

SAINT THOMAS CHURCH NEWS



February 2019 XXXXI, Issue 2

Pastor's Column

The Dying of Darkness

In these longer days of the season of Epiphany and prior to Lent, we witness the growing light of Christ liturgically and astronomically. Yes, Lent too is about the lengthening of days, but it is a time of reflection on darkness rather than on the light. Epiphany has no such contradictions. We are in the middle of a nine-week series of contemplations on the expanding intensity of the light born in Bethlehem and spreading into the world.

The proper preface for Holy Communion comes to mind. We have used this preface for several Sundays, beginning with the Epiphany of Our Lord:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on Earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

You can see here the progression of the Sundays just past: Epiphany, then Baptism of Our Lord, then the Second Sunday after the Epiphany—with the reading from Luke 2 about the Wedding at Cana. Pay attention to the upcoming readings; you'll see that they each address how the light of Christ reaches into our lives, into the lives of those who sit in various kinds of darkness, and into the world.

Over these weeks, a couple of events have been small epiphanies for me—manifestations of God's light. The one still much on my heart is the funeral for my sister, Janet. Out of the darkness of her death, much light has shined. The gathering of extended family members who are rarely seen was a blessing to all. The prayers and cards and expressions of care and comfort kept my heart aglow with your many lights. The honor of presiding at the funeral helped me (and I trust others) to find ways to reflect the light that was my sister onto the lives we continue to live. Or, as one dear member wrote beautifully using a differing metaphor: "The picture Lyle posted on Facebook speaks so deeply to the mystery of kinship—kin who are alike but different, the same chords but a different melody, variation on variation through the generations. I hope, now or in the future, you hear an echo of her song." Light and melody (leitmotif?).

Then there is the great light of Kaye Hill continuing to shine among us even after her three-plus decades of employed service to St. Thomas and our Lord. As I write, I am only anticipating the words, thoughts, feelings, and moving of the Holy Spirit that will bless us at the party given to honor Kaye's extensive, caring, dedicated, and remarkable service among us. She has been a beacon of hospitality, generosity of spirit, and organizational acumen. And she will be greatly missed as she forges new paths of faithfulness. May God bless her for all that she has been to us (and beyond) and for all that she will yet be.

Dylan Thomas' refrain comes to mind: "Rage, rage against the dying of the light." We might more aptly intone: "Joy, joy in the birthing of new light." That light, liturgically, gains its zenith in just a few weeks—on the Sunday of The Transfiguration of our Lord. May the illuminations of the Spirit rest well upon us in these increasingly sunny weeks.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Lyle

Out of the Waters: Resisting the Power of Fear

Lent 2019

Lent is late this year, with Ash Wednesday on March 6th. So this is an early invitation and summary of the themes for this year.

“Out of the Waters” offers a series of reflections on the stories of Exodus and the migrant People of Israel. It is based on a bible study written by The Rev. Dr. David Vasquez, President of Pacific School of Religion and a Lutheran.



Out of the Waters themes:

- | | | |
|------|-------------|--|
| 3/6 | (Ash Wed) | A Pharaoh Who Did Not Know Joseph (Ex. 1:1-14) |
| 3/13 | (Midweek 1) | They Are Not Like Us (Ex. 1:15-21) |
| 3/20 | (Midweek 2) | Moses, the First Mojado (Ex. 1:22 – 2:10) |
| 3/27 | (Midweek 3) | Hyphenated Egyptian (Ex. 2:11 – 3:10) |
| 4/3 | (Midweek 4) | What Is That in Your Hand? (Ex. 3:9 – 4:17) |
| 4/10 | (Midweek 6) | Now You Shall See What I will do (Ex. 5:1 – 6:7) |

Amy's Adventures in Seminary

As I continue my seminary journey, I thought it might be nice to share some of that journey with my St. Thomas family! I attended two intensive courses from January 5-19, 2019 at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. Unfortunately, we didn't have much snow there (it apparently went to Bloomington, IN instead), but we had cold temperatures! I stayed in a dorm room in Bockman Hall where I enjoyed spending time in community with my fellow seminarians. Fortunately for me, an underground tunnel allowed me to go from my dorm to my classes in Gullixson Hall without having to go outside!

At Gullixson Hall, where the library is housed, is also a Rare Book Room and Martin Luther's Death Mask! I took a preaching course and a course on the Trinity. My brain was well exercised! I also had the opportunity to see the inside of Old Muskego Church, founded in 1843 in Wisconsin as the first Norwegian Lutheran church in America, and moved as a historic building to Luther Seminary's campus in 1904. My paternal great-great-grandparents, Sigurd and Marit Sønderland, were married there on July 21, 1852 after emigrating from Norway.

Here are pictures from my two weeks at Luther Seminary:

Old Muskego Church:



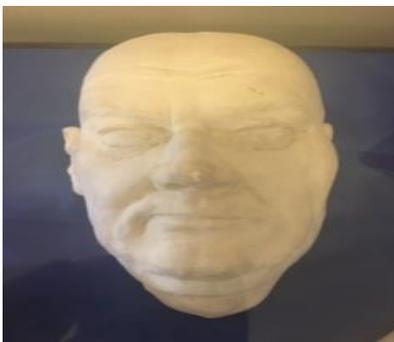


Bockman Hall (where I stayed):



The Cross in the pictures dates from around 1000 CE, and was believed to be the first Christian symbol erected in Norway. It was given to Luther Seminary in 1956 by the Nordfjord Youth. It stands in front of Bockman Hall.

Gullixson Hall, where I went to class, which also contains the library, Rare Book Room, and Luther's Death Mask, as well as the underground tunnel between Bockman and Gullixson Halls:



The main chapel at Luther Seminary, and evidence of cold temperatures:



Thank you for your prayers and support as I continue this journey!
Amy Balcam, Minister of Youth and Christian Nurture

Meet our Choir Director

Katie Gardiner, Conductor

Katie Gardiner is thrilled to be making music at St. Thomas. Currently, Ms. Gardiner is pursuing a Doctorate degree in Choral Conducting at the Jacobs School of Music. Ms. Gardiner was on the music faculty at Skidmore College where she held the position of Choral Director and Lecturer in Music from 2011-2018, conducting the Skidmore Community Chorus, Vocal Chamber Ensemble, and teaching a course in Music Theory. An active musician in the region, Ms. Gardiner also conducted the ensembles at Williams College and the University at Albany. As a passionate music educator, Katie Gardiner has worked with students of all ages and abilities. Ms. Gardiner holds Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Music Education (vocal emphasis and pedagogy emphasis) from the Hartt School of Music and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from the Eastman School of Music. Ms. Gardiner has studied conducting with Dominick DiOrio, Betsey Burleigh, William Weinert, Simon Carrington, and Brad Lubman. Prior to her position at Skidmore College, Ms. Gardiner conducted the Eastman Conducting Orchestra, Repertory Singers, and assisted with the Women's Chorus, as well as teaching middle and high school choruses. At the Eastman School of music, she has performed as a member of the acclaimed ensemble, "Voices." A Connecticut native, Ms. Gardiner resided in Vermont since 2007 before becoming a part of the Bloomington community.

Meet Mona Baker

I am the new Records Management person, just starting in January 2019. I have worked in Bloomington for 20 some years and it was either doing bookkeeping or being an administrative assistant for different companies. In that time I went to Indiana University and am a graduate from there.

I like doing gardening in the summer and also love working with flowers in our yard with my husband Eric.





Sister Parish Connections

Breakfast Fundraiser on Sunday, February 24, 9 – 11 am

The Sister Parish Committee is hosting a breakfast on 2/24/19 to raise funds for a 2020 delegation visit of brothers and sisters from Chichipate, Guatemala! Please join us for a family buffet of traditional Guatemalan breakfast foods as well cultural enrichment activities for children and adults alike. Look for more details in the weekly announcements.

Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Iowa Anymore

By Ronna Papesh

Ok, I know Dorothy's quote in the *Wizard of Oz* was about Kansas, but if you read my article in the October newsletter, you understand why I changed it here. I have been exploring the similarities and differences between our Sister Parish community in Chichipate, Guatemala and Tama County, Iowa.

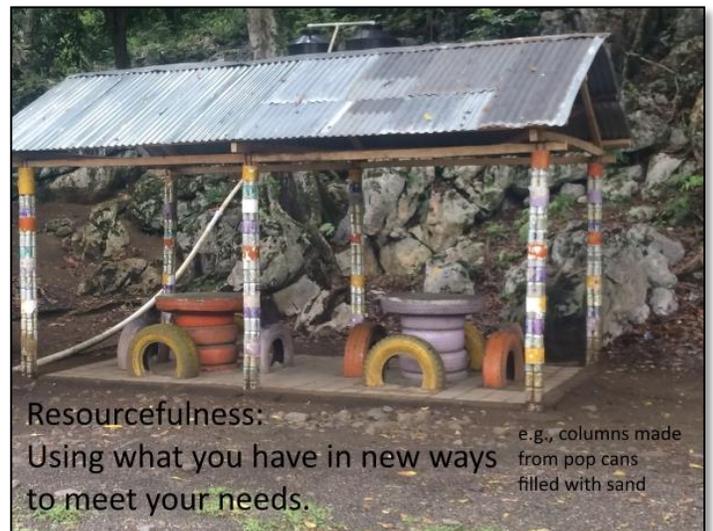
My early years were spent in a rural Iowa community that has strong ties to its Bohemian roots. Many of the immigrants who settled in this part of Iowa were from what is now called the Czech Republic. These homesteaders were known for their hard work, tenacity, and resourcefulness. I believe this is the reason I felt so at home with our brothers and sisters in Chichipate. They, too, are hard-working, tenacious, and resourceful people!

Chichipate is a small, rural town surrounded by corn fields. Gravel roads link community buildings and homes, just as they do in Tama, Iowa. Churches play an important role in the community and are often buzzing with activity. For example, on many evenings, music and praise blasted out of a church near my hosts' house late into the night. The enthusiasm of congregants in Chichipate is a bit more intense than I was used to here in the Midwest, but definitely contagious.

In both Chichipate and Iowa, the people live alongside their animals. When I was growing up, my mother's family raised chickens, geese, and ducks. You definitely had to watch where you stepped in Grandma's yard! My uncle raises turkeys, and it was he I thought of when I got up close and personal with a family's turkey in Chichipate. During my visit, I enjoyed waking to the chicken noises just on the other side of the wall and watching a pig wander around the village untethered. I believe the people of Chichipate follow the same premise as in Iowa: if you take care of the animals, the animals will take care of you.

On the surface, rural life is idyllic. The landscape certainly was breathtakingly beautiful around Chichipate. Looking closer, however, you see that residents of small towns face numerous challenges.

- In many cases, the one or two local industries offer unhealthy working conditions and low wages. They influence the government and negatively impact the environment. In Iowa, it's the meat packing plants. In Guatemala, it's the foreign mining companies.



- Jobs are scarce; so many residents have to work elsewhere to survive. My uncle had to rise early to drive over an hour, whatever the weather, to get to his factory job. A young mother teaching in Chichipate returns to her village only on weekends because it takes her 4 hours to get home by bus.
- Young people with little to do tend to make poor choices. That certainly was the case when my parents were young. Drinking and fighting landed one uncle in prison and left another brain damaged. To counter this aspect of human nature, leaders in Chichipate are making a conscious effort to offer their youth enriching activities and educational opportunities. We delegates enjoyed the fruits of their labor as young people shared intricate cultural dances, arts, and traditions they were learning from their elders.



That leads me to one of the closest connections I felt between my Iowa roots and the people of Chichipate. The hard-working people in both communities believe that education is vital. They value education very highly and make many sacrifices to educate their young. I was impressed to learn that children in Chichipate are taught three different languages in school. Many of the townspeople moonlight as teachers at the night school after they finish their day jobs so the students who have to work can also get an education. The typing and computer schools exist because of the foresight and dedication of our brothers and sisters of the Santo Domingo de Guzman Parish. Among other ways, the people of Chichipate serve God by serving the youth of their community. I feel

blessed to have met these loving, tenacious, and resourceful people who made me feel so at home in a faraway land, and I am grateful to the congregation of St. Thomas for making it possible.

MONROE COUNTY UNITED MINISTRIES

Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) creates lasting solutions to economic, educational and social injustice in our community through quality services, collaboration and innovation. MCUM is a nurturing organization serving working families and those in distress by helping people achieve self-sufficiency and providing subsidized childcare. It provides quality education and a safe place for children, basic needs assistance for families experiencing hardship, and community service opportunities for all.

DID YOU KNOW? St. Thomas:

- Has a standing appointment on the MCUM Board of Directors
- Contributes financially to MCUM on an annual basis
- Collects contributions each week for its Pantry (food, toiletries, and cleaning supplies)
- On January 28th 181 pounds of food collected at St. Thomas was delivered to MCUM by Jerry & Betty Smith

CURRENT NEEDS AT MCUM: paper bags- preferably with handles, cereal in small or medium boxes, canned tomatoes, carrots, pasta and pasta sauce, condensed soups, canned chicken, laundry soap, dish soap, all-purpose cleaners, shampoo, men's deodorant, diapers size 5-6

YOUTH GROUP ACTION

Souper Bowl of Caring is on Sunday, February 3rd



Since 1990, youth at various churches around the country have been participating in Souper Bowl of Caring, inspiring others to collect dollars and food weeks leading up to the Big Game. Teaming up with local partners, these groups give 100% of donations to local charities, changing the nation's largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring. We will be collecting money only - look for our youth holding "Souper Bowl of Caring" bowls at the early and late services to collect money for Monroe County United Ministries!

January 4th Youth Group Outing at LaserLite was a "blast"!

The youth group met over break for an outing at LaserLite in Bloomington. We had a great time playing laser tag, eating pizza, and playing arcade games. We discovered that Amy has terrible aim, and that we each have a competitive streak! The youth pooled all the tickets they won to purchase an "alien"! You'll find our alien friend, named "Peter (Iversen) Martin (Luther)" various places around the church building. Can you spot him?



Youth Group, January 20th: Peer Ministry Event

The youth group met at church on January 20th, and participated in a Peer Ministry activity with Victoria Hoppes. We worked with the Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10: 25-37), applying it by discussing how we can embody Jesus's teachings in our everyday lives. Thank you to Victoria for leading us in this activity!



Youth Group FEBRUARY Schedule

3rd – 5:30-7:30 pm, Movie Night at STLC!

17th – 5:30-7:30 pm, Youth Group at STLC!

February Adult Forum Schedule

3 – Living the Questions #20 "Creative Transformation"

10 – Tom Strentz, "Crossing the Red Sea"

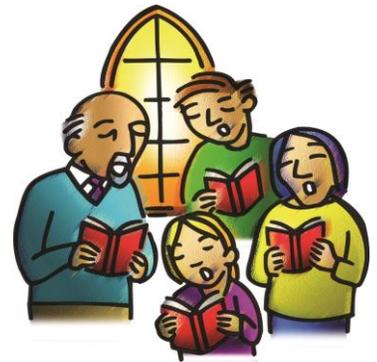
Did the Israelites truly cross the Red Sea? Solid evidence indicates that it was actually the Gulf of Aqaba that was crossed. Tom Strentz will lead this discussion with a Powerpoint presentation and a DVD video.

17 – Living the Questions #21 "Embracing Mystery"

24 – TBD

***Alleluia* Hymn Festival – Sunday, March 3 – 4:00 PM**

The concept of a hymn festival (which is distinct from a hymn sing, where people call out favorite hymns to sing) came about in the twentieth century as a way to celebrate the rich heritage of hymnody that the Church enjoys. Hymns, scriptures, and poems or meditations are woven together around a chosen theme in such a way that they comment on each other, allowing the audience to explore the theme to a depth that is not possible in an ordinary worship service.



The season of Lent begins this year on Wednesday, March 6. During this season of penitence and simplicity we abstain in worship from using the word *alleluia*, a joyous expression of praise that appears in our liturgy every other Sunday of the year. Sunday, March 3 is our last chance as a congregation to voice our alleluias until Easter Sunday, and as such I thought it would be fitting to organize a hymn festival that afternoon whose theme is *Alleluia*.

All of the hymns for the hymn festival include at least one alleluia. Many of the hymns are well-known favorites of St. Thomas; a few are less familiar but are worth learning nonetheless! Members of the St. Thomas choir along with some guest musicians will lead the congregational singing.

Hymn festivals are especially satisfying with a packed house, so come join us on March 3 at 4:00, and invite your friends along too!

Warmly,
Mike Powell

What a Wonderful Party!

After a few days of floating on air due to all the wonderful comments, presents and surprises, I'm beginning to come back down to earth. Thank you to everyone who attended my retirement party on Saturday evening. It was incredible and it could not have been more perfectly planned and carried out.

A very special thank you:

To the Planning Committee – Gayl Laughman, Kim Filiatrault, Susan Krieg and Betty Smith.

To the speakers with their remembrances, poetry and roasting – Dean Arnold, Gene Laughman, Pr. Marissa Tweed, Ronna Papesh, Betty Smith, Susan Krieg and Pr. Lyle. To the Thomas Choir with their lovely rendition of "Joyful, Joyful".

To the children for the beautiful posters.

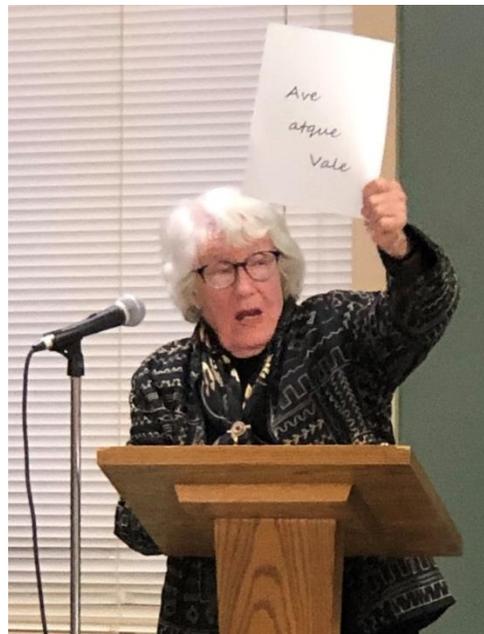
To David Rohlfing for his IT expertise (my grandchildren were delighted to see pictures of themselves on screen and I have no idea who that very young woman was that kept popping up in the pictures)



To everyone who attended and to those who could not be there, my love and gratitude for your care and friendship all these years. You are truly my extended family and it has been one of the joys of my life to work with and for you these past 32 years. Now I am looking forward to many years of serving with you as we make every effort to “do God’s work with our hands”.

Kaye Hill

Happily Retired, Church Administrator



Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you to all who were able to join us on Saturday evening to honor Kaye Hill upon her retirement after 32 years of working at St. Thomas. A fun time was had by all! Thanks also to those who shared their talents of singing, baking, public speaking, flower arranging, creating Power Point presentations, child care and card making. We also want to offer a grateful thank you to those who stayed after the event to help with clean-up and putting Community Hall back in order for Sunday school the next day. You are too numerous to mention by name. It really does take a village. Your generosity and willingness to share your gifts and time made the evening a memorable one for Kaye. Thank you!



The St. Thomas Community Garden is gearing up for 2019!

If you gardened last year and would like to continue this season, please fill out the Garden Registration form in the narthex and submit it, along with your garden donation, to the church office or via the offering plate by Friday, March 1. New gardeners are welcome to sign up on the list for open garden plots. Available plots will be assigned after March 1 on a first-come, first-on-the-list basis. Questions? Contact Marie at flemingmf@comcast.net.

Last year 98.3 pounds of produce from our Community Garden were donated to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard.



CREATION CARE

Concern for the earth is an ongoing issue for all Christians. The Creation Care Committee is currently looking for members to join the committee to plan intentional activities that we at St Thomas need to consider. Call Kathleen Boggess at 812-361-7332 or email kboggess44@gmail.com if you are willing to attend a meeting to brainstorm ideas.

February Birthdays

2/1 Ashly Edwards
2/2 Yvonne Leber
2/3 Dave Belbutoski
2/4 Eliot Smith
2/5 Mary Rust
2/6 Marian Baughman, Elizabeth Gaskins
2/8 Julia Bourkland, Nathan Pratt
2/9 Sara Fawbush Johnson, Amanda Madsen



2/10 Antonia Daleke, Matthew Schacht
2/11 Darrell Boggess
2/17 Ronna Papesh
2/18 Gretchen Mundy, Lia Marsh
2/20 Bob Ellis
2/21 Brenna Madsen
2/23 Kay Eagleman, Erin Wyatt
2/24 Isaak Fogleman