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“Back to the Future:” Buckingham and the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts captures one of the great transition points in the history of God's mission to redeem the world. And we'll be following the lectionary readings that feature that transition in May. The book starts with both Christ's absence but also his promise. Christ ascends into heaven, but before he leaves, he says God's Spirit will come. Christians are huddling in private homes. Regular worship spaces are closed to them. Old traditions don't provide the guidance they used to. There is a painful time of waiting in this period of transition, Christ has promised God's presence will be with them in a new way. But they must wait, wait, wait, wait....and that must have been difficult to do. We wait too, don't we?

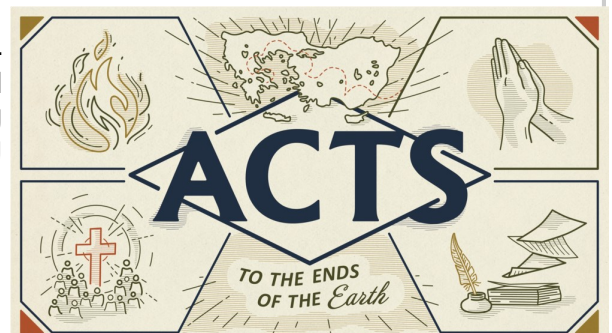
And in time something does happen. That's the hope Acts gives us. God's Spirit comforts and empowers them. The Holy Spirit points the early church to new vistas beyond the closed doors they faced after Christ's crucifixion. What follows is new hope. New purpose. New energy. New focus. New creativity. New love. The ethnic and racial composition of the chosen people changes. The geographic center of God's family moves out of rural Palestine (the Holy Land) and into the crowded multicultural world of pagan Greco-Roman cities. The elements of worship change. A whole new world and ministry opens up to the early Christians. A new direction can be ours too. We too desire a new purpose for our life and faith, don't we?

For the next several weeks I am asking the friends and family of Buckingham to consider their current experiences, hopes, and questions in light of the story we find in the Book of Acts. We seem to be experiencing unprecedented challenges to the way we are accustomed to believe, pray, and worship. And yet, the church of Acts gives us hints on how we (as individuals and a community) can survive and thrive during these difficult times.

During this unique period of listening to Acts, I invite each one of us to compare our own situation and faith with the situation of the people of faith captured in the pages of this unique book of the New Testament.

Let's make May the month we came to see how God is opening an exciting, new chapter in Buckingham's life that will point us to our new future and unique calling as an energizing life force in Berlin. God will support us on this challenging journey toward a deeper faith and more holistic love.

Stay safe and hopeful,
Rev. Glenn





A Note from Historian Lynne Murray

I don't think there is a lovelier spot in our historic church than the south end of our Kortright Chapel. When the sun comes in through the beautiful stained glass windows, arranged in a bow, heaven doesn't seem so very far away. We know from a brass plaque that the chapel was donated to Buckingham in 1905 by Lady Kortright in memory of her mother, Louisa F. Richardson. Who was this person with a British title?

I found a surprising amount of information on the family. A Miss Louisa Franklin was born near Berlin in 1807 and died in Philadelphia in December 1872. She married John Richardson in 1826, an Englishman that had settled in Philadelphia and become quite wealthy while serving as President of the Bank of North America. They had a daughter, Martha Ellen, who literally married the boy next door. The Richardsons lived on exclusive Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, next door to the English Consulate. The Consul was Sir Charles Edward Keith Kortright that married Martha in a society wedding in October 1861, attended by the British legation and the Consuls from Baltimore, Boston, and New York.

Old Buckingham By The Sea tells us that Mrs. Louisa Richardson had given Buckingham gifts of over \$2,000. She had died of double pneumonia in 1872, so thank you notes were sent to her daughter, Mrs. M. E. Kortright. Martha Kortright carried on her mother's dedication to the Presbyterian Church and broadened her philanthropy to a remarkable degree.

Lady Kortright gave the funds to build the Richardson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in memory of her parents. An internet search brings up that church, still in existence, and located at 5923 Walnut St. in Philadelphia. An architectural drawing and a photograph of the nave shows an impressive building.

The *London Remembers* website includes this 1889 newspaper article: "Lady M. E. Kortright, widow of Capt. Kortright, formerly British Consul at Philadelphia, has frequently made generous contributions to the Presbyterian Hospital of that city. She recently offered the managers \$100,000 to build a convalescent's retreat, appointing trustees to carry out her wishes. This fund is to serve as an endowment, Lady Kortright also providing the building. Lady Kortright was a Miss Richardson, daughter of a former president of the Bank of North America. She resides in England, but maintains her interest in Philadelphia's charities."

This article is from the April 22, 1889 NY Times: "Snow Hill, MD, April 21; Lady Kortright who gave \$40,000 to the Presbyterian Hospital of Philadelphia as a memorial to her father, John Richardson, has sent a check for \$5,000 to ex-Congressman George W. Covington of Snow Hill for the purpose of completing the Makemie Memorial Church. She is now on a visit to this country." It looks like Buckingham wasn't the only local Presbyterian Church to be the recipient of Lady Kortright's largesse.

Probate records from the UK show that: "On the 8th August 1888 the will of Sir Charles Edward Keith Kortright, formerly Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Philadelphia in the USA but late of 2 Grosvenor Crescent in the county of Middlesex, who died on 19 May 1888 at 2 Grosvenor Crescent was proved at the Principle Registry by Dame Martha Ellen Kortright of 2 Grosvenor Crescent, Widow and sole executrix." A copy of Charles' will can be viewed on ancestry.com and Martha is the only person named; apparently the Kortright's had no children. Although Martha's father left her a wealthy woman, Charles did so too, and apparently more so. A catalogue of *Pictures by Old Masters*, presumably originally owned by Charles, lists the property of the late Lady Kortright, to be auctioned in June 1907. One hundred and twenty items by such renowned artists as, Gainsborough, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Rembrandt, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Rubens, Titian, and Van Eyck, must have brought a fortune.

Martha's bio reports: "Dame Martha Ellen Kortright of 2 Grosvenor Crescent, widow, died 18 January 1907 at the Alexandra Hotel, Knightsbridge." In the minutes of the 125th General Assembly (1913) of the Presbyterian Church USA, it states: "Martha Kortright, a former resident of Philadelphia, who married a titled Englishman, remembered the Church of her birth and native land most generously in her will."

I must tell you, friends, that I was looking for a Richardson or Kortright descendant. You may have heard the support system under the south windows in Kortright Chapel is disintegrating and I was hoping to find someone in the family to whom we might appeal. Unfortunately, I could not. Martha had a younger brother that died at age 27 and there's no record of his having been married. In any case, this was a very interesting topic to research.

Happy Trails, Lynne



Richardson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia

Our Deacons In Action

Another challenging month for everyone.

Toilet paper and food top the list of donations for us this month. Buckingham sponsored a food drop from the Maryland Food Bank which has been serving approximately 200 families for each of three food drops, so far. This community sharing was also supported by the Spirit Kitchen and Worcester Youth and Family Services. Our share was \$350 and that included meat to be added to each family's bags that were placed in the trunks of their cars.

Easter cards from Buckingham were sent to shut-ins by Debi.

Lindsay was able to connect with her contact at Sysco and they had toilet paper!!! And other food items. We purchased a case of TP (96 rolls in all), a case of paper towels, as well as a case of milk (4 gallons) and a case of chicken pot pies to be shared with anyone in the church. The pot pies are in the freezer, if you would like one or some, or contact a Deacon for delivery. Some will go to our adopted seniors.

Supplies were delivered to the Samaritan Shelter and they were very appreciative. In fact, as a volunteer was tugging the heavy box of TP into the shelter she turned around and said, "Thank God for you guys, our donations are way down." We are also doing some other food shopping for them for items that they requested and we will deliver them at the beginning of the week. Our seniors are well and once again we did a drop and run of food.

Mission Report

The mission committee is continuing to keep our eyes and ears open to help those in need during this time. We are looking for opportunities to help those locally as many needs are arising.

The committee sponsored the Spirit Kitchen drive-thru food pantry for April 22nd. The Spirit Kitchen has been doing this every other week and has been supplying roughly 200 families with about 50 pounds of food.

The Blessing Box is being monitored regularly and stocked with items by people from the community, as well as from our church. Thank you to all those who are continuing to support this ministry. We did also purchase a case of toilet paper for the Blessing Box. If anyone has needs or knows of needs we can assist with please contact a committee member.

Christian Ed

Although we are not able to meet in the typical way, the Christian Ed team has been holding regular conversations. Sunday school has been held each Sunday since Palm Sunday, "live" online in a S'more Jesus Youth Group attached to the Buckingham Presbyterian Facebook page. During the week leading up to Easter, Resurrection Eggs were opened daily live on the group page with kids from church opening them and reading the different verses from the Bible. The Saturday before Easter, baskets were delivered to 15 families who regularly attend Sunday worship or S'more Time with Jesus. The baskets were left on the steps of homes with a note from Buckingham Presbyterian Church saying they had been "egged". Jerry also delivered gift bags to his youth group with special Easter treats to let them know the church is still thinking about them.

The Session asked the committee to continue to move forward with the playground. The area has been measured out and flags placed to mark a rough idea of placement. The committee will decide and order the playset by the beginning of May.

The group has been looking into and reading about a program called "Messy Church." The committee had signed up to attend a conference in Norfolk, VA on April 25th, this has been postponed, but they are attending a webinar on the 23rd to gather more information. The thought is to have "S'more Jesus get Messy" and convert over to this program which is a religious based family service with crafts, dinner, music, and a sermon. More information will be shared following the webinar.



During this time of school and food pantry closures please spread the word that our **Blessing Box** is open 24 hours a day. If you want to contribute, feel free to add non perishable food and household items to our box (toilet paper is always appreciated)
We can get through this together!

What's Happening

15 Things Happening within the Church Community even during the Crisis

- ⇒ Caregivers meetings Monday nights
- ⇒ Spiritual Formation class meets Wednesday nights
- ⇒ Christian Education sponsors Kids' education sessions every morning during weekdays and Sunday, helping parents teach their children
- ⇒ Deacons are delivering supplies and food to the elderly & Samaritan's Shelter
- ⇒ Mission group is handing out food to the hungry in the church parking lot
- ⇒ Christian Education is planning upcoming "S'More Times with Jesus"
- ⇒ Music Director & Pastor meet on Wednesday or Thursday to go over worship for Sunday
- ⇒ Church Secretary, Music Director, & Pastor go over the worship program
- ⇒ Elders & Deacons are calling members of the congregation to check in on them
(Christian Community In Action!)
- ⇒ Local papers mention the food distribution ministry of Buckingham
- ⇒ Deacons & Christian Education committees are stocking the "Blessing Box" in the church parking lot
- ⇒ Lindsay & Debi keep posting articles on the church Facebook page which makes it fun to check out once a day. Our Facebook page is up to around 285 "likes" and 305 "followers."
- ⇒ Our PNC interviews candidates over Zoom and discusses their gifts in light of the congregation's future vision
- ⇒ Our new Giving page on our website is taking regular donations to keep our ministry going and accepts donations for the Blessing Box, as well
- ⇒ The Pastor & Music Director meet at 10am on Sunday morning to lead church worship

Events, Reports, Notices, & Stuff

COVID FINANCIAL RESPONSE

Members and Friends,

At the start of this crisis, the Session and Trustees passed motions to:

1. Freeze all non-emergency spending for 6 months while maintaining current budget obligations
2. Establish a "Capital Repair Fund" to accept and direct monies to major necessary building repair projects to our beloved church
3. Create an online giving option at our website

Most of us, by habit, participate in offering when attending a church service. Since this is not possible, please mail contributions noting on envelope "offering," use our preaddressed offering envelopes or request a box to be delivered to your home, or make use of our online giving.

As we pray for each other and walk our faith, may we all stay safe until we can share a pew soon.

Mailing Address: Buckingham Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 248, Berlin, MD 21811

Website: www.buckinghampcusa.org/giving

Prayer Request Form

Date: _____

Please pray for:

Requested by:

Please place my request in the weekly bulletin:

Yes: _____

No: _____

Mail to:

Buckingham Presbyterian Church

20 South Main St.

P.O. Box 248

Berlin, MD 21811

Attn: Secretary



COMMUNION will be held on

DAY OF PENTECOST

May 31, 2020



5/6— BRADLEY Black
5/12—DEBI Cook
5/14—Greg Fraser
CHARLES Townsend
5/15—MADELINE Moore
5/24—MATTHEW Trask
5/25—CHERYL Holland
CECIL Tull
5/28—CAROL Rose
5/31—JACOB Gaddis



5/1— JAMES & SUE Mallory
LARRY & TAMMY Nickell
5/6— RICHARD & PEGGY Jones
5/7— DAVID & CINDI Pruitt
5/29—Hershel & CAROL Rose