

# Episcopal Church of Our Saviour

Newsletter, January 5, 2021



## Chalking our Door: An Epiphany Blessing

The Episcopal Church has a tradition of blessing homes on the Feast of Epiphany on January 6 or in the weeks following during the season of Epiphany. Family and friends gather to ask God's blessing on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows.

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your might.*

*Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart ...  
and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

*(Deuteronomy 6:4-6, 9)*

A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk blessed during the liturgy for the Feast of Epiphany and write the following above the home's entryway: 20 + C + M + B + 21. The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross and 2021 is the year.

Since we cannot gather in person right now, if you would like I can bless chalk for you and leave it in an envelope with your name on the parish office porch for you to pick up. You can then use the chalk. If anyone feels comfortable about this, I can come and bless your home or apartment by standing outside to do the blessing. I would wear a mask and stand at least six feet away. I had a COVID test on January 1 and it was negative.

When we chalk the door of our home we are physically marking the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. Each time we enter our home, the written symbols remind us of God's blessings and our calling as beloved children of God. May you have a blessed season of Epiphany. Mother Carol+

## The Campaign for a Church Building

As the newly christened Church of Our Saviour began to worship in the house on Lexington Road, pastored by Rev. John Burkhart, Bishop Wimberly sought a vicar qualified to develop a small church and initiate a building campaign. Our church profile from 1993 noted that average attendance, excluding Christmas, was 51. According to the Diocese Development Committee: "The Church of Our Saviour needs a church planter, someone trained and experienced in church growth and evangelism who can communicate that vision to the congregation. Priest and people should be committed to five years effort directed towards sustained growth and expansion." The Bishop's committee added, "The priest we are looking for would lead us in the major effort required to construct a new sanctuary."

In 1993 Bishop Wimberly instituted the ministry of Rev. Phillip Haug at Our Saviour. As Sr. Warden at the Church of the Apostles in 1987, he had led a major building program. At that time, he was administrator of the National Forest Service, but both he and his wife Anna also had been active leaders in their church. A mission trip to Africa in 1984 was part of his call to ministry. In 1988 he left

Washington for Virginia Theological Seminary, and upon graduation took charge of two historic small churches in Virginia. We were blessed when he accepted a call to Our Saviour.

Hopes for a new church building soared. Members had varying thoughts about fund raising, and ideas for the building itself. As the congregation continued to remodel the house, removing walls and building a ramp, our new home was still a rather tight space. Stephan Locke remembers one of the supply priests commenting on our having the “accoutrements” of a church but a definite lack of space. Our High Church procession would come in one door, go behind the chairs and then around to the altar, which was in front of the fireplace.

The choir and organ took up their corner which is now a storage area. This arrangement was initially satisfying, but as the congregants looked across the property to the small house, it was hard not to imagine what might yet be.

Even though the idea of building a new church was alluring, there was considerable hesitation on the part of many of the parishioners. This indeed, was a daunting task. Was this even viable? Could the money be raised? How would we proceed? Would the Diocese approve? Dan Evans recalls that at one stewardship meeting, he felt a strong need to take a stand and ask “When are we going to start saving for a new Church?” At this point, Fr. Phillip stood and asked Dan to be the head of the Building Committee. Dan had no experience in planting a church, but says that he felt pushed by the Holy Spirit to take on the task.

Over the course of approximately five years, a Building Fund was created, pledges secured, and money set aside for this hopeful project. The Building Committee chose an architectural firm, which offered a preliminary design and suggestions for future development of the property. It was Fr. Phillip’s goal to have all the money needed for construction pledged up front, so the church would be debt free. Although the fund accrued a large amount, the regular pledging fell, leaving little money to pay Fr. Phillip. Consequently, Bishop Wimberly temporarily froze the Building Fund. Dan, who was on the Vestry at this time, reports that they were left with no choice but to follow the directive of the Bishop.

As time passed, Fr. Phillip retired and the search for a new priest began, with a sketch of a proposed church building on the cover of the church profile. Fred Ruppell, a new Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) faculty member, pushed the search forward, working with The Rev. Canon Johnny Ross, under Bishop Sauls. Dan recalls that when Fr. Birch Rambo drove up to the church for his interview, he asked “Where’s the church?” He confessed he was not sure he was in the correct location since this hardly appeared to him to be a real church building.

Luckily, the Bishop’s Committee hired this young priest who was a bit of a visionary. After ongoing discussions and starts and stops, he made a dramatic commitment at one annual meeting, pointing out that the church could not grow without a building that looked like a church. He indicated that he wanted to be a part of a growing community that he might help thrive, and that would move forward. But it couldn’t grow without sustaining a priest’s salary at the same time. Then he crumbled up the proposed budget and threw it across the room! To assist with this forward movement, he increased the membership on the Building Committee, including Sandra Plant and Tom Bryan. Through Fr. Rambo’s efforts and a community outreach, the parish grew and the funds began to increase, as did gifts from the parishioners so that the salary for the priest could be covered and the Building Fund was reinstated.

We were able to borrow money from a revolving diocesan fund to help us get underway. Builders were contacted, and plans were drawn up. Dan remembers interviewing three companies, some for metal commercial buildings and others for “stick” buildings, with some members urging the Vestry to build “on the cheap” as Stephan Locke reports. Stephan recalls a set of plans that were posted on the wall of “the house” that urged on the congregation, but seemed to taunt them as time passed and the blue seemed to fade from the blueprints. From 1993–2006, many stalwart members kept the

dream alive, and the Building Fund viable. For a long period of time there was almost enough money, but still not quite enough.

Finally, with a good portion of the money saved, enthusiastic encouragement from Fr. Phillip's legacy and bold leadership from Fr. Birch Rambo, the project went forward. As Stephan said "It was now or never!" The Bishop's Committee's plans were submitted to the Diocese and gained formal approval. On October 5, 2005, Bishop Sauls joined Fr. Birch and the congregation for a Ground Breaking Service. It was a joyful but white-knuckling experience, as the congregation prayed for success and believed that their faith, patience and perseverance would be rewarded. The following year it was with love and thanksgiving, we dedicated our present church home!

Written by Grace Sear and Linda Myers, with additional information provided by Dan and Sally Evans, Sandra Plant, Stephan Locke, Jane Rainey and Tom Bryan. To contribute material for the final article, please contact Linda Myers at 513-368-6415 or [rukasa05@aol.com](mailto:rukasa05@aol.com)

### Book Club



This past September we began a Book Club. The original idea was to meet once a month via Zoom and discuss a book that we had read that month. This has been a wonderful addition to our parish life, and while we have not gone through any book at breakneck speed, we have had an opportunity to learn more about one another and to encourage one another in our walk as Christians. After a brief hiatus following the Christmas holiday, the Book Club will resume its regular Zoom meeting on Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

January's book is *The Five People You Meet In Heaven* by [Mitch Albom](#). Published in 2003, this novel remained on The New York Times Best Seller list for 95 weeks. Albom's story follows the life and death of a man named Eddie who, on his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, is killed and sent to heaven. There he encounters five people who had a significant and, perhaps somewhat surprising, impact on him while he was alive. After you read the book, please ask yourself who do you think your five people would be? This will be the basis of our discussion on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Leslie Farris for the link to the Zoom meeting. If you need a copy of the book, please contact Leslie Farris at [momfarris3@gmail.com](mailto:momfarris3@gmail.com) or 859-582-6367. Please keep in mind books that you may wish for a future Book Club. Submitted by Leslie Farris

### Room in the Inn

Well, the winter season is here and it is especially cold, if you live outside. Housing is provided for those in need at the Relax Inn in Richmond this year due to Covid 19 considerations. Several of our parish members are involved in this effort including registration, food preparation and cold weather items provided for the homeless. There are only twelve rooms available and on cold nights that is often not enough. With the grant that Mother Carol received during the Covid outbreak, our parish has been able to provide money for extra hotel rooms and additional food items. This has been a tremendous blessing to help those who are cold and hungry. It



also reminds us to be thankful to God for all that He provides for us! Feeling blessed, **Janie Jordan**

## Parish Mission House Renovations

The Renovations Committee has, like many other functions at church, been stalled by COVID concerns. With vaccines available, it is our hope to return to in-person worship later in 2021. To that end, it would be nice to have our spaces spruced up and ready to be used.

Currently we are getting estimates for work on the windows, gutters, downspouts, fascia board and soffits. We are also putting together some plans for organization of the kitchen, new flooring, and theme colors throughout the building. Work will begin very soon on repairing the lower cabinets in the kitchen and preparing the space for new flooring, a newer range and paint.

Any painters – we do need to paint the ‘green’ room in the Sanctuary building, hang the new write board and some organizational work in that space as well. So, if you like to help paint, plaster, drywall, glaze windows, nail stuff or hold stuff up, or another talent that you can lend to the renovation of the Parish Mission House, please contact Leslie Farris at [momfarris3@gmail.com](mailto:momfarris3@gmail.com) or 859-582-6367. Your assistance will be appreciated. Submitted by Leslie Farris

### A Controversial Christmas Carol *(submitted by Jane Rainey)*



Often during the Christmas season, we have sung “’Twas in the moon of wintertime” (Hymnal #114). Our Hymnal refers to the melody as a “French folk melody” with words by Jesse Edgar Middleton (1872-1960.) But this hymn, commonly known as the “Huron Carol” is often celebrated as the oldest North American Christmas carol, dating back to the 1640s. So how can both be correct and why has it become controversial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The earliest version of this hymn was indeed written in the 1640s by Jean de Brébeuf, a French Jesuit missionary to the Wendat people in what is now part of Canada. He wrote it in the Wendat language with the title “Jesous Ahatonnia” (Jesus is born) and set it to a French folk melody. It was later translated into French. The hymn is often referred to as the “Huron Carol.” Huron is another (and more familiar) term for Wendat but one that is seen by some as carrying derogatory implications because it is of French origin.

In 1926 Middleton wrote a so-called translation of the original found in many hymnals today. And this is where the controversy begins. Middleton’s words are not a translation but a rewriting that has been criticized for his “noble savage” portrayal of indigenous peoples as “innocent children of the forest... impoverished yet noble.” Unlike the author of the original words, he showed no knowledge of indigenous peoples. For example, his use in verse one of “mighty Gitchi Manitou” has been criticized because this is an Algonquin term and has no relation to the Wendat. (Our hymnal substitutes “God the Lord of all the earth”)

Another criticism focuses on the relation of missionary work and colonialism. While the hymn speaks of “the radiant boy who brings you beauty, peace, and joy,” the Wendat people were ravaged by smallpox and later forcibly removed and relocated many miles away. Does this hymn distract from awareness of the treatment of indigenous peoples of North America?

Opposing arguments run along the lines that it is good that hymnals in recent decades have, even if imperfectly, tried to recognize and honor diversity rather than relying largely on Anglo-European hymnody. We have done this with African-American spirituals as well as translations of hymns from Chinese, Japanese, and other ethnicities. And this hymn is still sung in the original by the Wendat community, now in Quebec, on Christmas. Here is a literal translation of Fr. Brébeuf’s words:

Have courage, you who are humans;

Jesus, he is born

Behold, the spirit who had us as prisoners has fled

Do not listen to it, as it corrupts the spirits of our minds

Jesus, he is born  
They are spirits, sky people, coming with a message for us  
They are coming to say, "Rejoice (Be on top of life)"  
Marie, she has just given birth. Rejoice"  
Jesus, he is born

Compare to the first verse of Middleton's version:

'Twas in the moon of winter-time When all the birds had fled,  
That mighty Gitchi Manitou Sent angel choirs instead;  
Before their light the stars grew dim, And wandering hunters heard the hymn:  
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, In excelsis gloria."

So, should we keep singing this hymn, but perhaps with a greater understanding of the complexities surrounding it, at a time when we are trying to come to terms with our past treatment of indigenous and enslaved peoples? We have a year to decide! Meanwhile you can hear the hymn in the original language, with French and English translations here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6IG6F6E5Ac> and the version found (except as noted above) in our Hymnal here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urkxPck8WuQ>

Sources:

<http://anishinabeknews.ca/2014/12/20/huron-carol-canadas-first-christmas-song/><https://united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/unwrapping-huron-carol><http://seabornsong.com/the-huron-carol/>  
<https://broadview.org/the-complex-history-of-the-huron-carol/>  
<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/best-ignatian-songs-jesus-ahatonhia/><http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/2019/12/17/twas-in-the-moon-of-wintertime-not-included-in-new-mennonite-hymnal/><http://diversitytree.blogspot.com/2011/12/huron-carol-racist.html>

Submitted by Jane Rainey.

### Karon's Korner

Before Glen and I moved to Richmond to be closer to our son and his family, we had lived on five acres of land, bordered on three sides by open fields and on the fourth by a creek. We lived there for around 40 years. So, I have several short stories about things that happened while we were there.

We brought our dog with us, a rescue we had adopted in Virginia. She loved the freedom to roam over the space she was not used to. One day I noticed she was making a nest with dried grass. Obviously, she was pregnant. When this went on for more than a couple of days, I called the only local vet. He was not the least concerned about my dog's difficulty. The next morning, I went outside to see her running up to me. It only took a second to see she was no longer pregnant. This is the part you may not believe. After I petted her, I asked her where her pup was. She turned and ran to the end of the garden. There was no way I could see this area from my back porch. Sure enough there was a very large single pup, deceased, lying there. She waited until I took a look at the body and then she took off for a run.

A couple of years later this same dog turned up pregnant again. This was different. The male dog hung around. She had a decent number of pups, all viable this time. Time passed and the pups thrived, and the papa still hung around. Unfortunately, my husband came home one evening to ask where she was. He thought a dog he saw on the highway looked like her. So, we drove the two miles up to the highway and there she was. My husband picked her up and brought her home in his truck. We put her in the corn crib. Our daughter was only three and we felt she would not understand what was going on. A good friend agreed to invite her to play with her children.

We took our daughter to her play date and came home to bury our dog. This is where the story gets a bit strange. We wrapped her in a sheet and carried her behind the barn where we had already dug

the burial plot. We looked up to see the papa herding the pups down to where we were. Unwrapping the sheet, all the pups and papa smelled her. Papa rounded up the pups and came back to the house. There was a porch swing on the back porch, we sat down and papa brought all the pups and sat down with us. It was as touching a funeral as any I have been to. Submitted by Karon Klick

### **Let's Keep Krogering**



We now have 21 households participating in the Kroger Rewards Program. From August 27 to November 28, our church received \$79.94. This is a great help in our budget.

It does not cost you anything to participate and there are no strings attached. You simply need to sign up online to join the Kroger Rewards program (<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>) and use our church account number which is **VP655** - Episcopal Church of Our Savior-Richmond. Or you can assist someone at the service desk to help you. Your participation in this program is greatly appreciated. Thank You!

### **Ancient Joke of the Week**

Late one night, a burglar broke into a house and while he was sneaking around, he heard a voice "Jesus is watching you!" He looked around and saw nothing. He kept on creeping and again, heard, "Jesus is watching you!" In a dark corner he saw a cage with a parrot inside. The burglar asked the parrot, "Was it you who said 'Jesus is watching you'?" The parrot replied "Yes." Relieved, the burglar asked "What's your name?" The parrot said "Clarence." The burglar said, "That's a stupid name. What idiot named you Clarence?" The parrot answered "The same idiot that named the rottweiler Jesus!"

If you would like to submit an article or announcement for the next issue, please send to Linda Myers, at [rukasa05@aol.com](mailto:rukasa05@aol.com) or call at 513-368-6415.