



THE BT TIMES

A New Paradigm

Special Events

Saturday, Feb 19 7pm

Movie Night

Tuesday, March 1

Mardi Gras

Carry-Out Dinner

Wednesday, March 2

Ash Wednesday

Noon & 6pm in church

7:30 pm on Zoom

Sunday, March 20 3pm

Concert in the Church

Ronn McFarlane &

Carolyn Surrick

Saturday, April 2 6 pm

Trivia Night

Sunday, April 10

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 17

Easter Day

Weekly Events

Mondays

Zoom Chair Yoga 10:00am

Tuesdays

Square Dancing 7:00pm

Wednesdays

Zoom Prayers

10:30am & 7:30pm

Thursdays

Zoom Bible Study 11:00am

Meditation 7:30pm

AA

Tuesday at 6:30pm &

Wednesday at 7:00pm

I looked at the draft of this newsletter Carolyn had created with the title she gave to my title before I wrote it. “What new paradigm?” I asked her. I know what we are doing today, but I don’t know what the new paradigm is. Then I looked it up. A paradigm is a typical example or pattern of something; a model. I don’t know that anything in my life or the world is quite typical right now. Perhaps it never has been, but I don’t feel like I have much of a pattern to my life or to our life right now. Paradigm comes from late 15th century: via late Latin from Greek *paradeigma*, from *paradeiknunai* ‘show side by side’, from *para-* ‘beside’ + *deiknunai* ‘to show’.

We have been going back through bulletins and poems and newsletters and sermons from the last two years, looking at things side by side. (Carolyn is compiling another book for us! And slowly the patterns did begin to emerge. We gather. We pray. We worship. We laugh. We cry. We serve. We celebrate. We give. We comfort. We challenge. We listen. We watch. And we do it all again. That is a pattern.

God has a pattern too, and it does not change. God creates. God calls. God leads. God liberates. God challenges. God comes among us. God loves. God heals. God sends. God weeps. God gives new life.

I’m figuring out that this new paradigm that is emerging is really just about timing and planning. In Advent we used to already be thinking about Lent. And in the summer, we were already thinking about Christmas. Now, it’s Monday and we’re thinking about Sunday. It’s February but it already feels like 2022 has been 8 months long. In our life together, sometimes things will happen with shorter notice. It just means we get to be more creative and more responsive to where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

It does come with a bit more responsibility on all our parts. We’re doing great. I’ve always said one of the gifts of our community is that we are nimble - quick to respond. So, I encourage you to stay connected. Read your emails. Keep giving and creating and thinking and praying and sharing. What we’re doing is making a difference in my life and in our community. That’s a paradigm I’d like to continue ... side by side.

Pastor Stewart

Notes from the Office

by Carolyn Surrick

We used to have staff meetings in which we sketched out upcoming events, months in advance. I used to keep track of the organizations using our facilities with a hawk-like focus. Having enough parking spaces available was a real issue, and deconflicting parties, funerals, dancers, and AA meetings was a regular part of life.

Things are different here in the office when it comes to planning. We don't know what the future will bring. We are cautiously optimistic (because we are a church, after all.) We're not planning out the summer and the fall. We are planning out the next two months.

And what a two months it is going to be! Movies and a concert and Mardi Gras dinners – and let's not forget Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Easter. We are keeping good thought, saying extra prayers, hoping for warmer weather, and privately thrilled that we might have an Easter Egg Hunt before we share an Easter brunch outside. It's possible, really possible.

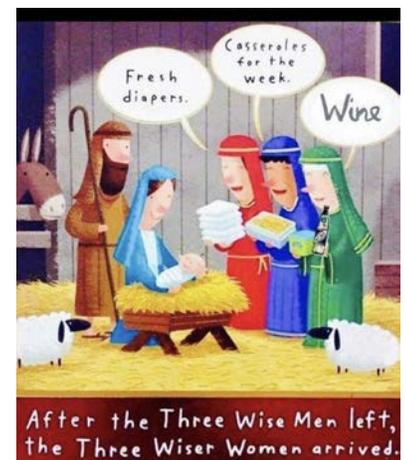
My Epiphany — The Women WERE There

by Barbara Herron

I've always liked Epiphany, the day the church celebrates the arrival of the three wise men bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the baby Jesus. Historians say that they probably arrived months later, and we only think there were three because three gifts are mentioned. Nevertheless, manger scenes feature Mary beaming beatifically at her baby, surrounded by Joseph, an assortment of animals, and shepherds, with an angel perched on top of the stable. The wise men take their places in this lovely tableau on January 6.

The old joke is that wise women would have showed up with diapers, a casserole and wine. There's even a cartoon that shows up every Epiphany on FaceBook. This year when I saw the cartoon, the truth hit me between the eyes. I had an epiphany of my own. Of course there were women there. The men who wrote the stories just didn't think they were worth mentioning.

So we read and we never give a thought to Mary in labor, Mary actually giving birth. Apparently, she was ready to deliver after that donkey ride from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and the birth just happened. Maybe Joseph lifted Mary off the donkey, carried her into the stable and gently deposited her on the bed of hay. Mary gracefully arranged herself, the baby miraculously appeared, along with swaddling clothes, Mary wrapped the baby and was ready to receive a lot of male visitors with not a hair out of place. Then Mary spent the next few days fending for herself, surrounded by a lot of animals and strange men. Really?



Women looked after each other in those days. After all, when Mary found out she was pregnant she went off to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Mary was young. She needed the support of an older woman.

Joseph set out with Mary to travel from Nazareth, where they lived, to Bethlehem, his ancestral home, to be counted in the Roman census. It's a trip of about 100 miles. MapQuest estimates that the trip can take from two hours and ten minutes to two and a half hours by car. How long must it have taken on foot? Not only that, but the route took them through Samaria which, as we know from the story of the Good Samaritan, was an area where travelers could fall prey to highwaymen and thieves. No doubt Mary and Joseph were traveling with family and friends from the north, including other women. And no doubt those women fussed over the pregnant young girl who was jouncing along on a donkey.

So, they got to Bethlehem, there was no room at the inn, but the kind innkeeper offered his stable. Said innkeeper may have had a wife, or at least a maidservant or two who carried the water, cleaned the rooms, did the cooking, and generally looked after the guests. Do you think they left Mary to her own devices? Do you think that they, or maybe someone in their traveling party, found the local midwife? Yes, there were midwives back then. The Hebrew term translated "the midwife" (*hameyaletet*) may literally be translated "the childbirth assisting woman." In Genesis 35:16-18, a midwife attended Rachel as she gave birth to Benjamin.

So Mary would have been attended by one or more women, who held her hand, wiped her face, and offered her wine or maybe an herbal drink to ease her pain. When the birth was over, it was the women who cleaned up Mary and the baby, wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes, handed him to his mother, and finally let her get some sleep.

They would have been around for a few days afterwards, helping the first-time mother, fussing over the new baby, and making sure Joseph got his dinner. And let's not forget that Mary, being a good Jewish girl, was considered to be unclean for seven days after giving birth to a son. She had to undergo ritual purification before she could present Jesus in the temple on the eighth day, in accordance with the scriptures. And women were part of that ritual.

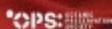
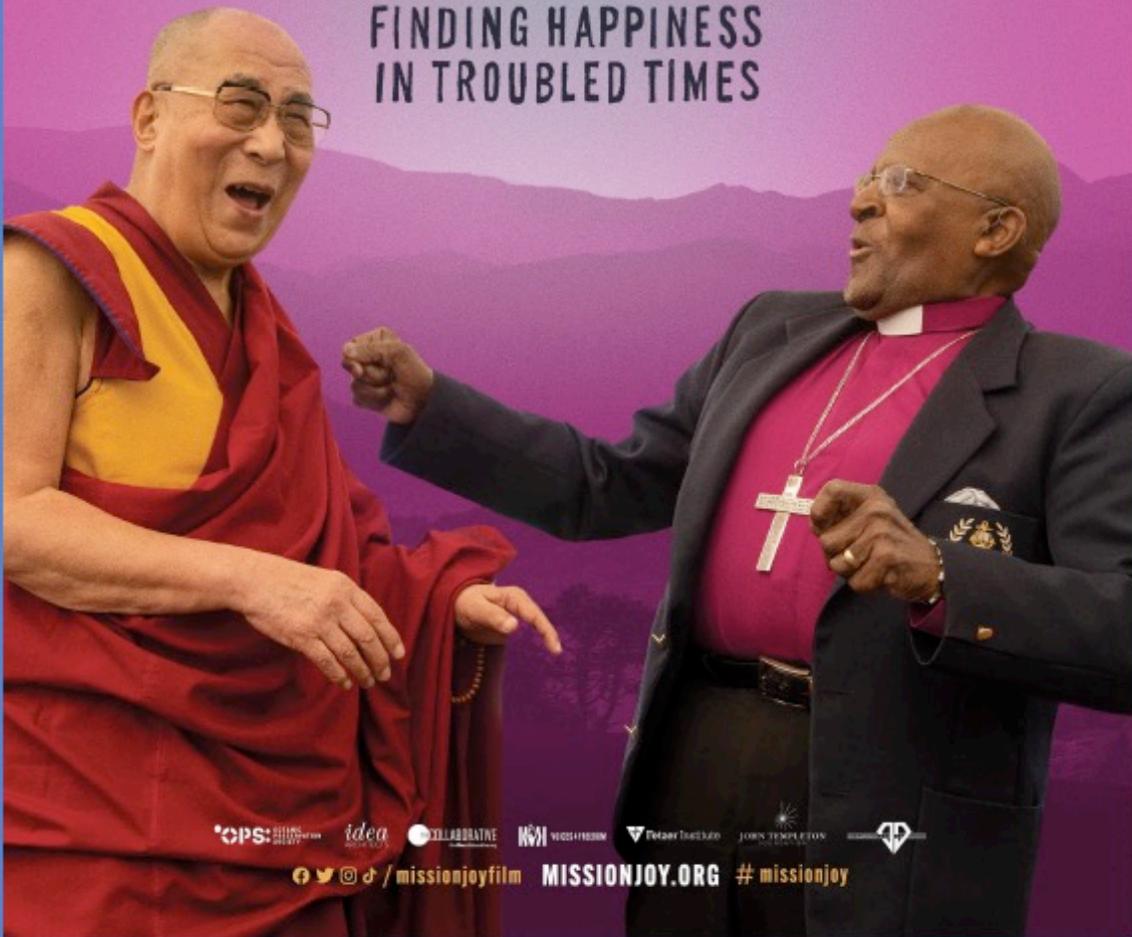
Maybe it's time to get the manger scene right. Bring in a woman or two to lovingly tend to Mary and her new-born son. Just because the authors of Matthew and Luke didn't think they were worth mentioning, doesn't mean they weren't there.



HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA & ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

MISSION: JOY

FINDING HAPPINESS
IN TROUBLED TIMES



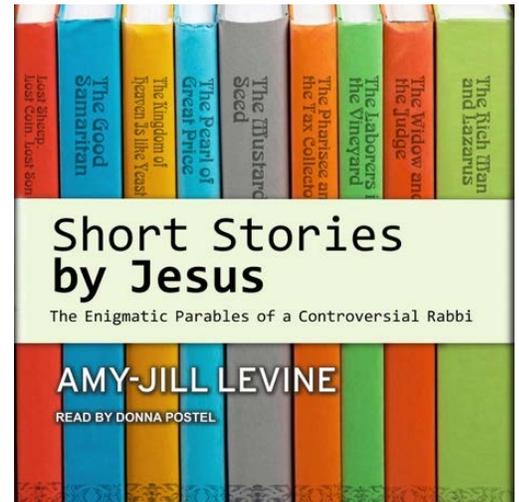
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Saturday, February 19, 2022 7:00pm

In Person in Hart Hall * Masks Required * Free!

Lenten Series: Short Stories by Jesus

On Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm in Lent, we'll gather on Zoom. Jesus was a skilled storyteller and perceptive teacher who used parables from everyday life to effectively convey his message and meaning. Life in first-century Palestine was very different from our world today, and many traditional interpretations of Jesus' stories ignore this disparity and have often allowed anti-Semitism and misogyny to color their perspectives. Each week we'll discuss short video presentations by scholar Amy-Jill Levine who analyzes these "problems with parables" taking us back in time to understand how their original Jewish audience understood them. She interprets these moving stories, showing how the parables are not just about Jesus, but are also about us—and when read rightly, still challenge and provoke us two thousand years later. This will be in place of our regular Wednesday Night Live.



ADLA

Engaging, involving, and investing in the gifts, interests, and capacity of people of African descent in every aspect of the life of this church is the focus of African Descent Ministry in the ELCA. As part of our Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries Team, we seek to strengthen the hands of the ELCA for building – with integrity – a multiethnic and multicultural church. As people of African descent, it is the gospel of Jesus that gives us the faith and freedom to join with all our siblings in Christ to boldly participate in God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in the name of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

The term "African Descent" refers to people who self-identify as Black, African Caribbean, African American, African Nationals and others of African ancestry from numerous countries who now live in the United States. A network of about 255 congregations report 49,000 people of African descent as active participants in the ELCA across the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The African Descent community within the ELCA is wonderfully diverse in culture and context. Together we are Christians, some new to the faith and others who for generations have been baptized Christians in Lutheran congregations. We stand in a long and biblically historical line of people of faith and of African descent, each person bringing a unique story that adds to the larger story that makes up the ELCA.

African Descent Ministries of the ELCA is celebrating Black History Month with a new series, *Talks at the Desk*, sharing the diverse expressions of the church. Join us each Wednesday in February at 8:30 EST as we listen to our youth, young adults, rostered leaders, elders, and friends of our communities while they tell their own sacred stories. There is more information on twitter @ELCAADM or on our FB page www.facebook.com/elcaadm.

Reparations

The Diocese of Maryland Reparations Task Force announced that grant applications for the Diocesan Reparations Fund will open February 21. These grants are open to any organization within the geographical region of the Diocese of Maryland that has a proven history of doing the work of restoring African American and Black communities, as well as startups whose mission and goals are the same.

On September 12, 2020, the 236th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland passed Resolution 2020-06, committing to creating a \$1,000,000 seed fund for reparations. The resolution called for the formation of a committee that, in conjunction with diocesan council, would prayerfully discern how to be stewards of this seed fund, which is expected to grow and reap benefits for generations. More information is available at www.episcopalmaryland.org.



CROSS CONNECTIONS:
Navigating Intentionally Into the Future
C.L.A.I.M. Virtual Annual Meeting
(Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission)
Monday, March 8 7pm
Special Guest: Bishop William J. Gohl, Jr.
All Are Welcome!

Spring and the Garden

Despite the relentless dips in the mercury, Spring is on the way. In fact, the Vernal Equinox is right around the corner. It's time to start planning out this year's garden - turning the soil and preparing the earth for new life. Contact Cindy Burggraf when you are ready to get out your gardening gloves and start scouring the farmer's markets for plants.

Ringin' in Easter

The Nativity/Holy Comforter Bell Choir rehearsals are about to start up again. With Covid numbers back into a manageable range, and Easter right around the corner, it's time to start working on some new music. If you've never done it before, now is the time to start!



GEDCO

Our friends and neighbors are still in need of our help, both with contributions of time and energy. Please keep our baskets full of donations and if you have a few hours in your week when you could help at the pantry, your presence would be deeply appreciated. **The food pantry also needs one pound bags of rice, instant coffee, tea, cereal, and JELLY! Microwaves and small refrigerators** are also in need for clients at the Samaritan Community. Please speak to Cindy Burggraf or Pastor Stewart if you have questions.

LUTHERAN EPISCOPAL CAMPUS MINISTRY IN BALTIMORE

TRIVIA NIGHT

3 locations, 1 competition!

**SATURDAY, APRIL 2
6:00PM**



Holy Apostles & St Stephen
901 Courtney Rd.
Arbutus, MD 21227

Trinity Episcopal
120 Allegheny Ave.
Towson, MD 21204

Good Shepherd Lutheran
1415 W 7th St.
Frederick, MD 21702

Teams of up to 8 people
\$20 per person (snack box included)

Register at www.BaltimoreLutheranCampusMinistry.org

Sharing a meal

Last Sunday night, I was searching for a photograph. I confess, I have thousands of photos on my phone (I do kind of love that it's possible to look at events that I clearly wanted to preserve, evidently forever) and in the process of finding that perfect picture, I came across many, many photos of dinners at our house. Big dinners. Tables set for fifteen or seventeen or twenty people. There was a time in my life when our home was the family meeting place – for holidays or birthdays or graduation celebrations – we had the space and the stove and enough chairs.

Those days are done, but I was struck by the joy in the pictures. There were kids and parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. There were flowers on the tables and dogs on the floor and you could almost smell dessert in the oven.



Pastor Stewart wasn't convinced that we needed to do a Mardi Gras carryout dinner this year. It's a little labor intensive on our side, and he wasn't sure how many people would be interested in placing an order. But I look at pictures of the meals that have been served in Hart Hall, I see the laughter, the silly faces, the joy, and the community. I confess, I want to see that again. We're not quite at a place when sitting together and sharing a meal is the wisest move, but we can have an evening when we're together (remotely) celebrating Mardi Gras. So join us if you are so inclined. If the cost of the meal is too much, call Pastor Stewart. The options are listed below, everything comes with a salad and cupcake, and while we'll be putting off slicing into the King Cake this year, we will remain ever hopeful for a Mardi Gras Dinner in person next year.

Let us not forget the joy of being in each other's company. Let us not forget the bigger, broader family that is our church. And most importantly, God, grant us laughter and silly when we need it the most. Amen.

Entrees with a small salad

\$15 Chef Bobbie's ¼ Rack of Ribs served with Cajun corn and sweet potato tots

\$15 Chef Barbacoa Vegan Bowl

\$20 Salmon Shrimp and Grits



Cupcake Options

Black Velvet – a rich velvet cupcake with a kiss of chocolate and smooth cream cheese frosting

Midnite - Chocolate chip cream cheese surprise tucked inside a decadent chocolate cupcake, topped chocolate buttercream frosting

Sublime-inal - Lemon cupcake topped with an explosion of lime buttercream frosting.

All orders must be received by 9:00pm on Sunday, February 27.