

# The Rainbow



JUNE 2022

A Response to the Texas School Shootings

*This is an abbreviated version of the sermon preached by the Rev. Lou Hays on the Seventh Sunday of Easter and based on John 17:20-26.*

Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is fond of saying, "If it's not about love, it's not about God" This past week, with the slaughter of innocents - 19 children and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas - was certainly not about love. It was about shock, disbelief, anger, grief, fear and maybe even helplessness and hopelessness.

This morning's Gospel, taken from a longer passage known as Jesus' high priestly prayer, is probably best known for what we heard at the beginning of our Gospel. Jesus is praying to God for us, that we "may all be one." But the last verse, the punch line, Jesus' final words before heading to his betrayal and arrest, prove that our Presiding Bishop is right. The whole point of Jesus' ministry is love. Jesus says, "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Scholars debate exactly what Jesus means when he asks God that we may all be one. But one thing is certain. He didn't mean what we have experienced this past week, or with the all too frequent other examples of mass shootings. Clearly Jesus didn't mean what the world has become. Jesus weeps for what our world has become.

Did you know that there have been 27 school shootings so far this year? Did you know that firearms are now the leading cause of death of children, overtaking motor vehicles for the first time, with over 4,000 children dead in one year? About two-thirds were killed in homicides, about 30% in suicides, about 3% in accidents, and the rest undetermined.

Some may feel that it's not appropriate to preach about firearms and shootings, that it's political. I beg to differ. I'm not preaching about politics. I'm preaching about how we are called to live our lives as Christians, about living into our Baptismal Covenant promises to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves, and to strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being. I'm preaching about what our Presiding Bishop calls turning the nightmares of our world into God's dreams for our world.

I don't have any easy solutions to offer, and I know that reasonable people can differ and agree to disagree. But I do think that something has to give, that we can't go on this way. And I do have questions, as I'm sure we all do.

Should an 18-year old be able to purchase what is commonly called an assault rifle? Should a convicted felon, like the person who shot at a crowd not far from where I live in Charleston last Wednesday, be able to obtain an assault rifle? Does anyone not in the military or police have a legitimate reason to have an assault rifle?

And there are many other questions. Can we do a better job of protecting our children? There were clearly serious mistakes made in Uvalde, mistakes that may have resulted in more loss of life. Can we do a better job of providing mental health services? Can we do a better job of identifying and preventing shooters from carrying out their plans? A recent study showed that about two-thirds of successful shooters had a prior criminal record and a similar percentage had a history of violence. Almost all were in a state of crisis in the days or weeks prior to the shooting,

and an astonishing almost half revealed their plans in advance, to family members, friends, colleagues, strangers and even law enforcement officials.

So what does Jesus mean when he asks that we be one? I believe Jesus calls on us to be one in the love of God through Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus calls us to be instruments of God's love in trying to heal a broken world in which mass shootings and the slaughter of innocents have become almost expected. In "Hymn for the Hurting," a poem in response to the Uvalde tragedy, Amanda Gorman writes "Thus while hate cannot be terminated, it can be transformed into a love that lets us live," and "May we choose our children over chaos. May another innocent never be lost." Amen to that.

May we be one with the love of God through Jesus Christ. May we be a beacon of hope, love and light for our community and beyond. May we be the light of Christ shining in the darkness, and may the darkness never overcome it. Amen.

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### **Prayers for the Victims of the Texas School Shootings and Violence Everywhere**

Holy God, your beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to entrust the children killed in the Texas school shootings and their two teachers to your never failing lovingkindness. We grieve the loss of all of these precious human lives. Give your grace to those who grieve in Texas and beyond, that they may find comfort in your presence and be strengthened by your Spirit. Be with all those who mourn, and draw them together in your healing love; in the name of the one who suffered, died, and rose for us, Jesus our Savior. Amen.

God of peace, we remember all those who have died in recent incidents of mass shootings. We remember particularly the 22 lives lost at Robb Elementary School in Texas, and earlier the ten lives lost at the grocery store in Buffalo, New York. We pray for all victims of violence, for the families and loved ones of the victims, for the first responders and all who care for the victims, for teachers and school personnel who live in fear that they and their students might become victims, for all whose lives have been darkened by mass shootings, for the children of our community, that we might love, cherish and protect them, and for all the children of our world, and for those who suffer from mental illness and particularly those who do not receive the treatment and resources they need. Amen.

Loving God, we come before you in pain and sadness. You gave the gift of new life, and now it has been taken from us. Hear the cry of our hearts for the pain of our loss. Be with us and all who struggle to understand the mystery of life and death. Receive all the victims of these tragedies into the arms of your loving embrace, to live in your gracious and eternal love, and help us to commit ourselves to your tender care. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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### **Transition Update**

There's light at the end of the tunnel, and it's not a speeding locomotive! You and your Rector Search Committee have had a very productive month of May, and you are getting very close to having your Rector position available to potential candidates throughout the Episcopal Church.

You may have been one of 36 parishioners who gathered in Rowley Hall on May 15 for Envisioning Our Future - to pray, celebrate and share the love of God and of one another. Collectively the people discerned the core values

of Christ Episcopal Church, the hopes and dreams for the future of this parish, and the essential characteristics of the person God is calling to serve as the next Rector. The Holy Spirit is alive and well at Christ Church! Your work enabled us to finish the Parish Profile, which is the key document that informs the world about Christ Church, the Bluefield area, and the position opening.

Bishop Klusmeyer met with us on May 25 to review our progress and receive the draft Parish Profile. He complimented the Rector Search Committee for its leadership and diligence in moving the transition process forward so expeditiously. Now the Profile is in the hands of a local web and graphics designer who will convert our paper product into an attractive and compelling online version that will visually enhance the wonderful story our Profile tells. We believe a final product, approved by the Vestry and the Diocese, should be public by the end of the month.

Once the position is open for review and applications, Bishop Klusmeyer has urged the congregation to consider whether they are aware of Episcopal priests who might be great candidates and encourage them to apply. There is currently a shortage of clergy available to move to new positions, so personal contacts can help supplement the official channels that will be used to publicize the opening. Pray for a successful search process!



Minutes of Christ Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting  
May 18, 2022

A regular meeting of the Vestry was held on May 18, 2022, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Vic Bowman, Peter Richardson, Peter Taylor, Betty Nash, Linda Ammar, Mary Catherine Williams, David Kersey, Elizabeth Clement, Susanne Pulse

Also present were Rev. Lou Hays and Don Kersey, Treasurer.

Lou declared the presence of a quorum and opened the meeting with two prayers, ending with the Prayer for the Transition.

The minutes of the April 20, 2022 meeting were reviewed and upon motion of Mary Catherine Williams and second of Vic Bowman, were approved unanimously.

Lou led a discussion of the Envisioning Our Future event and the status of the work of the search committee. No follow-up comments had been received in response to the email which went out after the event. We had good attendance-37 and good participation. Summaries of the insight questions are posted in the Narthex. Lou commented that he thought that a characteristic of the new rector would have been someone who is a leader in the community. The consensus was that we do want someone with that characteristic and it was implied within the others articulated. Lou also thought there would have been more emphasis on pastoral care, though it was articulated. Lou reported that he is now optimistic about meeting the ambitious timeline adopted by the search committee-to have the profile ready by mid-June.

Becky Beckett, Chair of the Search Committee, reported that they have been meeting regularly, sometimes twice weekly. The Bishop has contacted her, is pleased with the progress and wants to meet with the committee. She hopes to have the draft ready by next Wednesday, when the Bishop is scheduled to come. A meeting with the web designer is set to work on the graphics for the profile and Becky thanked the Vestry for its support. We do need response to the 12 questions previously distributed to the congregation.

The compensation package for the profile was discussed, including diocesan minimums and the obligations for health coverage. After a full discussion and upon motion of Peter Richardson and second of Vic Bowman, the

Vestry unanimously gave authority to Lou and Senior Warden David Kersey to select a compensation figure between \$65,000 and \$75,000 to insert in the OTM package.

The Food Pantry Grant Application to the Community Foundation of the Virginias had been previously distributed by email. Upon motion of Elizabeth Clement and second of Betty Nash, the Vestry unanimously approved submission of the application and extended heartfelt thanks to Art Meade for taking the lead on this worthwhile project.

Don Kersey gave the treasurer's report. Pledges to date have exceeded the budget by approximately \$11,000, but non-pledged gifts are off \$16,000 from the budget, to-date. He will speak to Emma about that issue. The electric bill for the past month was only \$1,100, down \$700 from the prior month. Upon motion of Mary Catherine Williams and second of Linda Ammar the report was unanimously approved.

David Kersey gave the Senior Warden report. A resolution was presented to authorize Don Kersey and David Kersey to be the signers on the Raymond James account. This resolution is required by Raymond James. Upon motion of Peter Richardson and second of Vic Bowman, the resolution passed unanimously. David reported that the Bishop has agreed to pay the cost of moving the unowned church furniture and accessories, which have been stored in our church, to Charleston. The church and Canon Slater wrote a joint letter to the Eli Lilly Foundation to request direction on disposition of the sabbatical funds on deposit in our checking account. The letter requested a reply to both the church and Canon Slater. Finally, Lambert's Construction has been contacted about capping the driveway cutouts with asphalt, which was included in the price already paid for the drainage work.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden's report. Mary Catherine Williams was thanked for spearheading the mulching around the church. The iron gate to the boiler room has been removed for repair and restoration. Proposals for repair to the Memory Garden railing are being obtained. The strike plate for the doors leading into the downstairs hallway is on order.

### Vestry Reports

Mary Catherine Williams reported that the closet off Rowley hall will be cleared out in preparation for the mission group work in June, removing the built in cabinets.

Susanne Pulse reported on the regular publishing of the Rainbow. A notice will be included in the next Rainbow, advising that hard copy mailings will be scaled back.

Linda Ammar reported that Parish Life is planning to the adult mission group next month.

Peter Taylor and Betty Nash reported that Food Pantry will take place tomorrow, expecting around 30 people. It was suggested that the church consider resuming the serving of breakfast. Peter has reached out to the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches on the community picnic and will also contact Scott Street Baptist and Mt. Zion. At the Easter Food Pantry, \$20 gift cards to Grants were distributed and Betty suggested we consider continuing with such gifts, periodically.

Lou gave the rector's report. He and Michele had a wonderful 2 week vacation in Portugal. He expressed thanks to both Paul Barker and Russ Hatfield for conducting the services while he was traveling. He sent a status report to the diocese after last Sunday's event and stated he has been impressed that so much has been accomplished in the last four months, towards calling a new rector.

New Business-Mary Catherine Williams thanked Elizabeth Clement for being the scribe at last Sunday's event. DOK is collecting school supplies for the Wade Center children for summer study. Patty Richardson was thanked for spearheading the healthy, home cooked meal served at the Union Mission.

Old Business-The Columbarium Committee needs to meet, to address outstanding issues. David Kersey reported that the checking account has been converted to interest bearing and Susanne Pulse has located a firm which can engrave the nameplates on the St. Mary's Cross, to make them uniform. As Junior Warden, Peter Richardson was tasked with calling a meeting of the Columbarium Committee.

Upon motion of Betty Nash and second of Vic Bowman, the meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Lou.



The Wade Center School Supplies Project *by Mary Catherine Williams*

The Daughters of the King, St Margaret of Scotland will be undertaking a community project of collecting school supplies for The Wade Center until the end of August maybe longer. A plastic tub is in the narthex for your donated supplies. If you wish to make a monetary contribution, you may send cash or make a check payable to Christ Church and notate in the memo "school supplies". You may contact Mary Catherine Williams at [mkw@dlwco.com](mailto:mkw@dlwco.com) or Becky Beckett at [beybeck@hotmail.com](mailto:beybeck@hotmail.com).



## MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT FOR MAY

### FOOD PANTRY

May 19, 2022

24 bags of groceries distributed

Workers: Betty Nash, Patricia Taylor, Peter Taylor

### UNION MISSION

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Meals prepared - Total of 48 served Wednesday evening.

Menu: Mouthwatering home-cooked chicken tenders with potato salad, green beans, rolls and brownie plus a drink.

Volunteers: Shirley Ofsa, Patty Richardson and Mary Catherine Williams cooked the tenders and Betty Watson made the rolls. Those who packaged and served the meals were; Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa and Patty Richardson of Christ Episcopal Church; Betty Watson of Bluefield, VA and her grandson, Tyler Watson, a Bonner Scholar at Concord.

### **Wednesday, May 25, 2022:**

Meals prepared: Total of 126 (72 served on Wednesday; 54 served Thursday)

Menu: BBQ on a bun, coleslaw, baked beans, brownie and a drink.

Volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Delia Kersey, Art Mead and Shirley Ofsa of Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV; Charlie Helmandollar, Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA; Fredia Helmandollar, Cumberland Heights Baptist Church; Marjorie Justice and Betty Watson of Bluefield, VA; Pat Zachwieja (Shirley Ofsa's daughter), Sacred Heart Catholic Church

**Please note:** There will be NO Episcopal feedings at the Union Mission during the months of June or July 2022.

Student missionary groups from other parts of the country will be feeding.



**Prayer List:** Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Bea Paine, Bob and Peggy Walk, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Jay Kephart, Buck and Louisa Sowers, Donna Fortune, Ed and Gladys Fortune, Ivy and the Gaines Family, Chris Justice, Brian, Lane, Loraine, and Sherry



### BIRTHDAYS

June 3 Patricia Meachum  
June 6 Martha Linkous  
June 7 Charlie Merritt  
June 8 Anne Wilkinson  
June 10 Kristen Kersey Douglas

June 11 Emily Goodykoontz  
June 11 Nathaniel Kersey  
June 13 Jason Cole  
June 14 Caroline Merritt  
June 16 David Kersey  
June 18 Juliana Paine

June 20 Susan Thomas  
June 21 Becky Kersey  
June 23 Marc Meachum  
June 24 Mary Lou Mannschreck  
June 25 Martha Shewey  
June 26 Joe Sanders  
June 30 Jarrod Sudduth



The above picture, surrounded by messages from the congregation, was delivered to Chad by our Interim Rector, Lou Hays, on May 24.

## June 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
<b>5</b> The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday 10:00 Holy Eucharist	6	7	8	9	10	<b>11</b> Saint Barnabas The Apostle Ember Day
<b>12</b> The First Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	13	14	<b>15</b> 6:00 Vestry Meeting	<b>16</b> 9:00 Food Pantry	17	18
<b>19</b> The Second Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	20	<b>21</b> 10:30 DoK Meeting Library	22	23	<b>24</b> The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist	25
<b>26</b> The Third Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Holy Eucharist	27	28	<b>29</b> The Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul	30		

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

June 5        Tom Coughlan  
 June 12      Phil and Valerie Mahood  
 June 19      Don and Becky Kersey  
 June 26      Emily Goodykoontz

**Lectors and Acolyte Schedule for June:**

June 5    David Kersey, Lector      Becky Beckett, Acolyte  
 June 12    Don Williams, Lector      Becky Beckett, Acolyte  
 June 19    Delia Kersey, Lector      Katherine Lewis, Acolyte  
 June 26    Katherine Lewis, Lector    Becky Beckett, Acolyte

Altar Guild for June:  
 Elizabeth Clement

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
200 DUHRING STREET  
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



**JUNE 2022**

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