourself and your family.

It is holy and heart filling work.

Outreach Committee: Steve Petrie – Chair, Hannah Pillsbury, Harry Ansley, Diane Eisen, Carolyn Davies, Jayne Heffron and the Rev. Debra Trakel

Coloring Page for Kids



Palm Sunday and Easter



*And many more at our
Facebook site!*

May MILESTONES	
BIRTHDAYS	
1	Matthew Belcher Connor Deuser Eleanor Seaman
3	Michael Gough Elliott Weigel
4	Claire Dobrowits
5	Karlie Allen Juli Coburn
6	Darlene Chase
8	Betty Brown Bill Darling
9	David Allen
10	Tom Gebhardt Pat Lipscomb
11	Patti Brose Emily Roesner Laura Thurow
12	Pam Thickens
13	Bethany Lopez
14	Ella Gotz Joan Seeger Dick Wythes
15	Erik Andersen Anne Davis
16	Benjamin Bedore Bill Browne
17	Lizzie Thurow Ann Deuser
18	Will Brunner
19	Judy Jones
20	Lake Schmidt
22	Joe Dobrowits Grace Fischer William Smith
23	Ella McCabe Mary Scott
26	Libby Aik Janet Bate
27	Alexandra Koroscik
28	Mary Kasten
29	Laura Gough Kaitlyn Kennedy
30	Robert-Claud Diedrich Ean Jamel Chris Latterell
31	John Lee
ANNIVERSARIES	
4	Lyn & Bob Slater
6	Liza & Randy Perry Sarah & Robert Schmidt
10	Laura & Tom Gough
13	Michelle & Allen Gotz Byron & Suzy Foster
14	Judy & Kevin Scharfenberger Nancy & James Barton
16	Linda & Barry Allen Gila & Bruce Holmes
21	Trish & Bob Juranitch
23	Beth & Jason Weseman
27	Jeni & Will Piper
28	Carla & Burt Bartlett Jeanne & Eric Christiansen

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Caring Ministry: caring@stchristopherswi.org

Website: www.stchristopherswi.org

Parish Office

Open Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Staff

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*

Gust Olson III, PhD, *Parish Administrator*

John Beardsley, *Music Director*

Mary Heyn, *Christian Formation Coordinator*

Gloria Bond, *Housekeeper*

Michael Schneider, *Building & Grounds Supervisor*

Vestry - Meets 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Debbie Roesner and Bonnie Thomson, *Wardens*

Florence Parnegg and Susan Hackl, *Clerks*

(2012) - MaryBeth Ansley, Jeni Piper

(2013) - Ginger Browne, Diane Eisen,

Judy Scharfenberger

(2014) - Diane Andersen, Darrell Fischer

Committee and Ministry Contacts

Altar Flowers: Roz Krause

Altar Guild: Roz Krause, Mary Jane Perry

Acolytes: MaryBeth Ansley

Building & Grounds: Kip Jacobs

Caring Ministry: Lauralee Uihlein

Endowment: Erik Andersen

Finance Subcommittee: Charlie Krause

Flower Guild: Hattie Purtell, Helen Sheen

Labyrinth: Catherine Davidson

Memorial Garden: Jeanne Tanner

Outreach: Steve Petrie

Prayer Chain: Chilly Braun, Kathy Housiaux

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The Monthly Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

The Holy Eucharist

Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Thursday 7:00 a.m.

Outdoor Labyrinth - open to the public, weather permitting

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*



Christianity is not just a religion...it's a way of life.