

The Messenger

Pentecost, 2021

The Church of the Messiah

114 North Third Street at Madison

Pulaski, Tennessee 38478

The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

John C. Bauerschmidt, Bishop

*The mission of the Church of the Messiah is to be a growing witness of
our Faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of the community
through worship and sacrament in the Episcopal tradition.*

Our leadership:

- ✘ The Rev. Jess Reeves, Priest-in-Charge
- ✘ Pat Woolard, Music Director
- ✘ Senior Warden, Crystal Woolard ('22)
- ✘ Junior Warden, Daniel Lavacot ('21)
- ✘ Secretary to the Parish, Marquenda Forrester
- ✘ Clerk of the Vestry, Dr. Cathy Roberts ('23)
- ✘ Treasurer, Kristi Watson ('23)
- ✘ Vestry members: Andy Hoover ('21), Ann T, Hays ('22), Donny Muth ('22)

From the resident pastor

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is swamping many organizations, schools, corporations, and churches today. However, its origins, its fruits, and its effects are contrary to love. Christians ought to be wary of Critical Race Theory, as it is, upon inspection, contrary to charity, faith, the Word of God, and common sense.

Christopher F. Rufo in a recent Atlantic interview: “critical race theory is an academic discipline that holds that the United States is a nation founded on white supremacy and oppression, and that these forces are still at the root of our society. Critical race theorists believe that American institutions, such as the Constitution and legal system, preach freedom and equality, but are mere “camouflages” for naked racial domination. They believe that racism is a constant, universal condition: it simply becomes more subtle, sophisticated, and insidious over the course of history. In simple terms, critical race theory reformulates the old Marxist dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed, replacing the class categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat with the identity categories of White and Black.”

CRT is uncontrovertibly born of the Marxist-centered Critical Theory, which has at its core the doctrine of *deconstruction*. Its proponents define *deconstruction* as the intellectual approach that *targets traditional interpretation of terms, concepts, and*

practices, showing that they contain unsuspecting meanings or internal contradictions.” [italics, mine] That is why we have the constant redefinition of terms, e.g., *man, female, marriage, sex*, being the most obvious stream, but there are others.

Deconstruction is not only one of the core elements of CRT, but it is shared with Critical Theory, its grandsire, a Marxist-inspired movement in social/political philosophy from streams of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, critical theorists whose primary goal in reframing philosophy was to uncover and overcome the social structures which dominate and trample society’s victims, always the “have-nots.” [note well, this is theory; the modern oligarchs do not fit this pattern in actuality, many being wealthy or tenured] Karl Marx insisted that conflict is inevitable for progress. The now fabulously wealthy instigators of BLM clearly agree.

This process is called the dialectic: *In the dialectical process, change is understood as conflict & struggle, the only constants; this change by conflict always leads to a more advanced level.* Thus, Marx’s idea is based on *power*. Violence is integral to all these schemes. Utopia is just another oligarchy.

Sigmund Freud’s ideas, another approach, are based on pleasure. Pleasure is the goal; “*you exist for me*” becomes the focus of an enlightened life, (i.e., hedonism). Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche

are all “masters of [creating] suspicion.” The set of systems that each of them advance is based and oriented to define humanity by POWER or PLEASURE being the fundamental drivers of all action, hope, aspiration, and envy. Suspect all which does not conform. This is radically different from what we find in Christ’s words in the Sermon on the Mount. See Matthew 5, Luke 6 to confirm.

Marxist and Freudian theories thus applied refute a Christian’s very meaning of life! The invariably evil power wielders [that rotten white patriarchy] cannot be otherwise and must retribute by never-satisfied submission – like that guy Sisyphus. However, dear reader, study every totalitarian regime to see that this leads to mass murder or mass soullessness.

In other words, “the two should NOT become one” as God intends. His intent is evident at the beginning of creation with Adam and Eve ^{Genesis 2:24} and with God and humanity at the end of time ^{Revelation 21:3}. With CRT, truth is based on isolation, “me,” “what I want.” Pit race against race by any means or lie to divide in order to dominate.

This is the antithesis of love! It is the opposite of the meaning of the body in which the two DO identify with each other because of love. Divine love turns the “me” into “we.” By enshrining *us vs. them* forever, CRT exponents are fundamentally rejecting a Trinity forever one in love and self-giving.

CRT, contrasted to Christ, leads to jealousy, envy, and pride – in fact, it demands them. So, here is that Sisyphus loop as some see it:

Look outside yourself not for love’s sake and not to any higher authority but to see how you compare to others. Comparison between people is strictly a power and competition analysis. Covet = good.

Then, you are the measure of all things (whether based on a self-righteousness as victim or simply despising all other power competitors). From this platform inherent superiority, you must subjugate and repress, reversing the hierarchy of the oppressors by the oppressed (even if these latter are not statistically verifiable as deprived). Excuse me: being celebrated, powerful, extraordinarily rich, and surrounded by an army of security does not equate to being oppressed and a victim, as some would claim, e.g., Madame Obama.

Moving right along, “progress” demands compelling - be despotic, and to maintain this power plinth one must oneself transcend external standards of good and evil. The new, triumphant Eve is born and hell swallows society. Simply put, we start with comparison instead of contributive identity, and the Biblical construct of complementarian living, sharing, loving is banished.

Brave new world, “transcending” evil; *I decide what is good and evil* (mark, as Eve under Satan’s instigation). Whatismore, *if I (we) say you are racist,*

then you are so, despite no quantifiable proof or simply if you are occupying a position I/we want.

To be clear, **RACISM IS A SIN AND IS TO BE CONDEMNED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.** **ALL** injustice is abhorrent to the Lord. While America is not perfect (and what's with everybody being so defensive as to fawningly reiterate that ad nauseum?), it is not overwhelmingly, systemically racist according to the stats [yes, even WaPo stats if you like]. The real horrific sin is painting it so for political leverage; painting it so makes great political firestorms, which is quite lucrative, also. As we endeavor to root out **any** injustice, heaven forbid we commit or commend the sin of rash judgment and claim to fight "racism" with ever-more-diabolic real racism in our crusade. But that's the crazy train we, as a society, are being pushed aboard.

Christian, we must combat CRT because its fruits are sick: jealousy, envy, pride, covetousness, all to displace God by determining what *or who* is good or evil based on skin color or static group assignment. Being "woke" or "racist" are cudgels to punish those who deny power to the woke warriors. Sometimes, it appears vicious simply to assert itself. The oligarchy's new, but ancient as the Fall, mantra is **WE DECIDE** – no good, no God, no democracy, but the elite! Christians condemn such misdirection in all its forms. It is spiritual cancer.

Why is this a Christian issue? We must oppose Critical Race Theory because it promotes power and hedonism as ends; that prevents us from understanding the meaning of life by perverting love. We must stand up for love as Jesus spoke and embodied it because that is what God has made us for in making us for Himself.

Never fall for the devil's strategy, the end justifies the means, for then the means always consume the end, and faith in God to make good achieve good is lost. As St. John's first letter reminds, "*whoever says he loves God but hates his brother is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen... whoever loves God must also love his brother*" ^{1 John 4:20-21}.

Let us live in truth, not by lies; let us love God and our brothers and sisters, not ruin them with falsity; and let us courageously resist that which distorts history, character, and the Faith, such as Critical Race Theory. Our future depends upon it!

My precis of
Rufo and Stonestreet
and a plethora of
pundits

GOD'S ECONOMY IN A CATASTROPHE

Where did it all go off the rails? That is a question plaguing the actively engaged conscience of many of our fellow citizens now. Why is our civilization cracking up such that every day a new, inane monstrosity is imposed on us, to the actual crushing and subjugation of persons? Just in case you are not apprised of the facts to which I refer, a few verified examples:

1. A proliferation of drag queen story hours in public libraries, therefore taxpayer sponsored, whose audience is grade schoolers being told how wonderful it is and how they can aspire to be one, too;
2. Children under age, in single-digit ages, being encouraged to begin life and body-altering, as soon as feasible, permanent gender transitions; [update: twice in one week, one cartoon, one in person, Nickelodeon features a transitioned "female" who sings to children to tell them how desirable and good such persona transition is].
3. A classic fairy tale (Snow White) has been censored because there is a non-consensual kiss, which is tantamount to rape (of course, she is in a coma and only true love's kiss can awaken her, but no matter her salvation).

You cannot make this lunacy up, but it is abundantly verifiable, whether or not guardians know or care.

So, what incited this moral, mental, emotional disintegration, which is making the true, the beautiful, and the good passe? The deeper meanings behind the twists and turns of history are identifiable to those with the more-than-human gift of insight. Seers, if you will. Prophets, as we will.

Prophets/prophetesses are very much a part of the Christian identity. They are given divine insight as and when God chooses, then, now, tomorrow. While this writer is certainly not one, we are all given to know of them and hear their voices; our Creed proclaims the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. I and you can learn how God works in human history from them. Being unchangeable, His moral criteria are unvacillating, though when and how He judges is, well, only revealed to us through prophets He chooses. Our society is now so plagued by unbelief that we are blinded by the Cassandra spell, which God permits to those who persist in unbelief.

Our political and societal situation in America is a deepening nightmare conjured of lies and manipulation of the pliant masses by the mendacious media, politicians, and academe, an unholy trinity which pits us against each other that they may step in to save, with full emergency powers, we underlings. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves,

that we are underlings. It is incumbent upon Christians that in such times of imbalanced and mendacity, we turn to our Faith and God's Word for understanding and a sure defense. Again, this is perfectly reasonable as our God is unchanging and consistent; what He judged anathema then will remain so tomorrow. The Bible is for our guidance and comfort, if we will submit ourselves to its authority.

From the beginning of our beginning, we are informed that God created all to be good, all to be blessed, all to be fruitful and multiply, which would redound to His Glory. All it required of us was love, loyalty, and compliance. Among His Creatures, He created a people to especially show forth His Glory: The Chosen People. They were to receive certain blessings or curses depending on their adherence (Deuteronomy 30f. especially explains). Most of their subsequent history was replete with inconstancies in this mission, always, sooner or later, owing to God's gracious forbearance, resulting in correction, and admonition to repent and return to covenantal compliance. God's restraint and deferment was to give them time to heed the prophets' warnings and calls to repent. This seeming delay was enormously frustrating to Jonah and the psalmists, as it can always be to humans who grow impatient with God – never smart!

After warnings and waitings, God in His perfect timing sent the perfect solution: His Son. Only He could bridge the gap between what we were created and capable to be, and what we indeed had become. The Kingdom of Heaven came near to us because the King came to us with His last and best offer: His death and Resurrection for our reclamation. To reiterate, although the offered rescue came once in time, responsibility to adhere to God was always comprehensible and applicable. Faith, in God to Come or Christ as come, and will come again, is forever that to which we are accountable before God.

On this basic, Saint Paul's sacred prophetic insight summarizes concisely and is as true to us as it was in 64 BC. Romans, Chapter 1, tells the tale of what happens when these truths are ignored or refuted. The goodness and glories, the authority and fundamental moral designs are visible to all who have eyes to see and choose to accede. Simply, what can be seen should turn us to acknowledge, praise, and render thanks to the Creator. Whosoever or whatsoever society declines or repudiates, God "gives them over" to the consequences of their own devices and desires: degeneration. By their own choice, their minds are darkened and their consciences numbed to truth.

Thus by man's vain imaginations come degeneration on many levels. The first stage is the diminution of man's greatest glory, the degradation of the human mind, body, and spirit. The terrible picture Paul paints, which very many Christians see in force today, is things go from bad to worse as man rejects God's wise design. The image of God devolves from breaking of vows and trusts to defilement of the marriage bed to uninhibited fornication to perversion, and nowadays, to the very desecration and ruination of God's most beloved innocents, children. Jesus warning is harsh: ⁵ *"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!"* ^{Matthew 18}

What our licentious society now condones for the treatment of the most helpless, i.e., extermination, desecration, or systematic indoctrination, clearly enrages our Lord.

Paul belabors elements of cultural dissolution: God gave them over to uncleanness, to dishonoring their own bodies, to vile affections, to a reprobate mind. The results are malice, envy,

murder, enmity, to abbreviate a gruesome catalogue. Why recapitulate these horrors? **BUT GOD.** But God provided a way out, no matter how awful or culpable the scene. As Peter ended his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost, *he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."* ^{Acts 2:40} The power to withstand and persevere is in Him, who told us to always take heart for He *has* overcome the world. Jesus Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, remains the answer to the madness of crowds, as He ever has been and will be.

As one assessment reminds, *"There is no politician, no government program, no amount of money, no brilliant utopian scheme that will ever save and redeem the world."* God sent His Son to accomplish what we would not, then could not. No matter how malicious and destructive loom the evils in this world, Christ is the power of salvation to all who put their entire trust in Him. We may be, as many, many pundits proclaim, living into a "Romans 1" world, but as His beloved and transcendent by His Blood, we do not have to be *of* it.

Rejoice for God's purposes must prevail, and we, with Him.

SPIRITUALITY VS. FOLLOWING JESUS

One hears it said that there is a relentlessly increasing gap between spirituality and religion. Many people insist that personal spirituality is autonomous and entirely valid over and against congregational religion ultimately demonstrated in worship. This perspective treats spirituality related to a particular community that congregates to worship as completely a private preference, “non-essential,” only indirectly related (and disputably so) to a church. All polls show the overwhelming majority of those claiming to be “spiritual” in America do not see a necessary connection to a church. To adherents and sympathizers of this view these remarks are directed.

The only argument substantial enough to plumb in this regard is as follows: religions have always been founded and promulgated based on an individual experience of God. Literally accurate, but half a truth is the most misleading of all. God spoke to one man named Abram, aka Abraham, and did so explicitly to create a race, tribe, people, nation of devoted, obedient God worshippers. Thenceforward, all prophets and leaders were called to unite a people in obedience to be exemplars to their neighbors. There are no private revelations not aimed at the welfare of a group united by faith. God speaks to one in order to bring us together. Invariable pattern. This means He deigns and designs that we live out our relationship to God corporately. If you really do meet God in private, He always send you back to the Body of the faithful. Check it out: from Genesis to Revelation. To reemphasize in other words, only there can we fully worship God as He desires and models, in contrast to seeking Him preponderantly on our own terms. The very convenience of “I don’t need to go to church,” should give any self-aware, humble person cause for pause, and suspicion.

While Jesus prays privately in the Gospel accounts, and indeed commends intimate personal communion with God, He always emerges from that with new direction and resolve, e.g., choosing the twelve to-be apostles and immediately before going to the Cross on our behalf. The same is true of every other theophany (one to one encounter with God or His plenipotentiary, like the angels) in the Holy Scriptures. For example, one less well known: when Joshua succeeds Moses to lead the people of Israel into the promised land, which at this point meant crossing the Jordan River from east to west, he had a surprising encounter: ¹³ *When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”* ¹⁴ *And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?”* ¹⁵ *And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.* ^{Joshua 5} What is of particular interest and so typical is how the angel corrects Joshua; when asked whose side are you on, their’s or ours, the commander of the Lord’s army makes it clear: neither/”no.” God may associate Himself with whosoever and whatsoever He pleases, but God is not on your side; you are on God’s side! God is working out His purposes for all Creation, and whatever the form, that is about the all-embracing forging of the family of God. It is about universal unity under the lordship of Christ, catholic in that sense, or it is not of God. *We believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church.*

How often does a priest receive this leading which shows fundamental disordering – *Well, he/she/it is very spiritual, but they’re not religious.* Most thoughtful Christians would recognize there more than a semantic difference but a whole different understanding of what it means to be very members incorporate in the mystical, singular Body of Christ, the blessed company of **all** faithful people [bold, mine] (BCP, p. 339). The test of the last season of restriction and confinement is in the extent to which people demonstrated the extent to which gathering as a Body of believers was essential to them, or far down the list. To remind, the first generations of Christians thought this so important they risk, habitually, imprisonment, ostracism, and even death rather than forego meeting to pray together. The stakes were so much higher for them, but they found their corporate life a necessity. I think that they would view our Facebook substitute with horror.

There is a crucial reason, you see, people like this writer are priests not monks or hermits, and it had nothing to do with our Myers-Brigs profile. It is theological. It is about what constitutes God and how God constitutes His Church. And the gravest disservice you or I can do our neighbor is to assure them that their religion is a *subjective, properly self-determined property* of their life. It is the opposite that phrase, and it is not our property at all, ... certainly, not permanently.

JLR+

MESSIAH MINISTRIES

- *Morning Prayer, Monday – Saturday, 7 a.m.*
- *Sunday, Holy Eucharist, 10 a.m.*
- *Wednesday, 7 p.m., Holy Communion*



LAYMEN’S CONFERENCE.....

The Episcopal Churchmen of Tennessee Laymen's Conference is back! August 20-22 at DuBose Conference Center, Monteagle, TN. The theme for this year is "Life after" Senator Bob Corker will speak in person as a Christian on life after politics. Several other celebrity speakers will join by remote. Register at "tnchurchmen.org/register." Consult that site or call Branson Reiser for more information, 615-983-1698. Several Messiah laymen have been repeatedly and enjoyed the experience. Speak to Rich Woolard or Pat Dunnivant for recommendation.



EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY....

We will be reinstating home Eucharistic ministry to shut-ins this summer. If you know of someone who would desire this reception, please contact the office or the priest-in-charge. We have ordained clergy as well as trained lay ministry to accommodate this need as we are notified of it.



ALTAR FLOWERS.....

<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>
4 Grace Meier	1 Grace Meier	5 Grace Meier
11 Patti Stagner	15 Bennita Rouleau	19 Samantha Muth
18 Kristi Watson	29 Kristi Watson	

RECURRING MONTHLY:

RURAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION is prepared monthly in the **third** week of each month, Thursday nights at the Sharp Annex. The distribution is the following Saturday, at the AG Park, 2014 Elkton Highway, and assistance from volunteers is needed for both.

Serving our Worship, ---- The Church of the Messiah:

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF THIS ORDER IS INCONVENIENT OR MIGHT BENEFIT FROM
YOUR ADVICE. JLR

July 4: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Lay Reader: Lewis Foster; Altar Guild: John; Flowers: Grace Meier.

July 11: Morning Prayer: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Worship Leaders: Cathy Roberts/Rich Woolard; Altar Guild: Tabitha/Dan; Flowers: Patti Stagner.

July 18: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Logan Muth; Lay reader: Mary Dubberley; Altar Guild: Connie; Flowers: Kristi Watson.

July 25: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Bella Muth; Lay Reader: Crystal Woolard; Altar Guild: Marqueda.

August 1: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Lay Reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Catherine; Flowers: Grace Meier.

August 8: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Logan Muth; Lay Reader: Andy Hoover; Altar Guild: Samantha/Donny.

August 15: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Bella Muth; Lay Reader: Lewis Foster; Altar Guild: John; Flowers: Bennita Rouleau.

August 22: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Lay Reader: Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: Tabitha/Dan.

August 29: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Logan Muth; Lay Reader: Rich Woolard; Altar Guild: Connie; Flowers: Kristi Watson.

September 5: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Logan Muth; Lay Reader: Mary Dubberley; Altar Guild: Samantha/Donny; Flowers: Grace Meier.

September 12: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Bella Muth; Lay Reader: Crystal Woolard; Altar Guild: Catherine.

September 19: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Lay Reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Marqueda; Flowers: Samantha Muth.

September 26: Organist: Pat Woolard; Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Lay Reader: Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: John.

October 3: Morning Prayer: Worship Leaders: Cynthia Low/Rich Woolard.