

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021

*REMINDER:* We have regathered for in person worship each Sunday at 10 am. Masks are strongly encouraged. For those not ready to return, the livestream continues on our YouTube Channel.

### MESSAGE FROM ROBIN+

*On the calendar for the feasts and fasts in the Episcopal Church, August 15<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin. This year the feast occurred on a Sunday, so its observance was marked on Monday of this week. Mary has a variety of titles such as Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, Mother of Our Lord, and Mother of the Church (Christ being the Church). One lesser-known title for Mary is Ark of God. With all the rain we've been having, I like this one!*

*We know the story of Noah and the Ark and how the ark saved Noah and two of each living thing from the flood waters. We know the story of the infant Moses being placed in a basket and then into the river water to save him from being killed by Pharaoh. But did you know that this basket was also called an ark in the Hebrew language? Then there is the Ark of the Covenant, or Ark of God in which the Israelites kept their holiest of treasures, and where they believed God's presence resided. They carried the Ark with them wherever they journeyed and when they made camp it was placed in the Tabernacle, or tent of meeting. In all of these examples, the implied definition of ark is a container that protects and keeps safe what is inside.*

*For the Israelites of the Old Testament, the Ark of God was a physical reminder of the presence of God in their midst. It was the Ark that rested in the very center of the Tent of Meeting, the Holy of Holies, and it was the Ark over which God's glory hovered, for within the Ark was kept some manna from the wilderness; the two tablets of the Ten Commandments; and the staff of Aaron the High Priest. Since we have been hearing about manna and bread all month, that's another reason I am intrigued by this title for Mary.*

*Stale bread, some stones, and an old stick, in and of themselves, don't seem all that worthy of attention, but for Christians they are the signs of what God has done and what God will do for us in Christ. The manna reminds us that God feeds us, both physically and spiritually into eternity. The stone tablets remind us of the way God revealed Godself to the people of Israel through the Law, and also through the Word made flesh as Jesus revealed the Law as God's redeeming love. The stick, or staff carried by Aaron reminds us that God who led the people of Israel out of slavery and sin is the same God who, through Jesus, continues to lead us and redeem us now.*

*When Mary carried Jesus in her womb, she carried this salvation history, this Word about to be made flesh to feed us now and always, this Law of Love, and this One sent to lead us into new life. And so, she is the Ark of God, who said yes to God and gave birth to the Bread of Life.*

*Seeing Mary as the Ark of God reminds us that we too are called to be arks of God, bearing and giving birth to the Bread of Life, the Law of love, and the Redeemer of the world. The next time it rains, think about how you might be an ark of God, bearing, carrying, and giving birth to the One who is Bread, Word, and Redeemer.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Br. James Koester, SSJE for thoughts and background on Mary as the Ark of God.

## **THANK YOU**

Many thanks to those of you who have generously given to help fund the removal of our two damaged trees. As of this week we have received \$3,700 toward the expense of \$6,300 to remove the trees, occurring next week. It's not too late to help us reach our goal to cover the cost of the work. Just send a check to the church office payable to Christ and Grace with "trees" on the memo line. We are grateful for your generosity to keep our church beautiful and safe.

## **ALTAR FLOWERS NEEDED**

Thank you for your help in beautifying our altar! Thanks to your generous support we only have one open date remaining - September 26. If you would like to remember or honor a loved one, contact Lee at 243-3302 or [shakubuku42@gmail.com](mailto:shakubuku42@gmail.com). The cost is \$55, payable to Christ and Grace with "altar flowers" on the memo line.

## **CHRISTMAS IS COMING**

Christ and Grace has for years supported a ministry of providing Christmas joy to children of incarcerated parents through Angel Tree Ministry. The registration deadline for our church to volunteer with Angel Tree is September 1. *If we do not have a parishioner to organize this ministry we will not have an Angel Tree this year.*

Ministries in the church are important, but ministries change and that can be healthy for a parish. It might be that this is a time to consider a new outreach ministry, perhaps with a local school or retirement community.

If you have ideas about ways that Christ and Grace can share the love of God and the hope of Christmas with those in need, please contact Rev. Robin at [rteasley@christandgrace.org](mailto:rteasley@christandgrace.org).

## **PRAYER LIST**

We beg you to feed the hungry, protect the refugee, embrace the distressed, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and comfort the dying. Especially we pray for James Christiansen, Thomas Clark, Shannon Farthing, Melba Felty, Kathy Hackett, Rod Hale, Heydon Lewis, Shelley Richardson, Mark Sheffield, Mary Villeponteaux, David and Wyatt.

To add someone to our prayer list, please contact the church office at 733-7202. We will keep names on the list about a month so please contact us if they need to remain longer.

To send a note of encouragement to parishioners on the Prayer List, please go to [www.christandgrace.org](http://www.christandgrace.org) and under "About Us" you will find the online directory. Contact the church office at 733-7202 for log in password or additional assistance.

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

Our service of Holy Communion is held in person and live-streamed each Sunday at 10 AM on our YouTube channel. Please call the church office at 804-733-7202 or email Robin at [rteasley@christandgrace.org](mailto:rteasley@christandgrace.org) if you would like a home visit with communion.

## THE COLLECT

Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Psalm 84

### *Quam dilecta!*

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! \*  
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house  
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; \*  
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King and my God.
- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! \*  
they will always be praising you.
- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! \*  
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.
- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, \*  
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.
- 6 They will climb from height to height, \*  
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.
- 7 LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; \*  
hearken, O God of Jacob.
- 8 Behold our defender, O God; \*  
and look upon the face of your Anointed.
- 9 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, \*  
and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God  
than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- 10 For the LORD God is both sun and shield; \*  
he will give grace and glory;
- 11 No good thing will the LORD withhold \*  
from those who walk with integrity.
- 12 O LORD of hosts, \*  
happy are they who put their trust in you!

**John 6:56-69**

Jesus said, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”