

# The Rainbow



September 2021

## **Of Bronze Serpents and Vaccines** *by Father Chad Slater*

In the Holy Scriptures we read of the people of Israel plagued by “fiery serpents” and many who were bitten died. They called out for relief, and God commanded Moses to make a serpent out of bronze and raise it on a pole for the people to see. Whenever someone was bitten they could look upon the image of the serpent and be assured that they would live (Numbers 21:4-9). The people wanted the snakes to go away, but that’s not what happened. Instead, God made a way for the people to heal in the midst of the world they lived in.

When we pray for relief during times of suffering, our assumption, or maybe desire, is often that the source of our misery be resolved. What we find, however, is that God does not always magically make our problems go away by themselves. God answers our prayers with solutions more often than not.

God, in God’s infinite wisdom, has given us an answer for the prayers we have made for nearly a year and a half that this pandemic would end, that loss of life would cease, and that we could return to lives of fullness. This answer is not that the illness we face would disappear but that we could look upon a solution and find a way through the suffering. This answer, through the hard work of researchers using their gifts of skill given by God, is the vaccines available to us to combat COVID-19.

Just like the ancient people of Israel, we have a choice to make. Will we look at our modern serpent of bronze and find a pathway to health and wholeness, or will be turned away to death and despair? Vaccines and modern medicines are gifts from our good God. They are the answer to our prayers. To reject the answer of our prayers is to reject the one who provided for them.

To all my beloved family in the Christian faith, and to all my friends of any faith or no faith at all, I ask you to look upon this modern bronze serpent—our vaccines—and live. No, it may not prevent you from being infected, but it will provide safety in the midst of suffering.

Look and live. Take part in the answer to our prayers. Be thankful and encourage others to see the good work of God. May we always see God’s solutions in the midst of our troubles.

For 38 years God has protected me from diphtheria, measles, mumps, polio, smallpox, tetanus, and numerous strains of influenza. I have traveled the world and been safe from malaria, yellow fever, and various tropical diseases.

God did this because my parents and I trusted science and got vaccinated.

Go and do likewise.

Monument to the Bronze Serpent on Mt. Nebo



## **Vestry Minutes - August 18, 2021** by *David M. Kersey, Senior Warden*

Present: Alyson Bowling, Peter Taylor, David Kersey, Peter Richardson (by Zoom), Vic Bowman, Betty Nash, Linda Ammar, Elizabeth Clement, Father Slater, Absent: Delia Kersey

The presence of a quorum was declared and the meeting was opened with prayer by Father Slater.

The treasurer's report was presented by Vic Bowman. The Investment, Endowment/Long Term accounts are all up because of the continuing bull market. The RJ Fund balance on July 31 was just under \$75,000, after transfer of \$45,900 from the Special Purpose Fund. That money is earmarked for the HVAC project. The Special Purpose Fund shows a negative balance of \$438.33, which represents the cost of confirmation class materials for a joint class with Immanuel Lutheran and will be reimbursed by that church for their share of the expense. Otherwise the church's finances are stable. Upon motion of Alyson Bowling and second of Linda Ammar the report was unanimously approved. David Kersey advised that the total monies received to date for the HVAC project is approximately \$85,000. Since the Vestry had already committed the third quarter St. Lucy distribution to that project, we have the cost of the HVAC in hand and should have approximately \$7,000 left over from that third distribution.

The Senior Warden had no report.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden's report. A donor has offered to pay the cost of refurbishing the church sign on Duhring Street. It has faded over the years. New Image Signs has quoted \$1,300 to remove, repaint and reinstall the sign. Upon motion of Betty Nash and second of Peter Richardson the Vestry unanimously approved that work. The roof quote of Dunford Roofing for repair/replacement of the roof over the organ loft has already been accepted and that work should start soon. After discussion, upon motion of Vic Bowman and second of Alyson Bowling, the Vestry unanimously approved reallocation of the excess St. Lucy withdrawal for the third quarter to pay for this project.

Lambert's Construction has quoted \$5,800 to remove the concrete between the driveway curb and the eastern wall of the church and to install a pipe to collect rain water from the roof scupper at the top of the driveway. We have experienced water problems inside the church along that wall in the office wing hall, nursery and the classroom above the nursery. That problem has been ameliorated by the installation of a temporary catch system last year, which collects and diverts that water to the other side of the driveway. This project would replace that temporary system and deposit the water into the catch basin outside the handicap access door. Upon motion of Vic Bowman and second of Alyson Bowling the Vestry unanimously approved that proposal. Funding source for that work will be determined, but there should be some money left over from the third quarter St. Lucy distribution. David Kersey was given authorization to contract that work with Lambert's.

We have explored replacement of the columbarium doors and have a materials quote of \$7,000 and estimate installation costs of \$3,000. After discussion, it was decided to postpone acting on that project until later this year or early next year after completion of the projects already committed. David Kersey was authorized to construct and install hand rails for the steps from the nave to the sanctuary. The will be made from walnut and will match the architectural detail of the end caps on the pews.

Father Slater gave the Rector's report. A parishioner has donated hospital quality HEPA UV light air sanitizers for placement in the church. The bishop coadjutor tour has been cancelled due to the uptick in Covid-19 infections. There will be available recorded interviews for viewing

instead. There are at least 5 candidates for confirmation. The Gaines family is in Philadelphia with the newborn IV, who will be in the hospital indefinitely. Parishioners were generous with their loose offerings on Sunday, which were dedicated to the family for expenses. This week's offering will again be dedicated for the family. Father Slater performed graveside service for John Noel Marsh at Roselawn Gardens and a baptism for Gianna Abada, great granddaughter of Bea and Jim Paine.


New Business: The Parish picnic is scheduled for August 29 at Bluefield City Park. The Covid-19 infection rate is increasing and concerns about potential exposure were discussed. The importance of the membership sharing fellowship was also recognized. The Vestry unanimously decided to go forward with this outdoor gathering, but instead of potluck, the food will be catered. Volunteers will act as servers and social distancing will be observed. Masks will be optional.

The Bishop will be in attendance for the October 24 service which will be a celebration of the 100th anniversary of worship in our current building. It was agreed that although we would like to have a large homecoming and invite family and friends from near and far, in view of the current increase in Covid-19 infection rates here and in other places, we will keep the gathering small and hope to have a larger homecoming next year.

Regular worship, in light of the current Covid-19 status, was discussed at length. Hospital admissions has increased from 11 to 34%. Updated recommendations from the diocese were reviewed. Upon motion of David Kersey and second of Alyson Bowling, the Vestry unanimously agreed that we should return to more restrictive in person worship protocols and at least until the next Vestry meeting, masks will be required for attendees, there will be no singing and there will be no coffee hour after the service. Father Slater was requested to send an email to the congregation advising of these changes

Mimi Merritt was our second delegate to the Diocesan Convention and Rob Merritt was the alternate. They are unable to attend the meeting in Morgantown. Upon motion of Alyson Bowling and second of Betty Nash, the Vestry unanimously elected Jim Pulse to serve as substitute delegate.

Old business. Upon motion of Vic Bowman and second of Linda Ammar, old business was tabled. There were no committee reports. The meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Father Slater



**Please Keep the Following in Your Prayers:** Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Mabeline Robinson, Bea Paine, Lynn Burney, Donna Fortune, Bob and Peggy Walk, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Sarah Irwin, Janet Slager, Kelly Cox, Dean Farmer, Haddon Lazenby, Jack Burchette, Nick, JL, Cis Barrett, Randy Snider, Lane, Loraine, Sherry, Margarette Joplin, Emily Broome, David, Cady, Martin, Marion Lowe, Harry, Ben Rose, Jay Kephart, Rick Longworth, all Healthcare Personnel and Frontline Workers, Jack, Sheri, Dan, Kathy, Hamilton Jones, Kensley, John, Kathleen Nieman, Alan Riggins, Brenda Payne, Buck and Louisa Sowers, Elizabeth Kane, Betty, Matt, Eric, Carol, Dave, Gail, Jean, the people of Haiti, the people of Afghanistan, the Family of Raymond Repass, Barbara Repass



### **Birthdays**

September 7 Kelly McConnico  
September 8 Mark Van Dyke  
September 8 Terry Whittington  
September 8 Bill Wimmer

September 10 Bobbie Kersey  
September 13 Samantha Kinney  
September 16 Will Czarnik  
September 19 Becky Beckett  
September 22 Don Kersey, Jr.  
September 23 Lynn King

September 23 Norma Mahood-Bay  
September 25 Patrick Anderson  
September 25 Gina Wilkinson  
September 27 Mimi Merritt  
September 30 Trey Snidow

**August 2021 Monthly Ministry Report** by Linda Ammar and Art Mead  
**Food Pantry**

August 19, 2021

24 bags distributed

\$20 gift cards (11 given out for proof of vaccination status)

Workers – Peter and Patricia Taylor

Betty Nash

Bread provided by Sheila Brooks

Bananas provided by Linda Thomas

**Union Mission Report**

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Meals prepared – 116 (57 served on Wednesday; 59 served on Thursday)

Menu – BBQ on a bun, cole slaw, baked beans, brownie and drink

Volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Delia Kersey, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa of Christ Episcopal Church

Charlie Helmandollar (Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA)

Fredia Helmandollar (Cumberland Heights Baptist Church)

Susie Green (Baptist affiliated, Bluefield, VA) Marjorie Justice (Pentecostal affiliated)

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Meals prepared – 76

Menu – “mouthwatering” smoked sausage on a bun, white cheddar corn chips, cinnamon graham cookies and juice

Volunteers – Sheila Brooks, Ted Lewis, Art Mead and Shirley Ofsa from Christ Church

Marjorie Justice and Betty Watson from Bluefield, VA



**God's work.  
Our hands.**

**Air Sanitizers Donated to Christ Church** by Father Chad Slater

A generous donation by an anonymous member of the Christ Church congregation has enabled us to purchase hospital grade air sanitizers for the nave and sanctuary. These sanitizers use HEPA filters and UV light to trap and kill bacteria and viruses. The particular model purchased was designed for use in medical facilities and the UV light component has been shown to kill the COVID-19 and other viruses. Similar air sanitizers were recently required for use in all public-school classrooms in the United Kingdom.

These air sanitizers are quiet, efficient, and discrete. They will be placed strategically around the room to help protect all who enter our church for worship. We are thrilled to be able to add this additional layer of protection for our members and guests.



If you have any questions about these new air sanitizers, please contact Fr. Chad for more information.

*Gracious God, thank you for the abundant blessings you have given us through all our adversity. Through your love and the generosity of your people, we are able to share another answer to our prayers for protection and safety. Today, we ask a special blessing over these air sanitizers. Help them, and all forms of protection from COVID-19, to be instruments of your compassion. Bless all those who will be the beneficiaries of this gift to see the goodness you have provided. We ask for your continued blessing now and forever. Amen.*



## Church Picnic *by Mimi Merritt*

Blue skies and a pleasant breeze (referred to by Father Chad as the presence of the Holy Spirit) at Shelter #1 at the City Park on Sunday, August 29, made for a fun annual parish picnic and worship service of the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

Father Chad delivered an inspirational message to the group of worshipers seated at picnic tables about the Book of James and the call to live our lives in ways that prove our faith. He asked us to “tangibly reach out to the people who have been marginalized in our society.”

“Religion isn’t theoretical or theological; it is a lived experience,” he said. He included in the marginalized populations who need our help the following: women, minority groups, those who love someone different than ourselves, and those with drug problems or other forms of addiction.

“God cares about how you treat people,” Father Chad said, citing as an example the humanitarian Albert Schweitzer, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who endeavored to live his faith. Despite a beautiful home in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France and many professional successes, the physician and theologian always returned to the little hospital he founded in Africa. His reason, said Father Chad, was that it was about his faith. “I wanted to make my life my argument,” Schweitzer had once explained in an interview.

“I’m calling on all of us to actually love people, to care for the widows and the orphans of our time,” said Father Chad in conclusion. “Make your life your argument for your faith.”

In his announcements, Father Chad told everyone that Christ Church has returned to mask-wearing for in-person services at the church “for the foreseeable future.” An increase in Covid cases in Mercer County, WV, and Tazewell County, VA, has led Tazewell County to declare a state of emergency, and Mercer County has recently been mapped in red in the West Virginia tracking of Covid infection incidence.

Following the service, Father Chad made himself available at a corner of the shelter for the ceremony of Unction, for anyone who wanted private prayer and the anointing of oil for healing.

Also following the service, Christ Church congregants flocked to a delicious meal of fried chicken, green beans, potato salad, and rolls prepared by David Hardin, who had also led everyone during the service in the singing of “Be Thou My Blessing,” and “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Desserts included chocolate cake, apple cake, and key lime pie.



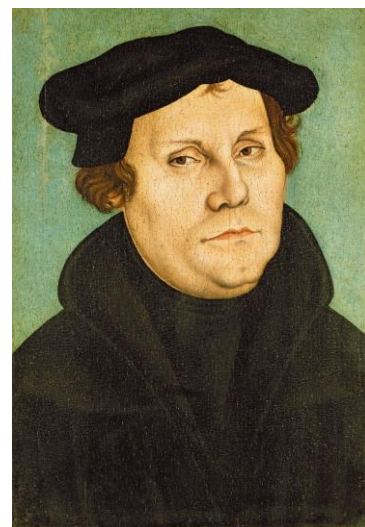
## Martin Luther's Advice for Christian Witness during the Plague *by Father Chad Slater*

In August of 1527 the plague—often called “the Black Death”—struck the city of Wittenberg, Germany. This disease was horrific: in a single day, an infected person could show signs of delirium, fever, speech disorders, and loss of consciousness. Soon after, they would break out in large boils that infected the bloodstream and rapidly led to death. The mortality rate was extremely high.

Martin Luther and his wife Katharina, who was pregnant at the time, were urged to flee the city. However, they felt it was their duty to stay and minister—but to do so responsibly. When asked by Christians in another city for advice, Luther wrote a pamphlet titled *Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague*. Luther wrote in response:

“I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

His lengthy letter, which can be found online, goes on to say, “Christian doctors cannot abandon their hospitals, Christian governors cannot flee their districts, Christian pastors cannot abandon their congregations. The plague does not dissolve our duties...” We, as the people of God, soldier on in this uncertain world—not absolved of our responsibilities nor casting aside our rights. Rather, we forge ahead in love and service to neighbor but doing so taking every precaution. As Christians and as Americans we have the right to do the right thing. We do this not for our own health, but for the love of those who are at risk. Masks, social distancing, and all the like are our crosses to bear at this time and place in history. Let us not be found dropping our responsibilities, or our crosses, in the days ahead.



to the place

*I belong...*

**Diocesan Tour Goes Virtual for  
Bishop Coadjutor Candidates**

Because of the increase in COVID cases across the state, all candidate interviews will be taped at the Diocesan House. Video postings will be available late evening August 24, 25 & 27.

For details and links to the videos, visit  
[www.wvbishopsearch.org](http://www.wvbishopsearch.org).

### Bishop Candidates Virtual Interviews

To watch the virtual interviews with the three candidates to be the next Bishop of West Virginia please go to [www.wvbishopsearch.org](http://www.wvbishopsearch.org). Links to the videos are located on the page. Our delegates for the electing convention are Jim and Susanne Pulse (Fr. Chad also has a separate vote as a member of the clergy in the Diocese). Please keep them all in your prayers as they discern God's will for the Diocese. You can also contact them with your thoughts and impressions on the candidates.

## September 2021

| Sun   | Mon            | Tue   | Wed   | Thu                             | Fri  | Sat   |
|---|----------------|---|---|---------------------------------|--|---|
|   |                |   | 1   | 2                               | 3  | 4   |
| 5<br>Fifteenth Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>10:00 Holy<br>Eucharist       | 6<br>Labor Day | 7   | 8<br>Nativity of the<br>Blessed Virgin<br>Mary<br><br>3:00 Union<br>Mission | 9                               | 10   | 11<br>9/11 20 <sup>th</sup><br>Anniversary<br>Commemoration<br>Chicory Square<br>12:00 noon |
| 12<br>Sixteenth Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>10:00 Holy<br>Eucharist      | 13             | 14<br>Holy Cross Day                            | 15<br>7:00 Vestry   | 16<br>Food Pantry<br>9:00-11:00 | 17   | 18  |
| 19<br>Seventeenth<br>Sunday after<br>Pentecost<br>10:00 Holy<br>Eucharist | 20             | 21<br>St. Matthew,<br>Apostle and<br>Evangelist | 22<br>4:00 Union<br>Mission   | 23                              | 24<br>Diocesan<br>Convention and<br>Election of<br>Bishop<br>Coadjutor | 25<br>Diocesan<br>Convention and<br>Election of<br>Bishop<br>Coadjutor                      |
| 26<br>Eighteenth<br>Sunday after<br>Pentecost<br>10:00 Holy<br>Eucharist  | 27             | 28  | 29<br>Saint Michael<br>and All Angels                                       | 30                              |  |   |

**The following people have graciously offered  
to donate flowers for the month of September:**

September 5, 2021 Richard and Carolyn McCue Matthews

September 12, 2021 Jim and Chris Justice

September 19, 2021 Frank and Bernadette Dragotto

September 26, 2021 Sheila Brooks





**Altar Guild for September:**  
Mimi Merritt, Teresa Paine,  
and Linda Ammar





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To our friends and family:



**September 2021**

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