

# The Rainbow



MAY 2020

## **Getting to Know Paul Barker** *by Mimi Merritt*

While Father Chad is away from Bluefield this summer with his family, Christ Church will be in good hands.

Most everyone knows the Rev. Russ Hatfield, who before retiring served as priest for St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Bluefield, Va. Russ has filled in for Father Chad several times and is always a welcome guest at Christ Church.

But not everyone has met Paul Barker, who will be on hand from June 1 through August, even though he has actually been connected to Christ Church a couple of years.

Recently approved as a candidate for ordination as a deacon, Barker has for the past several years been bringing mission teams to McDowell County from his home church in Mt. Lebanon, Pa., just outside Pittsburgh.

As former youth minister at St. Paul's – where Christ Church's former priest Bill Morgan once served as assistant rector – Paul began coming to McDowell County with youth mission teams to work with the Highland Education Project and Food Bank. Since HEP's reorganization, Paul has worked directly with Father Chad the past two years to continue the work. This summer will mark his third year bringing teams – a youth team and an adult team -- that are housed in the dormitory in First Presbyterian Church.

Barker is excited about serving as Chad's replacement while he is on sabbatical. The work that Barker does in Bluefield this summer will fulfill required fieldwork necessary for his ordination, a process that he says Chad has encouraged. The rest of his fieldwork will have been completed in his work with a small parish in Pittsburgh, which ends when he comes to Bluefield.

Though his term in Bluefield begins June 1, the plans are for Barker to visit two Sundays in May and stay a day or two each time.

"I'll be here to meet and greet members, and to observe how the worship service is done and how things are done," he said in a recent telephone conversation. "I want to learn the Christ Church way of going about things."

In addition to serving as our pastoral leader, Barker will also host the youth and adult mission teams coming from his home church in Pennsylvania, as well as a couple other mission teams scheduled to come.

While in Bluefield, Barker will stay at a guest cottage on the campus of Bluefield College. He said he is excited that he will have with him his two dogs: Jack, a rescue dog acquired from the humane society in McDowell County, most likely a Border Terrier with a strong herding and running instinct; and Montie, a full-bred Border Collie.

Barker's wife, a nurse case manager in Pittsburgh, will visit on occasion but cannot relocate to the Bluefields this summer due to the increased demands on her work during the pandemic. The couple live in Pittsburgh with her two daughters.

Barker has a son at Virginia Tech in the Corps of Cadets and a daughter who lives and works in Pittsburgh, though she has been furloughed during the stay-at-home orders.



**Reflections** *by the Rev. Chad Slater*

January or early February, I paid little attention to it.

When I learned this illness had reached the United States, I still didn't really think much of it. This sort of thing happens from time to time, right?

When states started asking residents to shelter in place and close businesses and schools, I thought, "Good, that will take care of it." then West Virginia went on lockdown I was convinced we'd be back open in a matter of two or three weeks.

As I write this, I have no real idea how many days we've been in quarantine (and I usually have lost track of which day of the week it is).

This present illness has been an inconvenience for me, but I am reminded daily that for others it has been devastating. So many have died around the world. While others bury loved ones, the worst that I have had to deal with has been burying travel plans.

I used to think I was in control. If this pandemic has taught me anything, it's that I am in no way in control.

To be honest, it's a hard lesson to learn. I tend to want to micromanage—to know every detail so I can analyze every situation and make decisions based on all careful critique of every possible scenario. That's how I maintain order in life. I can't do that right now. I don't have all the information about this illness, its timetable for spreading, ways to remedy the sickness, or what governments will do in order to stop the spread. It's driving me absolutely barking mad.

And I can't do anything about it—at least that's what I thought.

I have come to realize that I never had all the information—I didn't know, or at least appreciate, those things which seemed so common to me. I have been living a life of cheapened relationships because I took them for granted. I have been operating under the assumption that everything I want is within easy reach. I had lost sight of those things that truly matter in life.

I don't want to be that way anymore.

I may not be able to control the world around me, but I can control one thing: what I pray. I pray that I will never again take for granted the luxuries of my Western life—toilet paper, groceries, and regular haircuts. I pray that I will never again take for granted dinner with friends, trips in a car, and fellowship with my fellow Christians. I pray that I will never again lose an appreciation for my opportunities to worship freely. I pray that I will rely more on the will of God than on my own desires. I pray that I can be a channel of God's peace in this world more and more each day. I pray we learn from this experience. I pray that each of us can be more empathetic to those who have suffered loss, face unemployment, are alone, or ill. I pray we come out of this experience with the will to change the world, because I pray we don't go back to the old way of living in cheap comfort. I pray we give our lives over to faith and trust in God more than we trust in ourselves.

I don't know what the future holds—and trust me, I wish I did. But I do know who holds the future in His hands. Day by day, let us take comfort in knowing that wherever we find ourselves, God is already there. Let us never again think we are in control. Amen.



## Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

April 15, 2020

Present via [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com)

Linda Ammar, David Kersey, Frank Dragotto, Becky Beckett, Senior Warden, Donald Kersey  
Chad Slater, Rector, Elizabeth Clement, Tom Coughlan, Junior Warden

Becky Beckett called the meeting to order and Father Slater led the group in an opening prayer.

### **Financial Report**

Frank Dragotto discussed the financial report indicating that our assets were down by \$242,000 due to the fluctuation of the stock market. He said our cash flow was adequate and we were able to meet our expenses at this time. \$50,000 worth of DeBottis was sold to pay for heating/cooling improvements and \$25,000 has been sent to S and R. The balance sheets for February and March were discussed and Frank said we need to “stay the course” during this period of time. It was stated that the church is taking in less than it is paying out and has applied for a loan for small businesses and non-profit organizations. We are waiting to hear as to whether or not Christ Church will receive a loan. It was decided that Chad send out a reminder to parishioners to keep their pledges up to date. Linda Ammar made a motion to accept the financial report and Tom Coughlan seconded the motion.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Becky Beckett -Senior Warden** Becky thanked Frank for his work regarding the church’s finances and the application for the loan; she also thanked Chad for putting together all the online services during Easter week.

**Tom Coughlan – Junior Warden** Tom stated that the leak in the children’s nursery has not been found and will need to be repaired once the leak has been located.

**Communications (David Kersey)** David expressed his thanks to Chad for putting together the Rainbow during the month of March.

**Christian Education (Elizabeth Clements)** Elizabeth indicated that she might try to have a meeting via [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) to discuss what direction we want to take regarding Christian Education for our young people.

**Outreach – (Donald Kersey)** The Food Pantry continues to operate with a limited number of volunteers. Breakfast is not being served at this time and the community picks their bags up at the downstairs door outside Rowley Hall.

**Parish Life – (Linda Ammar)** A Parish Life meeting was held March 8<sup>th</sup> to organize upcoming events through the month of June.

### **Rector’s Report**

Fr. Chad stated that we were coming to the end of the heating/cooling project. All of the heating and cooling units have been installed and are operational. Twenty-five thousand dollars has been paid out and a walk through will be done with Travis Odle before the remaining \$25,000 is paid. Peter Richardson is to be thanked for his attention to this project.

The stone for Wanda Myers has been set in the Columbarium.

Chad discussed the services for Easter week, stating that the Palm Sunday video had 100 views while the Easter Vigil had 500 views. He discussed the possibility of streaming church services in the future.

The Bishop has closed churches through May 15, 2020.

Chad conducted the funeral service for Stella Stultz at Mercer Funeral Home.

Discussion took place about the agreement for Paul and Russ during Chad’s sabbatical. Elizabeth noted several items in the agreement which need to be corrected. A copy of this agreement will be sent to David Kersey who will look over it. The vestry will be emailed after corrections have been made, at which time it will be asked to be approved. David Kersey moved and Alyson seconded to approve the LOA which was passed by majority vote via email. Travel insurance for Chad’s trip beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> does not cover loss due to a pandemic.

The next vestry meeting is scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>. We will meet either via [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) or in person at the church. Chad provided the closing prayer; Donald Kersey made the motion to adjourn and Tom seconded the motion.

## Union Mission Report *by Art Mead*

At the Union Mission, Craig Hammond reports that, with Episcopal financial support, 119 meals have been served this month. Ninety-six were distributed on April 8 and 9, and an additional 23 were distributed on April 11. Mission staff prepared, packaged and served in the Styrofoam boxes regularly used. The menu was BBQ on a bun, baked beans (probably without Shirley's secret ingredients), coleslaw, and a dessert.

Under lockdown protocol, only two clients were allowed in the building together and those in line outside were required to maintain a proper social distance.



## Easter Season *by Mimi Merritt*

It was an Easter unlike any we've ever experienced, no doubt about it.

We've not been together physically as a church family for Sunday morning worship since March 8. Our schedule of Wednesday night Lenten services, carefully planned by Father Chad, came to an abrupt end following the last one on March 11. Though our Food Pantry mission has continued, thanks to dedicated volunteers who meet by necessity in small groups to distribute food bags, we've had to suspend much that is at the heart of our love for Christ Church, including passing the peace on Sunday mornings, the fellowship of coffee hours, Father Chad's sermons, Terry Whittington's organ, spring flowers in the Columbarium, and filling food pantry bags together after church while we laugh and talk.

We've had a different journey this Lent and Easter, so many of us separated by distances far and not so far from family and friends, and all of us without our Sundays at Christ Church and our traditions, like the Seder Meal. But the season has still been deeply meaningful to us all because of everything that Father Chad has done to make it so. From his encouragement for us all to livestream Sunday morning services at the National Cathedral, to his own messages posted on Facebook and You Tube, he has brought home to us the rich wonder of this season.

Particularly special to many in the Christ Church family was the Great Vigil of Easter, livestreamed from Christ Church on Saturday night, April 11; and the Easter Parade on Easter Sunday morning, when everyone was invited to drive by the church between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. to receive blessings from Father Chad. As many as 400 viewers tuned in to the Easter Vigil, which included readings, the Proclamation of the Resurrection, Spiritual Holy communion, and the Great Blessing of Easter, brought to us live from Christ Church by Father Chad and his dedicated assistants, David Hardin, Terry Whittington and Allyson Bowling.





On Sunday, about 50 people drove by during the 30 minutes designated for blessings. What they saw was Father Chad at the altar table, which was set up on the porch, beside a cross beautifully covered in carnations. The dozens of Easter lilies that usually adorn the sanctuary were festively lined up all along the front of the church. And the chimes were joyfully ringing out the hymns of Easter.

Among the many who drove by Easter morning were Charlie Blevins and Betty Nash.

“Seeing Father Chad surrounded by lilies and the altar dressings while extending a blessing filled us with hope,”

Betty said. “Thank you, Father Chad!”

Norma Mahood-Bay also drove by, and she said she was so moved that she pulled over to take pictures, several including Jennifer, Emma and Ben, as well as Father Chad.

“I was so happy to see them, especially the children!” she said. “I’ve missed them so much.” Norma said she appreciated all that Father Chad has done to make Lent and Easter meaningful during this challenging time, but she especially loved the addition of the drive-by blessing.

“I was so touched,” she said. “It meant so much, to have that Easter Sunday experience, in person.”

Peter and Patricia Taylor also drove by.

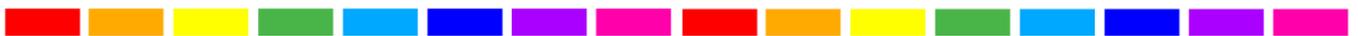
“It was a different kind of Easter for everyone, but the reverence of the day was truly captured by Father Chad,” said Patricia. “And Peter and I just had to remember his parents, when we heard the chimes.”

It was a gift of a carillon from Peter’s parents, Dr. Brookie and Charlotte Taylor, longtime members of Christ Church, that made the chimes a reality. A condition of the gift was that every week day at noon, the chimes would play “When the Saints Go Marching In,” and they do.

“We would love to commend Terry for his talent and how beautifully he played Easter morning,” Patricia said.

“When the Saints Go Marching In” and all music played from the bell tower, where the carillon is housed, is usually automated, according to Terry Whittington, but Easter morning was the very first time he had actually played it “live” to be heard outside.

“And I played all the Easter hymns in the book!” he said, adding that many drive-by church members – and others – told him they pulled into the parking lot to sit in their cars and enjoy the music.



THANK YOU SO MUCH FATHER CHAD!

The Rainbow would like to thank Father Chad for all he did during this very challenging Lenten season and on Easter Sunday, and for all he continues to do during the Easter season to hold us together as a family united in Christ.

Can you guess which Christ Church member lives in each of these houses?



**Beautiful Bluefield** by Mimi Merritt

Christ Church member David Hardin has been a major role player in the development and publication of a beautiful coffee table book that features some of the loveliest houses, gardens, churches, and public buildings and spaces in Bluefield, W.Va.

The book, *Beautiful Bluefield*, a fundraiser for the Bluefield Beautification Commission and the Bluefield Historical Society, was the brainchild of Hardin, a member of the Beautification Commission, and Gail Satterfield, the commission's chair. Its 150 photographs – including two of Christ Church – were taken by local and nationally known photographer Hal Brainerd. A foreword and history were written by Jim Nelson, interim vice president for community engagement at Bluefield State College.



Along with photographs of Christ Church are pictures of the homes of several Christ Church members, including John and Becky Beckett, Dave and Debbie Faber, and Peter and Patty Richardson, Linda Thomas, and David Harden and Terry Whittington.

Copies are available for \$55 by contacting David Hardin at 304-325-8145 or by ordering online at the Bluefield Beautiful website. Books can be shipped for an additional \$14.



**PRAYER LIST**

Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Lee Puckett, Sr., Mabeline & Elton Robinson, Bea Paine, Lynn Burney, Marilyn Denney, Donna Fortune, Bob and Peggy Walk, Susan Jewell, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Sarah Irwin, Janet Slager, Kelly Cox, Mike McLeod, Maxine Stevenson, Dean Farmer, Bob Moore, Haddon Lazenby, Miffi Williams, Jack Burchette, Nick, JL, Cis Barrett, Linda Jones

May 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 The Apostles Saint Philip and Saint James	2
3 Fourth Sunday of Easter	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Fifth Sunday of Easter	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Sixth Sunday of Easter	18	19	20 7:00 Vestry	21 Ascension Day 9:00 Food Pantry	22	23
24 Seventh Sunday of Easter Sunday after Ascension Day	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday						

**BIRTHDAYS FOR MAY**

May 1	Murial Mead	May 5	Theron Lewis	May 9	Joyce Morgan	May 22	Nancy Faris
May 2	Sloane Hunter	May 7	Ramona Parks	May 16	Jay Kephart	May 22	Patricia Taylor
May 3	Pat McCoy	May 7	Patty Richardson	May 17	Vanessa Hall	May 23	Gina Paine
May 5	Vic Bowman	May 8	Chris Justice	May 17	Brayden Wimmer	May 24	Lori Hypes
May 5	Lynn McCue Burney	May 9	Parker Anderson	May 19	Barbara Sudduth		

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
200 DUHRING STREET  
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



**MAY 2020**

**Editor in Chief:** David M. Kersey

**Editor:** Susanne Pulse ([susannepulse@gmail.com](mailto:susannepulse@gmail.com))

**Copy Editor:** Mimi Merritt

**Contributors:** Linda Ammar, Bea Paine, Mimi Merritt

**Graphic Design:** Susanne Pulse