



April 2021

# The Harvest

## God's Boundless Mercy for All

I wonder at times how closely, if at all, my understanding of God matches God's reality. I think often of Paul Tillich, a 20th century existential philosopher, Protestant theologian, and Lutheran minister, who wrote that God did not exist. At least not as one might think God exists. For Tillich God is beyond essence and existence and therefore does not exist as *a* being among other beings. He is the 'ground of *all* being'. Of all that exists. Of *being itself*. But what does that mean? And what does that say about God?

Words are helpful tools, which we use to formulate *our understanding* of reality; but they also do us a disservice because we then falsely believe that reality *is* as we understand and describe it to be.

If words are, at best, only symbols used to conceptualize reality, then I can only project my understanding of God in symbolic ways. What I am attempting to contact and know is that which is *ultimate*, the unconditional ground of all being. That is the ultimate and only concern for humankind. And yet, it eludes us because we have no way of fully grasping that reality; it is totally Other and beyond our meager ability to fully know. I must settle on an acknowledgement that the reality of God is beyond my best symbolic understanding of God. I yearn for the God beyond my idea of God. So, does that mean I cannot know God; that my understanding is limited to only an understanding of my projected symbol of God? I don't think so. Listen to what Jeremiah tells us is God's desire:

***"You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD"*** (Jeremiah 29:13-14). God wants me

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## To Connect to Christ Church via Zoom

<https://christlockport.info/>

Compline –Thursdays 7:00 pm

Zoom Coffee Hour – Sunday 12:30

Sunday drive-in & YouTube 10:00

Donate with PayPal

## Church Cleaning – Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am

Now that the lanterns are safely attached to the arches and we are confident they will not be falling any more, we need to clean the Church and get it ready for reopening on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Debbie Bronschidle is leading the effort to get it all shiny and clean. She has a list of tasks that need to be completed. We need volunteers – please call Debbie to arrange what you will do. If you don't have Debbie's phone number, please call the church to get it. When you come to clean please bring buckets, gloves, cleaning clothes, dusters, etc. We will supply the Murphy's oil soap, vacuums, etc. We also need someone with a carpet cleaner to clean the small rug in the columbarium.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. Food Drive

The next drive will be April 10<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 – 1:00 am. There is a need for more protein (canned tuna or chicken, spam, hash, chili, hearty meat soups, meat ravioli, beans, peanut butter and jelly, etc.). When our Outreach Team is filling the Blessing Boxes they are finding lots of ramen noodles, macaroni and cheese, and spaghetti still there so we will focus on protein.. However, we still need a variety of items and will gladly accept all donations.

**Come Early – Help Clean &  
Bring Your Food to Donate**

to know him. God may want me to find him, but if I don't know who exactly I am looking for, how will I recognize God when I find God? My answer is I will know when I find God. I am comforted in Kierkegaard's leap of faith – which defies explanation. *'I will be found by you'*, says the Lord. If I am to find God, he must extend his hand to help me find him. And I must be searching for that hand. The hand that God extends is that of Jesus who extended his hands on the cross to embrace all people, at all times, in all places.

So back to my original question: how close is my understanding to God's reality? I cannot say for sure; I can only say what I firmly *believe*: I believe God loves us so completely that he has given himself for us in Jesus Christ his beloved Son, and thereby pledged his very being as God for our salvation. In Jesus Christ God has *actualized* his unconditional love for us in such a once-for-all way, that he cannot go back upon it without denying himself. Jesus Christ died for us precisely because we are sinful and utterly unworthy of him, and thus already made us his own before and apart from our ever believing in him. God has bound us to himself by his love in a way that he will never let us go, for even if we refuse him, his love will never cease. **That is the God that I know at the deepest core of my faith.** I know that God – my God – is love. Paul reminds me that nothing can separate me from the love of God. God's 'judgement' ultimately is my salvation. Through the suffering and death of Jesus I find God and see his tangible love. But God extends a hand to Jesus and raises him back to life, because God is being itself. All things were made and brought into *being*, brought into God's being through Christ, who died that I might live – forever!

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday. They are the heart of the Christian faith. Here God extends his hand that we may see and believe; that God may be found by us.

That we may come to truly know God as God is. **God is love.** And by his very nature extends his boundless mercy to all so that, like him, we might live forever!!

Now that is something in which we can rejoice, indeed. Alleluia!! Praise God, Alleluia!! A Blessed Easter to you.

*Fr. Thomas+*

## Congratulations, Mat Heschke

On November 20, 2020, Mat Heschke was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at Orleans Niagara BOCES. He was selected because of outstanding character and achievement.

In addition, Mat has been accepted at SUNY Erie Community College (ECC). Starting in the fall he will be at the North Campus in Williamsville and will be studying Construction Management Engineering Technology. Well done, Mat. We're looking forward to all your future successes.

## A Note of Thanks

Tom and I wish to thank each of you for your prayers, cards, and expressions of kindness extended to us on the occasion of my Dad's going home to God.

My Dad was a good man, who worked and played hard and loved us no matter what. I was more than blessed to have him as my Dad and he left our family with wonderful memories of a long and full life well-lived.

Blessings,

*Fr. Thomas and Tom*

## Restitution and Restoration

In March, we reflected on the Lenten words of "Reflect and Repent". We took time to rest and remember in order to reflect on those areas of our lives...our words and actions...that cause us to lose awareness of the Presence of God within ourselves and others. As we approach the celebration of Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday (with the understanding that we celebrate Christ's Resurrection every day), we turn our attention to what happens after we repent and make a commitment to change our hearts and lives.

This brings us to "Restitution and Restoration". It is unfortunate that the word "Restitution" has recently taken on a negative connotation in our culture, as it is associated with the word "reparation". Both words involve making amends, compensating for damages, repairing what is broken. Let's take a closer look at this with open minds and hearts.

Restitution is necessary when our words and actions have caused another to be made less than whole, such as causing a loss of income, damage to or loss of property, physical injury. Have we spoken untrue words that damaged another's reputation and caused them to lose their employment? Has our recklessness caused someone to be injured and incur medical attention? Have we discriminated against another for any reason and caused them to not have the opportunities that would be offered to us? The *positive* aspect of restitution is the act of doing what is necessary to repair the damage we have caused so that both the person suffering the loss and we may move forward in wholeness.

"Restoration" goes hand-in-hand with restitution. Through our acts of restitution we bring about restoration, the renewal of the relationship, the return to good health, the offering of opportunities that we withheld from another.

Restitution and restoration apply to *all* of God's Creation, not just the human beings. Our actions that cause harm to the air, fresh water, agricultural lands,



## Birthdays

5	Ann Rucci
6	Cambridge Urtel
10	Al Shaw
11	Barb Wallace
12	Cono Sammarco
14	Bob Theurer
16	Dick Lang
17	Tom Ralabate
21	Sue Bauer
24	Barb Scott
29	Shirley Gaygen
30	Florence Smith
	Joanne Stanton

## Anniversaries

2	Willian & Joanne Conley
24	Kevin & Meg Wager

## Thanks to the Scotts

The Outreach Team wants to thank Barb and John Scott for the donation of a collapsible wagon that can be used for hauling all the food donations. This makes it much easier to move all this food around. Thank you. Thank you.



## Need Help Getting a COVID Vaccine Appointment?

We have a member who has offered to help anyone at Christ Church who needs help getting an appointment for a vaccine. If you could use some help, please call the office at 433-9229 and I will put you in touch with our volunteer. *Note:* you must be eligible by NY guidelines to use this assistance.

rain forests, polar ice caps, oceans, and to all of the creatures living in the air, on land, and in water, call for restitution and restoration.

**Restitution and restoration are EASTER words! They are RESURRECTION words!** They bring about wholeness, balance, respect, dignity, peace. Most of all, they bring Jesus' words to life: "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another." *John 13:34*

On Easter Sunday we will renew our Baptismal Promises. After our Lenten experience of *reflection, repentance, restitution and restoration*, may we all declare: With God's help, WE WILL seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves; and WE WILL strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of the Earth and every human being.

**ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!**

Robin Kozlowski  
Aspirant for Ordination to the Diaconate

## Reopening Christ Church

The Vestry has voted to reopen Christ Church on April 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be one service at 10:00 am and it will be live streamed to YouTube. Everyone will have to wear a mask over mouth and nose at all times, stay a minimum of six feet apart, and there will be no congregational singing. We will have organ music and we may have soloists. This is how it will work:

- When you get to church on Sunday, you must wear a mask and stay at least six feet away from all those who do not reside in your home. Stop at the entrance to church, maintaining safe distancing. An usher will seat you. At the end of the service take everything with you and exit as the usher directs. Hand sanitizer and masks will be available.
- During church you may respond and pray aloud, but there will be no singing. Communion (host only) will be distributed – follow the ushers' directions. Wait until you return to your seat to remove your mask and consume the host.
- To exchange the Peace with those not residing with you, wave, bow, nod, etc. but avoid being less than six feet apart and all physical contact.

The Bishop reminds us that COVID is still very much with us and recommends that only fully vaccinated people (i.e. at least two weeks after the second shot of Moderna or Pfizer, or two weeks after the single shot of Johnson and Johnson) attend. Please use your judgement.

*Note:* This information is my best guess at this point but may change as we get closer. Our plan is currently being developed by the Rector and Wardens and needs to be approved by the Diocese before we reopen. Watch for updates in the weekly Saturday emails.

## Church Lanterns

The church lanterns are finally safely hanging so we do not need to worry about another one falling. They were also rewired (it was probably last done when they moved from Market Street to our current church). Tim McQueen has worked for over a year to find a method, the hardware, and electricians to do the work. Johnson Electric has just finished the work. Each lantern now has a steel cable (the kind used in suspension



bridges) in addition to the chain – both would have to fail for a lantern to fall. They also took care of some other existing lighting issues. Thanks, Tim, for all your work and your persistence.

As the scaffolding was moved around the church to reach the lanterns, pews were unhooked and moved out of the way. John Scott assembled a crew of people to get the pews back in the right place and attach them securely to the floor. Thanks to John and his whole crew.

## Volunteers Needed for Reopening

If you are fully vaccinated (i.e. you had the second shot of either Moderna or Pfizer at least two weeks ago or the single shot of Johnson and Johnson at least two weeks ago) and would like to help Christ Church reopen, we need you:

- **Ushers** who will greet, take attendance, and seat people, direct people to communion, and dismiss people to ensure six-foot distancing is maintained.
- **Eucharistic Ministers, Readers and Acolytes** – probably starting 4/25
- **Altar Guild** – probably starting 4/25
- **Cleaning crew** to wipe down high-contact surfaces such as doors, railings, and light switches after the service.

Please call the office to let us know you are available and willing to help. Thank you.





### Christ Episcopal Church

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(716) 433-9229

[office@ChristLockport.info](mailto:office@ChristLockport.info)

<https://www.christlockport.org/>

[www.facebook.com/CECLockportNY](https://www.facebook.com/CECLockportNY)

## April at Christ Church

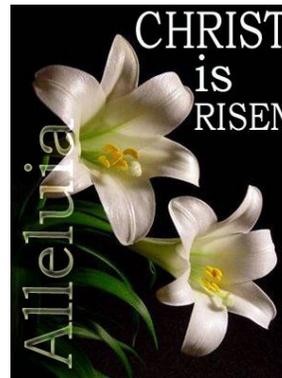
**Maundy Thursday (4/1) – drive-in church & YouTube at 7:00 pm**

**Good Friday (4/2) – drive-in church & YouTube at Noon**

**Easter Sunday (4/4) – drive-in church & YouTube at 10:00 am**

**Christ Church Reopening April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am**

(More info in various articles and future weekly updates)



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7145 Fieldcrest Drive  
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