

St. Mark's Messenger

April 2020

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTION



This is not the Easter reflection that I had wanted to write. I share some images of our beloved church during Holy Week 2019: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. At our Easter Vigil we read lessons that reminded us of who we are, where we came from, and where we're going. We have been doing these services in almost the same form since 1549. Then and now, we affirm this timeless truth: the crucifixion was not the end; it began something that transformed the world, Christ's defeat of the powers of darkness and the triumph over sin and death. Our plan was to have the same services this year.



We were preparing our hearts, but we were not prepared for a new version of an old virus previously found only in animals. Viruses are constantly mutating, changing their shapes and hosts. A novel virus (COVID-19) has found a way to "hop over" into humans.

First detected in China but now found throughout the world, it doesn't make most people particularly sick (some never show *any symptoms at all*). *But a tiny percentage become very ill and need to be hospitalized because it attacks the respiratory system. In severe cases, they need to be on a ventilator and receive highly skilled care.*



Mt. Nittany Hospital has only 12 ICU beds; if more people than that need them, there's a big problem. The Geisinger hospital in Lewistown is similar. We need to "flatten the curve" by slowing the number of new cases until we have a vaccination.

People most at risk are over 60 and those with prior medical complications, and that's about 50% of our congregation. Because the virus is so very contagious, it spreads quickly when people are close to each other. Think of a cruise ship, for example, or a nursing home.

I was not surprised when Bishop Scanlon asked all sixty parishes in our Diocese to suspend services and meetings *through the end of May. The same policy has been implemented in Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and New York. Why? The risk of gathering in groups is simply too high. More than half of our congregation is over 60, and most are over 70, including your priest. When I learned that we could not celebrate the liturgies for Holy Week, I was just plain depressed, and so were you.*



And then I thought about the deep story of Holy Week. Christ dies and finds a new way to be with this. So how could we worship together? *In a new way – with technology like a personal computer (Mac or PC) or smart phone (iPhone or Android). If you do not use a personal computer or have a "smart phone," please see if a close friend or family member could share theirs with you for these services. These new technologies can help us to see and hear the Word of God. As Gabriel said to Mary and as Jesus said to his disciples, I say to you, "Be not afraid."*

It's easy to be frightened by the stories we see on television: hospitals without adequate supplies to protect doctors and nurses and without enough specialized equipment to properly care for the sickest patients. We can't "spend" our way out of this disease. We can buy more respirators, but where do we find more respiratory therapists and the ICU staff to take care of all the patients who need them?



This is the face of a pandemic (in Greek "pan" means all and "demos" means people). Because the virus is so contagious, governments have taken very strong measures to slow its spread by encouraging people to protect themselves and each other through "social distancing," a fancy phrase for staying away from groups and keeping a distance between yourself and others.

(continued on next page)

Distancing is your best friend right now. But other things help. Wash your hands vigorously many times per day. Use hand sanitizer AFTER you wash, not instead of washing. Avoid touching your face as much as possible.

"Social distancing" is tough – it invites loneliness and psychological isolation, both of which are dangerous to our physical and mental wellbeing.

Nevertheless, almost all businesses, schools, and colleges have closed their physical locations; for Penn State it's for the rest of the semester, and even summer session is in limbo. Our local schools are suspended indefinitely, which is a real hardship for students and teachers. Don't even think about taking a cruise or flying internationally. Dining out is impossible except for take-out. You won't be able to go bowling or get your hair styled until later this spring. NCAA tournaments and the Olympics? Suspended until next year. I wouldn't place bets on the baseball season opening soon.

All nursing homes are on lockdown, and hospitals either strongly discourage or forbid visitors. In State College, my vet, optician, dentist, and family doctor have suspended all appointments except for emergencies or illness; my barbershop is closed, and soon I will look like a hippie: please love me anyway.

Craziness abounds. Wide-spread hoarding of staples have left many grocery store shelves empty. Walmart, for example, limits the purchase of toilet paper to two packages per shopper.

Last week 3.3 million people filed for unemployment compensation, the largest jump in fifty years. Congress has appropriated more than \$2.2 billion to soften the economic hardship, but the economically vulnerable will feel the pain first and longest.

So where's the good news, Father John? Are we going to skip Easter and just stay in Lent for the next six months? Not at all, dear friends. The same Lord who was crucified on Good Friday (April 10) will be resurrected on Easter (April 12). Jesus, the son of God, is our cornerstone. Of that we can be assured.

Our Lenten journey will move us from ashes to glory, and we should not skip a single step on this road. Let's face it: "no cross, no crown" – in other words, we can't know the true joy of Easter without having first known the agony of the cross, which we experience most fully during the Three Sacred Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). We will hold all of these services – and more – in the days ahead.



Death does not have the final word for Jesus or for us. Hear what St. Paul says: "If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, o death, is your victory? Where, o death, is your sting?"

The season has changed from winter to spring. We are moving from death to life.

At Easter we will proclaim in one voice throughout the world: The Lord is risen – the Lord is risen indeed.

Father John+



- 1 **HANDS** Wash them often
- 2 **ELBOW** Cough into it
- 3 **FACE** Don't touch it
- 4 **FEET** Stay more than 3ft apart
- 5 **FEEL** sick? Stay home

General public health information

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ST. MARK'S

Even though we are unable to worship in our church or to hold meetings there, our expenses continue. Just like you, we must pay for insurance, utilities, and routine repairs. We mow the cemetery lawn every two weeks. We pay our sexton and housekeeper to keep our three buildings in good order; Mother Hubbard's costs continue each month, and they will rise sharply because of the economic hardship affecting so many people. Please MAIL your checks to the church: 21 South Main Street, Lewistown, PA 17044.



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



All of our Holy Week services will be joint services with St. John's Episcopal Church in Bellefonte. St. Mark's has had a special connection to Bellefonte since 1824, when our first priest was assigned to start Episcopal parishes in both Bellefonte and Philipsburg. In olden days the railroad made it easy to travel between these communities, and in more modern times you could even take a bus. Can you imagine the trip over Seven Mountains in this vehicle? Hang on!

You might even take the bus over the beautiful Main Street bridge that will soon be replaced when the workers return to the job. The grand opening had been scheduled for June, but like the Potters Mills project the date has been pushed back.



To worship in Holy Week 2020, you can even stay in your pajamas. Thanks to the same technology that enables you to share pictures on Facebook, buy toys from Amazon, or bid on eBay, you can share the liturgy with Father Carlos and me regardless of your zip code. We will have readers from both parishes, too.

We will not, however, be able to have "people in the pews" or to distribute bread and wine, but the rest of the liturgy will be taken straight from the Book of Common Prayer. You can download the service leaflet and participate as though you were at St. Mark's. Kathryn and I participated together in the feast of the Annunciation last Wednesday while we were in our study, and it was meaningful and beautiful.



We will stream the service from St. John's-Bellefonte on Palm Sunday and Easter; we will stream from St. Mark's on Good Friday. We are grateful to be partners with another small Episcopal church in these difficult times. After all, a priest from Lewistown, Rev. Nash, was charged by Bishop White in 1824 to plant trees in both Bellefonte and Phillipsburg since we had just built our new red-brick church.

Go to this address to participate. You do NOT need to have an account on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

I will send out the site for downloading the service leaflet each week by email.

Schedule of Services

Palm Sunday: 10AM <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

Maundy Thursday: 7PM <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

Good Friday: Noon <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

Easter Vigil: 8PM <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

Easter 10AM <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>

After Easter 10AM <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksepiscopalchurchlewistownpa/live>

Another good choice are the Diocesan services for every day of Holy Week:

<https://diocesecpa.org/holy-week-2020/>



OUR WEDNESDAY SERVICE AND COFFEE WITH FATHER JOHN

We will offer our Wednesday services at 10AM with a service of Morning Prayer and special prayers for healing. You can participate in these services by computer or telephone.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/154507836> Meeting ID: 154 507 836

You can also participate via any of these toll-free phone numbers:

+1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 154 507 836
+1 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 154 507 836
+1 720 707 2699 Meeting ID: 154 507 836
+1 253 215 8782 Meeting ID: 154 507 836
+1 301 715 8592 Meeting ID: 154 507 836
+1 346 248 7799 Meeting ID: 154 507 836



I will remain connected from 10:30 to 11:30AM on Wednesdays.

ST. MARK'S MEN

We will resume our breakfast meetings when the restaurants reopen.

HOW WE ARE PRACTICING OUR FAITH DESPITE "SOCIAL DISTANCE"

**GOING
THE
social
DISTANCE**

Maintaining "social distance" does not mean being spiritually detached. There are many ways for you to help your neighbors even if you can't see them in person. Call five people each day to check in with them. Write postcards or a brief letter to people who would like to hear from you.

Find new ways to help the community. Joyce is making face masks for the hospital; Deb is knitting caps for hospitalized infants.

What can you do? Please share your stories with me.



HOME VISITATIONS AND PASTORAL NEEDS



Because of the dangers from the COVID-19 virus, we are unable to bring communion to shut-ins. Instead, we will be in frequent contact by phone. If there is an end-of-life situation, Father Harwood will visit in person. Please call him at 814-571-0687. We will be unable to hold funerals for the foreseeable future, a very painful situation for families. I am working with a former parishioner in Renovo whose husband died several days ago.

PROPERTY AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Both Committees continue to assess our most important needs and possible enhancements. We are not committing to any expensive projects (e.g., new steps and railings for the Water Street entrance or a new bathroom for the parish house) but are gathering information on costs until we have a true understanding of our finances. If we have a leaky roof or a broken furnace, we'll fix them at once, of course. We know that our HVAC system is not performing as expected, and so we are determining the best course of action. Our goal is to increase our comfort and reduce our cost.



BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER, MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD, AND OUTREACH

In March the people of St. Mark's served 35 people a tasty take-out meal as our **Break Bread Together**



meal. We were glad to see familiar faces and to meet some new people, but it was very clear to me that many of our regulars come for the fellowship, not just for the food. They will be grateful for our return to normal, but we will use the

same procedure in April and May.

.In March **Mother Hubbard's Cupboard** served 118 families. This includes 321 individuals; we helped 5 first-time families and 8 first-time individuals. We have implemented new safety procedures to help protect both our volunteers and our clients. Time and time again, we hear amazement about the

magnitude of our ministry. None of it would be possible without the generosity of the people that have designated MHC as their opportunity to make a difference in our community.



Hunger does not go into quarantine. Our schools have fed many poor children during the school year. Who's feeding them now?

Parishioners Outreach Committee continues to help those finding themselves in a "pinch". However, recently the calls have decreased, an indication that people are not traveling and need gas to go to previously-scheduled doctors appointments. Plus, utilities can not be cut-off during the Covid19 pandemic. We will undoubtedly see a real increase in requests on the other side of our current situation.



St. Mark's Prayer List

Prayer List: Patty Attivo, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Tyler Burris, Dottie Casner, Peggy Collins, Lew Copenhaver, Heather Creighton, Bishop Michael Curry, Amanda Ergler, Shirley Ferguson, Richard Flood, Marcia Folk, Dick Gibboney, Kathryn Grossman, Thomas Hart, Kassidy Hendricks, Josh Hohol, Dolores Houser, Angela Kaler, Bruce Kinsey, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, Pam Lawson, Hugh McKee, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Austin James Moore, David Moore, Virginia Nace, Gabriel Newman, Carol Potts, Jack Potts, Amy Reeder, Sattler, Makenzie Shearer, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Laura Tate, Henry Walk, Jackie Walk, Ann Wimsatt, William Wilson, Stella Wright and Ashley.

Pray for Lloyd A. Gessaman and Max Wilson who are serving our Country.

God of everlasting love, who provides all things, we pray for all people: make your way known to them, your saving power among all nations. We commend to your fatherly goodness all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or circumstances.; relieve them according to their needs, giving them patience in their sufferings, and deliverance from their afflictions. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 6—Robin Wilson
- 7—John Stewart
- 7—Kaylee Blewett
- 11—Kelly Crawford
- 14—Max Wilson
- 19—Elizabeth Cvejkus
- 22—Patricia Wilt
- 25—Dolores Houser
- 26—Zaniaca Kaler

O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON YOUR SERVANT *N.* AS (*S*)*HE* BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (*S*)*HE* MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.



TWENTY PRAYERS FOR THIS TROUBLED TIME Thanks to Jen Michel (*Christianity Today*).



1. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help. Sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection.
2. For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially the uninsured.
3. For the young and the strong: God, give them the necessary caution to keep them from unwittingly spreading this disease. Inspire them to help.
4. For our local, state, and federal governments: God, help our elected officials as they allocate the necessary resources for combatting this pandemic. Help them to provide more tests.
5. For our scientific community, leading the charge to understand the disease and communicate its gravity: God, give them knowledge, wisdom, and a persuasive voice.
6. For the media, committed to providing up-to-date information: God, help them to communicate with appropriate seriousness without causing panic.
7. For consumers of media, looking to be well-informed: God, help us find the most helpful local information to equip us to be good neighbors. Keep us from anxiety and panic, and enable us to implement the recommended strategies, even at a cost to ourselves.
8. For those with mental health challenges who feel isolated, anxious, and helpless: God, provide them every necessary support.
9. For the homeless, unable to practice the protocols of social distancing in the shelter system: Protect them from disease, and provide isolation shelters in every city.
10. For international travelers stuck in foreign countries: God, help them return home safely and quickly.
11. For Christian missionaries throughout the world, especially in areas with high rates of infection: God, provide them with words of hope, and equip them to love and serve those around them.
12. For workers in a variety of industries facing layoffs and financial hardship: God, keep them from panic, and inspire your church to generously support them.
13. For families with young children at home for the foreseeable future: God, help mothers and fathers to partner together creatively for the care and flourishing of their children. For single mothers and fathers, grow their networks of support.
14. For parents who cannot stay home from work but must find care for their children: God, present them with creative solutions.
15. For those in need of regular therapies and treatments that must now be postponed: God, help them to stay patient and positive.
16. For business leaders making difficult decisions that affect the lives of their employees: God, give these women and men wisdom, and help them to lead self-sacrificially.
17. For pastors and church leaders faced with the challenges of social distancing: God, help them to creatively imagine how to pastor their congregants and love their cities well.
18. For college and university students, whose courses of study are changing, whose placements are cancelled, whose graduation is uncertain: God, show them that while life is uncertain, their trust is in you.
19. For Christians in every neighborhood, community, and city: May your Holy Spirit inspire us to pray, to give, to love, to serve, and to proclaim the gospel, that the name of Jesus Christ might be glorified around the world.
20. For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us.



We also pray: God, keep them safe and healthy. Keep their families safe and healthy. Help them to be knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, as well as the changing protocols. Help them to stay clear-minded in the midst of the surrounding panic. Deliver them from anxiety for their own loved ones (aging parents, children, spouses, roommates). Give them compassion for every patient in their care. Provide for them financially, especially if they fall ill and are unable to work. Help people in health care to exhibit extraordinary peace, so that many would ask about the reason for their hope. Give them opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

God, we trust that you are good and do good. Teach us to be your faithful people in this time of global crisis. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd, Jesus, who laid down his life for the sake of love. Glorify his name as you equip us with everything needed for doing your will. Amen.

DO YOU WANT TO ADOPT AN ALTAR AS A MEMORIAL GIFT?

Four people have already adopted newly restored windows for our Parish House, which began its life as "St. Mark's Chapel." They will be wonderful memorial gifts.

We now seek funds to purchase a congregation-facing altar so that the priest can celebrate the Eucharist in the manner recommended by the Episcopal Church since 1965. It would be placed between the choir pews and would be movable.

The cost is between \$3-5 thousand dollars. What a marvelous memorial gift to the sacramental life of our church! See Father John if you would like to do this.

Here are some possibilities. All come from Catholic churches that have closed or been consolidated. All would fit our space and our style (Victorian, Gothic Revival).



DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK and THE WEEK AFTER

Date	Psalm	OT	Epistle	Gospel
Sun Apr 5	am: 24, 29 pm: 103	am: Zech 9:9-12 pm: Zech 12:9-13:9	1 Tim 6:12-16	Luke 19:41-48
Mon Apr 6	am: 51 pm: 69:1-23	Lam 1:1-12	2 Cor 1:1-7	Mark 11:12-25
Tues Apr 7	am: 6, 12 pm: 94	Lam 1:17-22	2 Cor 1:8-22	Mark 11:27-33
Wed Apr 8	am: 55 pm: 74	Lam 2:1-9	2 Cor 1:23-2:11	Mark 12:1-11
Thur Apr 9	am: 102 pm: 142, 143	Lam 2:10-18	1 Cor 10:14-17, 11:27-32	Mark 14:12-25
Fri Apr 10	am: 95, 22 pm: 40, 54	Lam 3:1-9, 19-33	1 Pet 1:10-20	am: Jn 13:36-38 pm: Jn 19:38-42
Sat Apr 11	am: 95, 88 pm: 27	Lam 3:37-58	am: Heb 4:1-16 pm: Rom 8:1-11	
Sun E1 Apr 12	am: 148, 149, 150 pm: 113, 114	am: Exod 12:1-14 pm: Isa 51:9-11		am: John 1:1-18 pm: Jn 20:19-23
Mon Apr 13	am: 93, 98 pm: 66	Exod 12:14-27	1 Cor 15:1-11	Mark 16:1-8
Tues Apr 14	am: 103 pm: 111, 114	Exod 12:28-39	1 Cor 15:12-28	Mark 16:9-20
Wed Apr 15	am: 97, 99 pm: 115	Exod 12:40-51	1 Cor 15:29-41	Matt 28:1-16
Thur Apr 16	am: 146, 147 pm: 148, 149	Exod 13:3-10	1 Cor 15:41-50	Matt 28:16-20
Fri Apr 17	am: 136 pm: 118	Exod 13:1-2, 11-16	1 Cor 15:51-58	Luke 24:1-12
Sat Apr 18	am: 145 pm: 104	Exod 13:17-14:4	2 Cor 4:16-5:10	Mark 12:18-27
Sun E2 Apr 19	am: 146, 147 pm: 111, 112, 113	Exod 14:5-22	1 John 1:1-7	John 14:1-7

Saint Mark's Episcopal Church
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 Telephone: 717-248-8327
www.stmark-lewistown.org
 The Right Rev. Dr. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop, Diocese of Central PA
 Father John T. Harwood, Priest-in-Charge
St. Mark's Vestry
 Blair Hannon, Senior Warden - Hal Jenkinson, Junior Warden
 Deb Vaughn, Clerk
 Dan Dillon, Lillian Myers,
 Jane Smith, and Robin Wilson
 Deb Vaughn—Coordinator of Pastoral Ministries
 Joseph Sikorsky—Treasurer



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

21 S Main Street
 Lewistown, PA 17044

The Mission of St. Mark's

We gather to celebrate as the family of God, that we may be fed spiritually through the Sacraments and teachings of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we serve others in the love of Christ.