



A Message from Long-time Faithful Choir Member and Parish Leader, Bea Paine

May 2022

Dear Family, Friends, and loved ones,

It is so good to be here with all of you this morning. I grew up in the Methodist Church – loved going to church; ours was a very large church that seated approximately a thousand people. As we approached church you could hear greetings and lots of chatting.

When we arrived here, it was so quiet, a very different service. It felt very strange. Shortly after being here and getting to meet and know many people, I began singing in the choir and enjoyed becoming very active in church. We have five children and one who came to live with us at the age of 15, Jim's nephew. Our youngest, Patrick, was baptized here. My husband, Jim, went to work at Bluefield Sanitarium as an ENT Dr.

We lived in an apartment at first and then built a small home on Shady. We had to look for a larger place with five children plus Jim's nephew. We found a beautiful lot on Mt. View. Our friend and employee, who was an architect, helped with the design. Our living room with high ceilings and stained-glass windows presented a challenge. We loved the stained-glass windows and I have spent a lot of time there with my Day by Day and the Bible.

I don't know why I am writing this; just thought I would like to thank all of you, who have become our friends and family. I am at the age of 95 and Jim just turned 101 on Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> (Happy Birthday Jim!), and this is a goodbye to all of you who have been such loyal friends over the years. With much love and Best Regards for all.

Love,

Bea, Jim, Teresa, Pamela, Jim, Patrick and Rick, and all the members of our family.

May God Bless you all.

We are blessed to have Father Lou to replace our priest, Father Chad.



### Reflections on the Transition *by the Rev. Lou Hays*

It has been four months since I introduced myself in the January issue of *The Rainbow*. And what a four months it has been! The normal work of the parish has continued—weekly worship, pastoral care, outreach, adult Christian education, Vestry meetings and the like. We have returned to more normal times with the lifting of the mask mandate, the return of the choir, congregational singing and coffee hour, thanks be to God! But at the same time, sometimes very publicly and sometimes behind the scenes, the work of transition began and continues, full steam ahead.

You said your goodbyes to Chad and his family, and you welcomed me so warmly. The Rector Search Committee, consisting of Becky Beckett as Chairperson, and David Hardin, Mimi Merritt, Susanne Pulse and Mary Catherine Williams (sadly, Bill Denney stepped down due to the conflicting demands of his job), is up and running. The Vestry has been briefed on the details of transition ministry and the Rector search process. And on May 15 the

entire congregation will have the opportunity to provide critically important information for finding the person that we believe God is calling to serve as the next Rector of Christ Episcopal Church.

I think it's fair to say that we have come a long way in just four months. But it may not be apparent to many people in the congregation. And you are probably wondering, when will we have a new Rector? So let me briefly outline where we are, what still needs to be done, and how long this could all take:

- The Rector Search Committee is preparing a major portion of the Parish Profile. This is the document that serves as the primary solicitation for the Rector position. It tells the story of our parish and our community, and the characteristics of the person we believe God is calling to serve as the next Rector.
- The Committee has chosen a theme for the search: "See, I am making all things new." This is from the Epistle reading that we will hear in our worship on May 15, and it expresses our belief that God is doing a new thing with us, and that discerning God's will is key to a successful search.
- The Parish Profile also contains information about the core values of the parish, the hopes and dreams for the future, and the necessary qualifications of the person God is calling to help us turn those dreams into reality, in a manner consistent with our core values. This portion of the Parish Profile will be developed based on the information gathered at our May 15 "Envisioning Our Future" event.
- Once finalized by the Search Committee, the Parish Profile must be approved by the Vestry and the Diocese. No applications from clergy may be solicited until the Parish Profile and substantial other information has been submitted to and publicized by the Episcopal Church's Office of Transition Ministry.
- Applications for our position will be sent to the Diocese for initial screening before being sent to the Rector Search Committee for evaluation. Some candidates will be interviewed by Zoom, and ultimately a small number may be brought to Bluefield for in-person interviews. The ultimate candidate must be approved by the Vestry and the Bishop. All of this will be done in the utmost secrecy without publicly revealing any names until everything is signed, sealed, and delivered with the person who will be the next Rector.

As you can imagine, all of this can take a lot of time. Once we have finished the Profile, much of what happens and how long it takes will be out of our control. And when there is a final candidate who has been chosen and fully approved, it will take some period of time for that person to move to Bluefield. So how long will all of this take? It will happen in the fullness of time, in God's time, not necessarily our time. Suffice it to say, it is likely to be sometime in the fall at the earliest when a new Rector will be here. And if that is the case, we will have moved more quickly than most transitions, which are said to take between 12 to 18 months on average.

In the meantime, life will go on at Christ Church. We won't sit on our hands waiting for the next Rector to arrive. We are particularly reminded during this season of Easter that Christ is alive and working through each and every one of us. We are an Easter people. Neither we nor Christ are in the tomb. God bless you all for your ministry at Christ Church and beyond. Peace and blessings for a most joyful Eastertide.



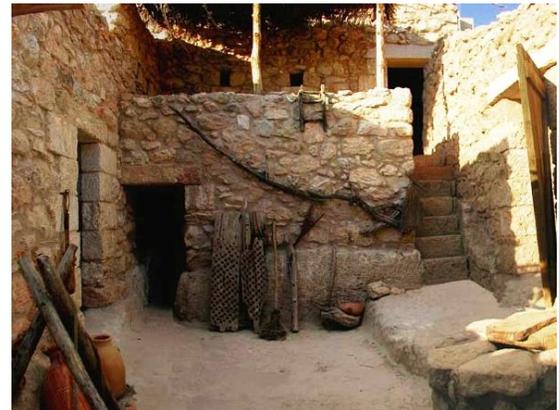
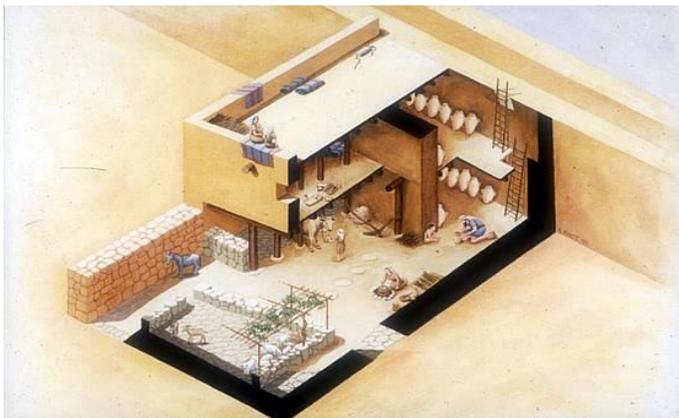
### **Early Christian "House Churches" *By Elizabeth Clement***

The theme of our new Rector search is Revelation 21:5, "See, I am making all things new." Our church is thankful for its beginnings and history, and for all of our previous members and priests. At this juncture though, we look outward and forward –toward a kind of fresh start. This provides an opportunity for us to step back and think about the most essential elements of our worship and work together and how we can best move into the future as Christ Episcopal Church.

Over the years, most groups and organizations become layered and complicated with well-intentioned structures, protocols, committees, and traditions. Many are beneficial; some are not. An interesting perspective is provided by looking at the New Testament Church. This would seem to represent the bare bones of Christian community. Why did they meet? Where did they meet? What happened at their gatherings?

The earliest followers of Jesus were mostly Jewish Christians. After Jesus ascended, they wanted to celebrate his continued presence, and they believed that as they gathered, he was “in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20) These early believers called themselves “disciples of the Lord” and “followers of the Way.” They did not meet in buildings with stained glass windows, pews, polished crosses, and flowers. Although some Scripture reading and preaching were done in synagogues, most meetings were held in private homes. Meetings were held in homes mostly because, until the Edict of Milan in 313, Christian worship was illegal.

These “house churches” are mentioned many times in the book of Acts and also in several of Paul’s letters, according to “House Churches in the New Testament,” an article in *St. Anthony Messenger* written by Theresa Doyle-Nelson. She notes that biblical references to these meeting places are not lengthy but “occur within intriguing stories of faith, weaving together colorful glimpses of ancient Christian life.” She describes five house churches, all of which had women as primary or secondary proprietors: Mary, Lydia, Nympha, Priscilla and Aquila, and Philemon and Apphia. Houses in first century Palestine were made of rock and mud brick, most having two to four rooms and a courtyard. The roof could be used as another room, for a workspace or as a sleeping area in hot weather. Ten to 20 people could meet in the smaller homes, while 30 or more could gather in larger homes, utilizing the courtyard and dining areas. The church group mentioned in Acts chapter 20 must have met in a large home. We learn that when the young man, Eutychus, sank into a deep sleep on the windowsill (as Paul talked on and on until midnight!), he fell to the ground three floors below! Fortunately, the Lord and Paul took care of Eutychus, and he survived.



Artist’s impression of a first century home in Palestine.

A home in first century Palestine (both photographs are from Mater Christi College, from *Women in the Bible*, copyright 2006, Elizabeth Fletcher.

Doyle-Nelson tells us that early believers met after the Ascension “to ponder the life and message of Jesus and grow in their faith, supporting each other with prayer and Christian love.” That is a good model to follow, Christian worship and fellowship in a nutshell.

Paul Trebilco, who teaches theology at the University of Otago in New Zealand discussed house churches in a lecture entitled “House Churches in the First Century.” Drawing on Paul’s letters to Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, and to Timothy, he describes house church meetings that included the reading of Scripture, teaching, admonishing, singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” and serving those in need. It was also very important for them to

“break bread” together, which is the way they often referred to the Eucharist. In Paul’s letters, he carefully describes the Lord’s Supper to the church at Corinth and presents it as a tradition that is to be kept. In I Corinthians 11:23-26, the instructions he gives for the Lord’s Supper are the words used by our priest every Sunday. Probably the host of the house church led the service, and the first altars were likely the dining tables of those families, according to Owen Chadwick, a British Anglican priest who was a prominent historian of Christianity. The impression we get about these relatively small gatherings is that a generous spirit of hospitality prevailed and that all were encouraged to be involved and participate. Of course, the “initiation ceremony” for all believers was baptism because “something happens there which is fundamental to establishing the identity of the group and binds them together.” ([christianity.com](http://christianity.com)) Many baptisms took place outside near a river but some occurred inside homes. What traditions and activities do we consider essential and most meaningful as we gather together in the Beloved Community?

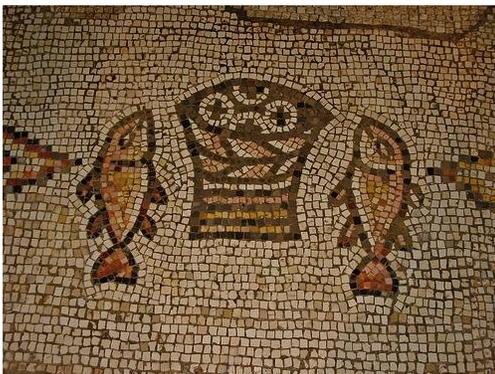
The fish was an important symbol for early Christians. Sometimes it was even used to covertly mark a house church meeting place. There are several Scripture references that link Jesus to fish: the feeding of the 5,000, “I will make you fishers of men,” Jesus grilling fish for the disciples on the beach after the resurrection. The letters in the Greek word for FISH also form an acrostic for “the original credo, the fundamental article of faith for the earliest Christians” as shown below. Many people of faith were persecuted, even put to death, for refusing to worship the Roman gods or the emperor. What beliefs and practices do we hold most dearly?

Join our Beloved Community on May 15 as we meet together to talk about what we care about at Christ Episcopal Church.

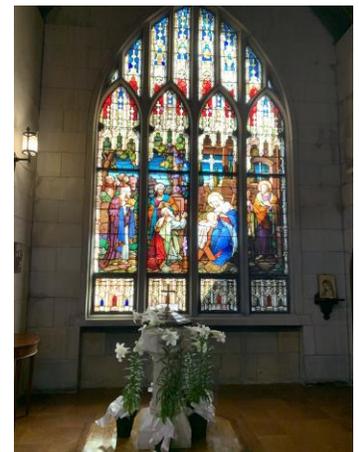


Ιησους	Χριστος	Θεος	Υιος	Σωτηρ
JESUS	CHRIST	GOD	SON	SAVIOR

“JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, SAVIOR”



Mosaic on the floor of The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes near Capernaum.



Vestry Minutes  
April 20, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church-Bluefield was held on April 20, 2022 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mary Catherine Williams, Susanne Pulse, Linda Ammar, David Kersey, Elizabeth Clement, Betty Nash, Peter Richardson, Peter Taylor, and Vic Bowman  
Also present were Don Kersey, Treasurer and Rev. Lou Hays.

Lou called the meeting to order, declared the presence of a quorum and opened the meeting with a reading from Revelations, Chapter 21:1-6, which is also the reading for our Sunday service on May 15, which is the parish-wide event to assist with the search process.

Lou advised that the search committee had adopted a quote from that reading as its theme: "See, I am making all things new", with the thought that God is doing a "new thing" in our parish with the search for a new rector. Lou then led the Vestry in the prayer for Transition.

The minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting were reviewed and upon motion of Linda Ammar and second of Peter Taylor approved unanimously.

Lou provided a report on the Search Committee progress. A calendar of projected progress, culminating in delivering the parish profile to the diocese in mid-June was distributed along with minutes from the sub-committee meeting of April 20. A special service and congregational meeting will be held on May 15 as part of the search process, followed by lunch. A series of questions was distributed to elicit input from members of the church on certain topics. Once we finalize the profile, it must be approved by the diocese. Bishop Matthew Cowden is our primary contact for the process. The profile must be in digital format and we will obtain professional assistance to make it as appealing and interesting as possible. The next search committee meeting will be on April 27, 2022.

Don Kersey gave the treasurer's report. The pledges year to date are up, but the non-pledged income is down. The \$4,000+ electric bill is for a 2 month period. Upon motion of Mary Catherine Williams and second of Betty Nash the report was unanimously approved.

David Kersey gave the Senior Warden's report. We can increase our liability insurance by \$3 million for an annual premium of \$250. Upon motion of Vic Bowman and second of Mary Catherine Williams, it was unanimously agreed to purchase the additional coverage and Don Kersey was authorized to arrange the increase. Father Chad and the church are going to write a joint letter to the Eli Lilly Foundation with a proposal for return/distribution of Father Chad's sabbatical funds held in the church's checking account. With two recent contributions to the Columbarium Fund, pushing the balance above \$25,000 First Community Bank has converted the existing Columbarium checking account to interest bearing. The account, number, signers, etc. have all remained the same. Susanne Pulse has located an engraver which can engrave the metal plates on the St. Mary's Columbarium cross. A meeting of the Columbarium Committee will be called to discuss making the name plates uniform and addressing other matters. Summit bank has confirmed that our second PPP government loan was forgiven on February 9, 2022. Emma has been asked to enter the portal and print out a written confirmation of that forgiveness.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden's report. A Building and Grounds meeting was held and a list of priorities was discussed:-Railing in columbarium garden; Doors on either end of the columbarium; Plaster work on hallway wall-Jim Pulse to address; Cosmetic repairs around the church necessary due to the heating and cooling project. It was agreed to obtain quotes for repair or replacement of the columbarium railing.

The miscellaneous furniture accessories from other churches, scattered around our church, was discussed. David Kersey is to discuss that issue with the Bishop to determine how the diocese wants us to dispose of all that we do not want or need. Peter Richardson recognized and thanked Elizabeth Clement for her work in the children's chapel, cleaning and straightening up after the heating and cooling project.

Vestry Reports- Peter Taylor advised that Food Pantry will be held on Thursday April 21. With the warmer weather, kerosene vouchers will not be distributed. Art Meade has drafted a grant proposal to the Community Foundation for work to convert our Rowley Hall closet into a proper food storage and distribution center for the food pantry.

Vic Bowman is still reviewing possible methods for online gifts to the church.

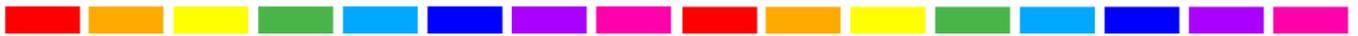
Linda Ammar and Mary Catherine Williams gave the Parish Life report. A carry in lunch for visiting Paul Barker will be held after church on Sunday May 1. The Parish Picnic will be held on August 28. Meals will be provided for summer mission groups-specifics to be determined later. The downtown community picnic was discussed, and the Lutherans and Presbyterians will be contacted to determine their interest.

Susanne Pulse gave the communications report. The Rainbow and weekly emails continue to be regularly published.

Lou gave the rector's report. Attendance comparisons for Palm Sunday and Easter, year over year were, 40-36 and 66-48, respectively. We had 17 on Maundy Thursday, 14 for Stations of the Cross and 13 for Good Friday evening service. Lou thanked the Altar Guild for their hard work in setting up our worship space for those services. Lou will be out of town May 1 and 8. Paul Barker will serve on the 1<sup>st</sup> and Russ Hatfield will serve on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Lou will be back for the May 15 event/service. He reported that attendance for the Wednesday Lenten programs was good and also for the Ukraine vigil in Chicory Square. The Malcolm Guite service was a treat and very well attended.

New business-Doreen Dimes' birthday is coming up and a basket for cards will be placed on the banister.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned on motion of Vic Bowman and with prayer by Lou.



## **MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT FOR APRIL FOOD PANTRY- April 21, 2022**

Volunteers: Betty Nash, Peter and Patricia Taylor; 23 grocery bags handed out; 11 Grant's \$20 gift cards handed out

### **UNION MISSION - Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

Meals prepared: 37 meals served Wednesday evening

Menu: sausage, egg, and cheese sandwiches with homemade

desserts from First United Methodist Church, Bluefield, VA; cheese balls and soft drinks

Wednesday volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Art Mead and Patty Richardson of Christ Episcopal Church, Betty Watson and Marjorie Justice of Bluefield, VA.

### **Wednesday, April 27, 2022**

Meals prepared & served: 151.

Menu: BBQ on a bun, cole slaw, baked beans, brownie and a drink. Wednesday Volunteers: Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa, and Patty Richardson of Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV; Charlie Helmandollar, Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA; Fredia Helmandollar, Cumberland Heights Baptist Church; Majorie Justice and Betty Watson, Bluefield, VA



## May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> The Third Sunday of Easter 10:00 Holy Eucharist	<b>2</b> The Apostles Saint Philip and Saint James	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> The Fourth Sunday of Easter 10:00 Holy Eucharist Mother's Day	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 4:00 Union Mission	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> The Fifth Sunday of Easter 9:30 Holy Eucharist Special Meeting Envisioning Our Future	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:00 Vestry	<b>19</b> 9:00 Food Pantry	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> The Sixth Sunday of Easter Rogation Sunday 10:00 Holy Eucharist	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 3:30 Union Mission	<b>26</b> Ascension Day	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> The Seventh Sunday of Easter: The Sunday after Ascension Day 10:00 Holy Eucharist	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary				

**The following people have graciously donated flowers for the month of May:**

May 1, 2022 Terry Whittington  
 May 8, 2022 Dr. and Mrs. Paine  
 May 15, 2022 John and Becky Beckett  
 May 22, 2022 Don and Mary Catherine Williams  
 May 29, 2022 Jim and Susanne Pulse

**Lectors and Acolyte Schedule for May:**

May 1 David Kersey, Lector Rob Merritt, Acolyte  
 May 8 Mike Lilly, Lector Katherine Lewis, Acolyte  
 May 15 Rob Merritt, Lector Becky Beckett, Acolyte  
 May 22 Linda Ammar, Lector Rob Merritt, Acolyte  
 May 29 Ted Lewis, Lector Becky Beckett, Acolyte

**Altar Guild for May:**

Betty Nash and Grey Kiser

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
200 DUHRING STREET  
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



**MAY 2022**

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