

Time Together

While We are Apart



Sunday, May 3, 2020

Good morning, dear church communities,

Our animal picture today features a Limburg pet, our dear Bix! This photo is Bix's "glamour shot" from a few years ago when he was a scarf model for Christmas Treasures at SMWC! His picture was in the Rappahannock Record, and he was identified by full name, Bix Limburg! Bix came to us in Richmond from a shelter program there; he was nine months old, and had been turned in by a family that had to move out of state. Bix is likely part Corgi and part Pomeranian, and all confidence! Though his legs aren't much more than four inches long, Bix acts like he is six foot, two inches! He is an amazingly cheerful dog and a great buddy to Autumn, our other dog, and we love him much.

This past week I participated in a group Zoom meeting as the Dean of the Northern Neck Region. The Bishops wanted to meet with church leadership (Deans, Region Presidents, members of the Standing Committee and the Executive Board) to begin the discussion of what our process might be to reopen our churches.

The discussion was interesting and was only the most preliminary step for reopening. The Diocese and the churches will continue to follow and respect the "Stay at Home" order that Governor Northam put in place until June 10. In her introductory remarks Bishop Susan offered a few interesting statistics and facts. The first, from the CDC, noted that 91% of those who have died of COVID-19 were 55 years old or older. This statistic is, of course, relevant to our churches, and to the majority of folks in the Northern Neck. The second fact was surprising, but not after a bit of thought. A report from Johns Hopkins University, prepared to help state governors in their reopening processes, stated that worship services and choir

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practices are gatherings that fall into the category of “super spreaders” of the coronavirus! I was shocked by this analysis of our gatherings! But then I started to think about worship, and realized we sing, we do responsive readings, we say the creed together, I preach, we sing again... and I realized, that well... I don't know how to say this nicely, but spit goes forth when we are together! And I have not even mentioned the person to person greetings, conversations and hugs, and finally communion, sharing of the bread and the wine, hand to hand, face to face. I realize now that worship, as wonderful and powerful and life-giving as it is, in this time of pandemic, does fall into the “super spreaders” category.

We will discuss ways to cope with this reality, but again, we are only in the most initial stages of discussing a reopening of our churches. This is sobering information that our ways could spread the coronavirus, and we must be thoughtful in our considerations of how to reopen and keep everyone safe and healthy. A very first step suggested is to simply have a few folks go with me to our churches and do a little thinking, measuring etc. If we were to return to church, maintaining six feet of social distance in all directions, and keeping the spit in mind, where could folks sit, how many could be present at a time? We can all ponder and imagine at this very initial phase. If you are interested in helping with this measuring and pondering, wearing masks of course, let me know.

In the meantime, I offer a final comment paraphrasing from Bishop Susan, reminding us that we continue to be the church, even when we cannot go to church. I see us being the church in so, so many ways... to name just a few... when we call, text and email each other to check in; when the Vestries do their good work together on Zoom; when the River Road Food Pantry continues operating as a drive-through pantry and caring for the so vulnerable in our community; when we gather for Zoom coffee hour for some laughter and sharing; when we continue our pledges to our churches to keep us going; and when we donate to the Discretionary Funds so we can support folks by paying electric and rent bills, among so many needs. Keep on being the church, dear ones! Alleluia!

Now, onward to a little more, “Time Together.” Megan

Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Sunday Newsletter. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists.

Notes for this week:

- Chuck McGrath Chuck is slowly improving. He is not mobile at this time, but PT is working with him on being able to get out of bed. He is eating well and is more alert, but they must be very careful with the consistency of his food and drink, as he still has a bad cough as a residual from the pneumonia. Malena noted that everything needs to be thick, and asks, "Ever tried thick water? It is an acquired taste!" Please continue your prayers for Chuck and his family.
- Our healthcare workers are on all our hearts. Please keep them, and their families, in your prayers.

Prayer Lists:

St. Mary's Whitechapel: Chuck McGrath, Don DeFilippo, George Clowser, Sherry Mann, Susan Goff, Jori Keckman, Nancy Brandon, Ron Okrasinski, Sally Flanigan, Alexa Frisbee, R. W. Courtney, Tammy, Dorsey Ficklin, Glenn Courtney, Terry Thompson, Wendy Burnett, Nora Pennell, Lin Greene, Jake Cobb, Dave Petersen, Dan Ficklin, Marie Beringer, Donna Alexander, Rose, Cecil Courtney, Mimi Chace, Donna Brayton, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Howard Hanchey, Jennifer Cassell Cole, Karen Woodruff, Roger Fortin, Wier Harman, Gina Adams, Brad Quillen, Jessica, Joanne and Michael.

Nursing Home Resident: Lancashire - Mary Sue Courtney

Armed Forces: Joshua Green, Aimee Budzinski, Mark Medina, Kathryn McCormack Akacem, Mehdi Akacem, Anderson Sale, Thomas Mackie, Pia Mackie, Tate Young, Spencer Fortin.

Trinity: Omid, Nancy Clark, Vicki Simmons Watson, Jerry Gregor, Susan Goff, Janice Shanks, Sherri Carter, Terri, Nick Slaughter, Fran and Dick Davis, Sally Flanigan, R. W. Courtney, Frances Bush, Delford Walthall, Glenn Courtney, Barbara Nunnery, Keith Elswick, Fred Eddowes, Steve, Rick Bateman, Jenny Dunaway, Earline Tomlin Kelley, Ed Borer, Dean Haine, Donna Alexander, Mary and Karen Jackson, Cecil Courtney, Berkeley Kellum, Wendy Boswell, Preston Bryant, Michael, Mel and Frances Ercelino, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Karen Woodruff, Joey Coker, Michael Dunaway, J.W. Boone, Brad Quillen, Ian Larmore, Brandon Dunaway.

Armed Forces: Giovanni Elhordoy, Ward Gavin, Paul Price and Michael Stout.

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: Pray for Leeds, Markham; Christ, Charlottesville; Good Shepherd, Burke; Resurrection, Alexandria.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Pray for the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Communion in Japan).

Announcements:

Food Drive this Tuesday, May 5th to support the Healthy Harvest Food Bank and the Food Pantries of the Northern Neck. The Food Drive will be held at the Lancaster YMCA in Kilmarnock, from 8am-1pm on Tuesday. You will not need to leave your car to deliver this much needed food -- just drive up, pop the trunk, and volunteers will be ready to pick up the food. Much needed items include: peanut butter, canned tuna, canned chicken, canned fruits and vegetables. Many thanks!

The May/June/July edition of "Forward Day by Day" is now available. This devotional produced by the Episcopal Church is usually available on our Announcement tables. If you would like a copy and you have a key to the parish hall, you can drop by and pick one up. If you do not have a key and would like a copy, call me and we will arrange to get it to you.

Many of you have told me how much you are enjoying Glenn's "Thoughts from the Organ Bench" column in the Newsletter, and the links to hear the hymn of the day! First, I wanted to share Glenn's email address so you can connect with him: Glenncourtney49@gmail.com Second, I wanted to let you know that if you are looking for other links to Glenn's music selections, check out the SMWC website: stmaryswhitechapel.org. Glenn keeps a link to a hymn or song there too. Music is so good for our souls always, and especially in these stressful days. Many thanks, Glenn!

"Zooming Coffee Hour" is this afternoon at 3pm; all are welcome! Text, call or email me if you want to join us, and I'll send you the invitation this afternoon. (My cell number is 804-477-5515) And if you would like to join us, but are not signed up for Zoom, Ellen Tracey from Trinity and Sharon and Richard Gill from SMWC are willing to help anyone get on Zoom. Ellen can be contacted at: 804-436-2371 and The Gills can be reached at: 804-462-9939.

For the season of Easter, I will be posting a video each Sunday, focused on the Gospel for the week. The videos will be available on the Trinity website and on our Facebook pages.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org.

Please let me know if you are in need of help with getting groceries or other necessities. Call, text, or email and I'll connect you with a volunteer.

Many thanks for continuing to pay your pledges as you are able in these difficult financial times. And many thanks to those who have been able to donate to the Rector's Discretionary Funds. You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector's Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church
PO Box 208
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC
5940 Whitechapel Rd
Lancaster, VA 22503



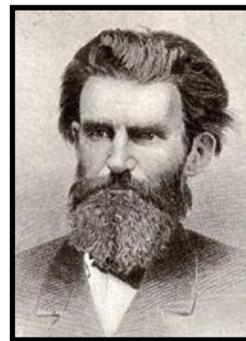
Thoughts from the Organ Bench

"**Jesus Loves Me**" is a Christian hymn written by Anna Bartlett Warner (1827–1915). The lyrics first appeared as a poem in the context of an 1860 novel called *Say and Seal*, written by her older sister Susan Warner (1819–1885), in which the words were spoken as a comforting poem to a dying child. The tune was added in 1862 by William Batchelder Bradbury (1816–1868). Along with his tune, Bradbury added his own chorus "Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus Loves me..." After publication as a song it became one of the most popular Christian hymns in churches around the world, especially among children. As originally published in 1860, it appeared in three stanzas, as follows:

Jesus loves me—this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong,—
They are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus loves me—loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high,
Comes to watch me where I lie.

Jesus loves me—he will stay,
Close beside me all the way.
Then his little child will take,
Up to heaven for his dear sake.^[2]



William Batchelder Bradbury

Here is Mr. Bradbury's hymn version of the poem; there are other variations of the verses in print.

Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
they are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me he who died
heaven's gate to open wide.
He will wash away my sin,
let his little child come in.

Refrain

Jesus loves me, this I know,
as he loved so long ago,
taking children on his knee,
saying, "Let them come to me."

Refrain^[5]

In 1943 in the Solomon Islands, John F. Kennedy's PT-109 was rammed and sunk. Islanders Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana, who found Kennedy and the survivors, remember that when they rode on PT boats to retrieve the survivors, the Marines sang this song with the natives, who had learned it from Seventh-day Adventist missionaries.

This hymn tune was titled "China" in some hymnals of the 19th century. Some early hymnals, such as *The Modern Hymnal* (1926) explain this title with a subtitled note that says, "The Favorite Hymn of China". Later the subtitle was dropped and the tune is simply called "China."

I can remember learning this hymn as a boy at Corrottoman Baptist Church. I was a member of the Sunbeams and our leader was my cousin Beatrice Carter Oliver Doggett. I'm sure it is one of everyone's favorites.

Please enjoy two performances of this hymn. The first by the Barrett Sisters; the second by a children's choir.

Click on each link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQQRzNoft8>
 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBALcN7o1NU>

Source: Wikipedia.com

Reflection

On this 4th Sunday of Easter, we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday. Our readings speak of Jesus as our good shepherd, and the psalm assigned is always Psalm 23. For so much of the scriptures I enjoy exploring different translations, studying how the words can vary and deepen our understanding of a passage. But for Psalm 23, I can only really hear it in the King James translation.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

I find myself on this Good Shepherd Sunday, thinking of those who have died from COVID-19. As I write this on May 2nd, over 65,000 Americans have died in just four months... an overwhelming number, and in such a short period of time. I am grateful to the newscasts that take time to tell a little of the story of those who have died. The stories help me to remember the people, the lives cut short, behind that so large number that is still growing. I also know that of those 65,000+ folks, the vast majority died without family and friends to hold their hands, to comfort them, to play music and whisper in their ears as they let go, words of love and farewell. And I know you too have read of those who have stepped in, like good shepherds to assure that folks are not alone in their final moments... nurses, doctors, CNAs... holding hands, sharing messages sent by families, guessing at what needs to be said... crying for and with families outside... far away.

So I invite you to join me in saying Psalm 23 today, as a prayer for the 65,000+ who have died, for those who dying now, for their families and friends, and for all those who, along with providing physical care and help and medicine, are providing too the shepherding we all need.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.....”

Amen.

