



# THE BT TIMES

We are Better Together  
September 2020

## Digging Deep

I asked Carolyn what I should write about. Wisely, she suggested our first ice cream social / communion in the garden event. It was more powerful than I ever dreamed to see faces that I've not seen since December. There weren't any hugs, and I only saw their whole faces when they were eating ice cream, but it was like Easter morning for me. Death and rebirth is never far from our minds these days, but some days, like today, I find it hard to be joyful

The fact is that every day I have to dig deep. Sometimes it's all too heavy. We aren't having a big lunch on "Kick-Off Sunday." The Ravens are playing in an empty stadium. Looking ahead to All Saints, Thanksgiving, and Christmas doesn't promise to bring the same joy and beauty those seasons have always created.

We have to dig deep all the way back to the building blocks of our faith. We have to break open the Bible to see it with our new eyes. Now we see famine, plague, floods, fire, oppression, and slavery completely differently. Our old eyes have died away, and now we are in the time when all is being transformed.

We have to dig deep to the foundation of the church and of our church. How have we made it this far, and what are we called to do next? What does our community need? How shall we use the resources we have, and where will we find the next resources?

We have to dig down deep to find the roots of our faith through prayer in community. We have not

made it this far by ourselves, but only by the grace of God, with the faith of generations before us, and the support of our friends all around.



We began our first Zoom Confirmation Class this week with seven amazing young people! I was so nervous, concerned I might break their faith or that somehow drive them away from church forever. What can I say to light them on fire for Jesus? What curriculum should we follow? Then I remembered, that Confirmation is an adult reaffirmation of our Baptismal Covenant. We are going back to baptismal basics in this class. We learn about scripture and the history of the church. We learn about prayer and the sacraments. We learn how we make decisions as people of faith and how we can make a difference in the lives of those most in need, seeking and serving Christ in all persons.

Some things have not and never will change. Lots of anxiety and smoke and division seek to cloud our vision, but all we have to do is dig down deep to our faith in Jesus Christ who died, was buried and yes rose again for us all. That feels like Easter to me. More ice cream, please. Alleuia. Amen.

Stewart

## Squeegee Kids

by Carolyn Surrick

I know the whole conversation about Squeegee Boys is fraught. Everybody has an opinion, and stories of scary encounters abound. But I love the Squeegee Boys.

When I head home, I usually decide whether to go President Street to Lombard, or take MLK to Russell Street – and it's based on which group of kids I feel like seeing that day.

Last fall, sitting at a light, headed for MLK Blvd, a young man came up to do the windshield. He had a wonderful smile, so genuine, so open – and when he finished, I handed him a twenty-dollar bill. I don't know why I did that. I don't have much in the way of disposable income, I don't think I had ever given any of the kids more than five dollars, but on this day, a little voice in my head encouraged me to dig deep.

He looked at the money, and with total joy and astonishment on his face he said, "Mama! Today is my birthday!" He reached through my open window and gave me the biggest hug. "Thank you! Thank you!" he said, as he skipped down the street to the next car. I will never forget him.

Last week, driving down President Street, I stopped at a light and started up a conversation. It was one of those hot, humid August afternoons when the whole world is wilting, and when I asked, "Hey! How's it going?" my young friend shook his head and said, "I'm outta here, it's so hot." I said, "I know what you mean, I was mowing yesterday, and I thought I was going to die."

"No mama, don't say that!" He was emphatic. So serious, so concerned. That throwaway phrase, "I thought I was going to die..." meant something completely different to him. In those ninety seconds of conversation, in that terribly short period of time, he already cared if I lived or died. And clearly, dying was something he knew a lot about.

We live in different worlds. I understand that every day because those kids are on the corner in the afternoon. They aren't sitting at the table doing homework. They aren't at football practice for a club team that they have to pay to be part of. They are working. They are quick to smile, quick to be grateful, and sometimes we bump fists as I drive away.

I work hard. They work hard. I cannot know their lives, but I admire their brotherhood. I admire their energy, their joy and their compassion. And I am grateful for the way they remind me every day, of the great grace of this world.



The CARES Food Pantry depends on our generous donations. In addition to the regular needs, they need **cooking oil, coffee, and canned vegetables other than the usual corn and peas!** Please bring your donation to the church any time and leave it at the door under the covered ramp entrance.



Cindy Burggraf will be starting a **Handbell Choir** this fall! Please email her if you are interested in joining this safely distanced group to prepare some music for the holiday season. You do NOT have to be able to read music! This will be a seasonal commitment.  
[cindyburggraf3455@gmail.com](mailto:cindyburggraf3455@gmail.com)

### **Christmas Stockings for the Salvation Army**

I know, I know. Why, oh why, are we thinking about Christmas already? Fear not, it is still September, and we have a little time left. Penny Patschke spearheads this effort every year, and it's an incredibly wonderful ministry. So, dear friends, just put this on your mental calendar and we will keep you updated about deadlines and what might be best to put in these wonderful, meaningful stockings.



## Weekly Gatherings

### Monday Yoga & Mindfulness Meditation

This 10:00 am class led by Linda Macgill each week. No prior experience is necessary, and we remain in our chairs! Call Linda at 410-235-3612 or 410-236-9650 or email her for the Zoom link if you have questions. [laharte12@gmail.com](mailto:laharte12@gmail.com)  
Namaste.

### Tuesday Nights

6:30 pm Holy Communion & Ice Cream!  
If it is raining, we will send an email and post to Facebook by 5:30pm to cancel. Social distancing and masks are mandatory. We distribute the bread only, and we won't be singing. Please bring a comfy chair or blanket if you like for this brief service. We'll also have metal folding chairs available. Then stick around for ice cream sandwiches or sugar-free popsicles. The playground will be open!



### Wednesday Healing Prayers

We gather on Zoom at 10:30 am to reflect on the readings or saint of the day as we pray for those on our parish prayer list and others on our hearts.

### Wednesday Night Live

Join in our time of prayer, listening and reflection at 7:30 pm. In September we'll have Compline Complementary Conversations, brief half-hour discussions led by a volunteer member, which we hope will not only inform and reinforce our faith and spirituality, but also promote improved understanding and appreciation for God's creation in its widest diversity.

### Thursday Morning Bible Study

Every week on Zoom with Pastor Don at 11:00 am

### Sunday Mornings

10:30 am Zoom Service and Coffee Hour

## Sacred Ground Dialogue

Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. In a small group or groups, we will walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class,

and political and regional identity. The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society.

I invite each of you to consider whether this might be a good time for you to delve deeper into this work of learning and reconciliation. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. However, I want to encourage our members of color to join this journey too. I anticipate that there will be opportunities to break out into smaller groups based on race and reconvene to share our thoughts. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day - all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

Please know that this is a significant commitment of time. There will be 2-3 hours of documentaries to watch or literature to study. This makes the dialogue and relationship that much more fruitful. Please pray about whether you might be called to journey with me in the coming months. On this form, let me know of your interest and which time you could attend. Monday from 10:00-11:30am or 7:00-8:30pm or Tuesday morning from 10:00-11:30am. If you would like to discern further with me, just let me know.

*Stewart+*

More info about the series is here. <https://episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground>



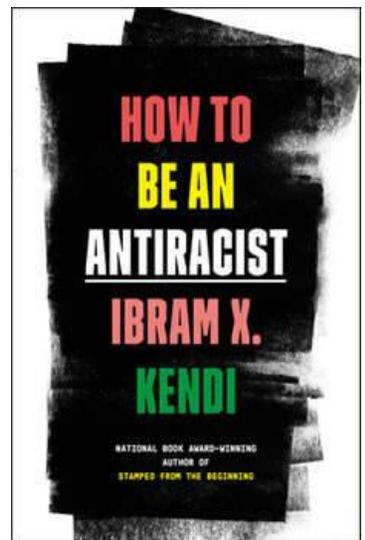
## Critical Conversations

In the Racial Justice Team's, Listen and Learn Workshops, we are learning the basics of Racism, its' history and impact in our communities and in the church. Where do we go from here? How can you make a difference? CLAIM (Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission) is sponsoring three *Critical Conversations* to help us move forward in understanding and implementing change within ourselves. Each month, we will read a book and then gather to discuss what we have learned and share ideas on how to “make the change.” You can get your book in either electronic or hard copy through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Kindle (or any vendor you prefer). We'll provide you with a list of questions to consider as you read and then discuss what we have learned during a *Critical Conversation* via Zoom. We are asking interested participants to RSVP to [claimbaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:claimbaltimore@gmail.com) so we can provide discussion materials and Zoom links.

**Tuesday, September 22 7:00-8:15pm**

**How To Be An Antiracist.** Author: Ibram X. Kendi

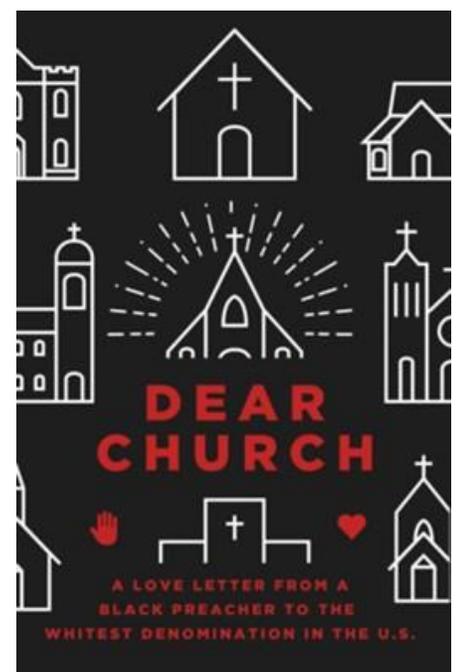
This historian and New York Times best-selling author uses a mix of personal experiences, history, and science to show how a person can go from being racist to anti-racist, and how we can all build a new anti-racist society.



**Tuesday, October 27 7:00-8:15pm**

**Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US** Author: Lenny Duncan

Lenny Duncan is the unlikeliest of pastors. Formerly incarcerated, he is now a black preacher in the whitest denomination in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Shifting demographics and shrinking congregations make all the headlines, but Duncan sees something else at work—drawing a direct line between the church's lack of diversity and the church's lack of vitality. The problems the ELCA faces are theological, not sociological. But so are the answers.



## Our Civic Responsibility

If you need to register to vote, just visit the Maryland State Board of Elections. The deadline to register online is October 13. If you would like to apply to receive a mail-in ballot for the November election, visit this webpage. Forms must be received by October 20. You will need to have your driver's license ready.



## Be Counted!

Please take a few minutes to complete the 2020 Census if you have not already do so. It's an easy process online here.

## A Prayer for our Country

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence,



discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way.

Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# 2020: A Year to Remember—and a Year to Remember Seafarers!

We can't know in July whether public health concerns will limit our service to crews in December. How can YOU help?

Please help us prepare for the worst while hoping for the best:



## 1. Please put items in ONE-GALLON SEALED PLASTIC BAGS (NOT boxes this year).

- ★ Why? If public health is a concern again, few of us might be available to deliver gifts. So they'll need to be lighter and more portable.
- ★ And if circumstances prevent any delivery before 2021, we wouldn't have space for an accumulation of 1600 bulky boxes!

## 2. No food, no food, no food! Please: NO FOOD of any kind.

- ★ Why? "No food" has always been our policy. Our store-room is hot, and so are ships' storerooms. Candy melts, and gum overpowers the room with spearmint fragrance.
- ★ But 2020 gifts might not be delivered till 2021 if conditions worsen. Now, more than ever, we can't store food.



## 3. Then what can you include?

- ★ A one-gallon bag accommodates a pocket or paperback New Testament (modern English if possible), a warm hat if not too bulky, warm socks or gloves, small sealed toiletries (gender-neutral), pad and pen, post cards or magnets of Baltimore or D.C., and/or pocket calendar.
- ★ Please don't over-fill, so bag won't come open, and do seal carefully.
- ★ Christmas stickers (no bulky bows) on the outside and/or cards on the inside are options to make your package more festive.

## 4. What if you've already wrapped boxes?

- ★ Please contact [baltseafarers@aol.com](mailto:baltseafarers@aol.com) to find out if we can accommodate. NO FOOD please! Boxes must total UNDER 3.5 POUNDS (no hardback books, no large toiletries.)



PLEASE BRING BAGS TO NATIVITY & HOLY COMFORTER BY NOVEMBER 1, 2020.