

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH XENIA

**NewsNote Vol. 2, No. 16
Fourth Sunday of Lent**



Service by Zoom this Sunday

[ZOOM link](#)

**We will stream live to Facebook
this week.**

[Link to Facebook page](#)

A message from Rev. Jennifer

I read a beautiful meditation on the old hymn, "There is a Balm in Gilead" that really stopped me in my tracks. Howard Thurman, the great American mystic, suggests that that hymn provides a basic insight of optimism, "an optimism that grows out of the pessimism of life and transcends it."

An "optimism that grows out of pessimism." Finding hope in hopelessness. Finding peace in chaos. Thurman suggests that Jeremiah, the great prophet who asked whether there was a balm in Gilead (Jer 8:22), a question that is asked by Jeremiah as he goes to his soul laid bare and brought to the "very ground and core of his faith." There is a balm in Gilead!

One thing that I've noticed as we come to the one year mark of lock-down is how much I miss conversation that helps me sift my thoughts and emotions and experiences--and helps me look at myself a little more critically. I hope that I can use this Lent--and the waning days of social distance, masks, and self denial--to experience a shred of what Jeremiah realized.

I've copied the whole meditation and provided a link for the hymn at the end of this news note. May you find healing in whatever is hurting you.

Peace,

Jennifer+

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Easter Flowers

A message from Becky:

Covid has played havoc with our flower orders but we'll try to make this work! Flowerama will reserve Easter flowers for us and these will be available to those who want them. As of today, we are planning on in-church worship starting Palm Sunday and going forth through Holy Week, at least. We are ordering the same number and types of flowers as last year:

9 lilies

12 tulips

13 daffodils

All are \$9.50. If you want to order, please let me know the number and what you are ordering by March 22 if possible. First come, first serve. If you have any questions, please call me at 937-372-1594.

Becky

LENTEN OFFERING: Visual Bible Study

**Lenten Series *Scripture through Pictures:*
This and every Wednesday in Lent at 8.30 pm
*by Zoom/Facebook***

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Lenten Bible Study

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Second Sunday**

**Preacher and Celebrant: Reverend Jennifer
Scripture Readings for March 14**

**Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21**

*you can find copies of the scripture on our weekly devotional
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Clothes, Etc. is continuing outreach to the community--community members can call for an appointment to come and find clothing. A second outreach is also emerging: serving social workers and children who have been placed in foster care. Clothes Etc. is putting together packets of clothing by gender and size--underwear, socks, pants and shirt--and then inviting social workers to make appointments to get packets for the children they serve. If you would like to help, see below...

Older girls: sizes 12-18

- Jeans/pants
- Shirts/tops
- Socks
- Sweat shirts
- Athletic bras
- Coats
- Hats
- Gloves
- New** underwear/panties (all other clothes can be used)

Older boys: sizes 12-18

- Jeans/pants
- Long sleeved warm shirts
- Socks
- Sweat shirts
- Cotton tshirts
- Coats
- Hats
- Gloves
- New** underwear (all other clothes can be used)

Hygiene Items

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- hairbrush

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Ohio Dept of Health Map

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++Parish Prayer List++

Please contact church office to update or add names

Prayers for your daily devotions

Healing

Karen I, Rev Greg, David, Cheryl, Holly, Ruth, Amelia, Brad, Cynda, Heather, Diana and Peter, Matt L, Alex B, Jacob C, Carolyn C, and for all who suffer because of COVID-19.

In God's Nearer Presence

Marilyn Thomas

Ray Kerr (Cheryl's family)

John Watkins (Cheryl's family)

Connie Adamson (Cheryl's family)

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++Previous Sermons++

Rev Jen, "Good Words"

++Christian Formation++

*Weekly Devotional

Our readings this week include exploration of hunger--spiritual and physical hunger. Suzanne Guthrie's weekly devotional is found at the button below. At the top left hand corner you will find the readings of the week.

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Weekly Devotional

Devotional from Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation

The Hebrew prophets deeply loved their tradition and profoundly criticized it at the same time. Such truthful love is a very rare art form and a hallmark of prophetic identity. The prophet Jeremiah lived in a time of deep grief and loss. Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians and his people had been exiled. He critiqued the false prophets of his day who denied such necessary suffering and pretended things were better than they were. He poured out his heart to God and famously asked, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" (Jeremiah 8:22). The hope for a healing "balm in Gilead" provided inspiration for the African American spiritual tradition and Civil Rights Movement. Today's meditation is a reflection from the mystic and theologian Howard Thurman about the beloved spiritual "There Is a Balm in Gilead."

There is a balm in Gilead,
To make the spirit whole.
There is a balm in Gilead,
To heal the sin-sick soul.

The peculiar genius of the Negro slave [song] is revealed here in much of its structural splendor. The setting is the book of Jeremiah. The prophet has come to a "Dead Sea" place in his life. Not only is he discouraged over the external events in the life of Israel, but he is also spiritually depressed and tortured. [Wounded,] he cried out, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is no physician there?" It is not a question of fact that he is raising—it is not a question directed to any particular person for an answer. It is not addressed either to God or to Israel, but rather it is a question raised by Jeremiah's entire life. He is searching his own soul. He is stripped to the literal substance of himself, and is turned back on himself for an answer. Jeremiah is saying actually, "There must be a balm in Gilead; it cannot be that there is no balm in Gilead." The relentless winnowing of his own bitter experience has laid bare his soul to the end that he is brought face to face with the very ground and core of his own faith. The slave caught the mood of this spiritual dilemma and with it did an amazing thing. He straightened the question mark in Jeremiah's sentence into an

exclamation point: "There is a balm in Gilead!" Here is a note of creative triumph.

The melody itself is most suggestive. It hovers around the basic scale without any straying far afield. Only in one place is there a sharp lifting of a tonal eyebrow—a suggestion of escape; and then the melody swings back to work out its destiny within the zones of melodic agreement.

The basic insight here is one of optimism—an optimism that grows out of the pessimism of life and transcends it. It is an optimism that uses the pessimism of life as raw material out of which it creates its own strength.

Howard Thurman, *Deep River: Reflections on the Religious Insight of Certain of the Negro Spirituals* (Harper and Brothers: ©1945, 1955), 55–56.

A beautiful recording is at the link "Balm in Gilead" below.

Balm in Gilead

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God's blessing be with us,
Christ's peace be with us,
the Spirit's outpouring be with us,
now and always. Amen.++

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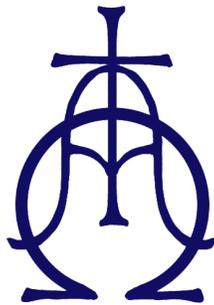
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Facebook for Marilyn Thomas Funeral

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CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH XENIA

Special Edition: Annual Meeting 2021 Election Results



Vestry Elections

Your new Vestry consists of
Jennie Hudson, Senior Warden
Bradley Alexander, Junior Warden
Debbie Gillespie, 2022
Rick Bayless, 2023
Rick Feinour, 2024
Tanya Ellenburg-Kimmet will be nominated to be the
Secretary for the Vestry (ex officio)

Many, many thanks to Jim Goines and Nigel Gunn for being
willing to serve, and to all who participated in the voting.

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Voting on Amendments

All five amendments passed:
We will have a new Vestry size of five: Sr Warden, Jr Warden, and three
Vestry members at large
We have a system for moving to that formate
A typo in the by-laws was corrected.
We will be able to hire a treasurer rather than have one come from the
congregation

Forgotten Business

We did not elect delegates to the Annual Meeting.

We will take care of this in the new future by mail
We'll meet by Zoom--click the "Lenten Bible Study" button below to join us. The Facebook button above will take you to the live stream.

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