

**Rector's
Ramblings**

As we continue to walk through this time of public health emergency we continue to reevaluate our response as the Body of Christ.

Bishop Daniel has written a further letter to the diocese and may be found [here](#).

I have been increasingly drawn to reflecting on the life of the Church in times of turmoil and crisis over the last week. How are we to be Church during this time? What witness do we provide to the world?

These questions brought me back to Rodney Stark's landmark study "The Rise of Christianity". In a chapter entitled, 'Epidemics, Networks, and Conversion', his research showed that the Christian witness during a time of epidemic was such that people wanted to be a part of this "group". How? Motivated by their belief in Christ and modeling His Life they ministered to the needs of their community. Their witness was directly contrary to the pagans around them who looked out for "number one."



COVID-19 Update (Policy Update)

We pray that the crisis is short lived and will post current and updated policies in this space for the duration. They are bullet pointed for ease of reading.

- Reception of Holy Communion: The communicant may decide to receive in one kind only, by common cup, or by intinction by the clergy to the palm.
- Passing the peace by handshake has been suspended. The preferred method is either to place hands on the shoulders (if the receiver wishes) or a simple nod while saying "Peace" or "Peace be with you". Let's not get silly with other gestures, elbow bumps, fist bumps, etc.
- The Offering Plate will be placed on a stand in the center aisle, please place offering/alms in it as you come forward for Holy Communion.
- Even though the CDC does not hold that food is a vector for this virus, after consultation, we are asking that prepared/packaged items be used for Coffee Hour. Alternatively, please let the office know and we will arrange purchase and delivery of baked goods.
- If you are in need of assistance of any kind due to this emergency please call the office or Fr. Dave. We will take care of each other during this time.

Meals

At this time we are looking to stock the freezer with meals for distribution in case of need. If you wish to make a specific

In short the Church was the Church and lived what it believed. We proclaim that we believe God is with us in the midst of tribulation, and that our lives are hidden in Christ. That no matter what happens in these days, we will live with Him. The question is do we really believe this?

We do!

Of course, no one should seek illness for the sake of martyrdom, nor should we be foolish, but now is not the time to take care of "number one". That is what those who are panic-buying toilet paper are doing. That is not the Christian response.

And with this in mind, St. Matthew's will be a community of witness at this time. To the best of our ability, we will care for one another, and anyone else effected by this time of crisis. If you have a need at this time, please do not hesitate to call on the Church, we will care for the sick, we will provide help shopping, we can help with meals, and we even have extra toilet paper. We will care for one another. This is a time to pour out ourselves for our Lord and His Body the Church.

And of course, since the life of the Body flows from our relationship with Christ and

meal and put in the freezer that would be greatly appreciated. If you have extra portions you wish to donate, that would be great.

Please mark the containers with contents and date.

Containers are available in the kitchen beginning Sunday.

Lenten Series

Our Lenten series will take place on Wednesday evenings beginning with Eucharist at 5:30. At 6PM we will be reading, and praying, together through sayings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers on the life of prayer, spiritual disciplines, and forgiveness. We will end each evening with Compline.

This Wednesday the commemoration of Cyril of Jerusalem.

Confessions

There is an old saying about Episcopalians and confession, "All may, some should, none must".

For those desiring to make a confession during Lent, opportunity will be given from 4-5:30P and 6-6:30P on Fridays.

Breakfast Fellowships

There will be no Women's Breakfast in March, and Men's Breakfast meets on the 21st, 8AM, at Shannon's.

Bridal Shower

A potluck bridal brunch/shower for Sarah Halt will be held in the Parish Hall on March 14th at 10AM. RSVPs can be made at this [link](#), by March 7th.

Outreach Opportunities

ITEMS-OF-THE-MONTH

Thanks so much for your generous outpouring of items for Heartland Head Start in January and February. Much appreciated by staff and parents

In March and April the Outreach Committee is asking for

sharing in his life, we will continue to pray and celebrate the Eucharist with our regular schedule.

With apologies to Sir Winston, when we look back on this time, may it be said of St. Matthew's that despite the challenges, "This was their finest hour!"

Praying thou has an Holy Lent and remain in good health!

Dave+
309-660-8515

Ministry Links

St. Matthew's Webpage
The Episcopal Diocese of
Springfield

[Rector's Blog \(new\)](#)

Find us on Instagram--stmattsblm
Twitter--@BloomingtonSt

personal care items for the Salvation Army. For adult men and women we need shampoo, body wash, shaving cream, feminine products. There's always a need for baby diapers, too. Thank you.

Book/DVD/Bake Sale

The spring Book/DVD/Bake sale will be on Saturday, March 21, 8 AM -1 PM. Please bring donations to the parish hall and place near the bookshelves. Bake sale items can be brought to the church on Thursday or Friday, March 19-20 or on the morning of the sale. Sale set-up will be Friday, March 20, 3-6 PM. Any amount of time you can help is much appreciated by the Outreach Committee. Any questions call Debbie Leighton at 662-7478.

Advent Time

Advent is enrolled in year 3 of a 5 year course to become a doctor. He is the son of Bishop Elias in Tanzania. In US dollars, his tuition would be \$2,273 per year. Room & Board is an additional \$1826 annually. Anyone wishing to help Advent with his education can make checks to St. Matthew's Episcopal Church; putting Outreach-Education in the memo line. God Bless, and we thank you

The Daily Devotional Reading

is available by clicking of the link below:
[Good News Daily](#)

Worship Serving Schedule

15-March 2020

7:30

Greeters: Ray Durham

Lector: Bill Johns

E.M.: Emily Lavikoff

10:00

Acolyte: Alley Roberson

Crucifer: Christian Pitts

Thurifer: John Stoffer

Lector: Jim Cooper

E.M.: Jack Pitts

Monday Counter: Gary Ploense

Coffee Hour: Chrissy & John Stoffer

22-March 2020

7:30

Greeters: Doug & Dede Dyson

Lector: Bill Johns

E.M.: Bill Johns

10:00

Acolyte: Liam Halt

Crucifer: Brad Bauman

Lector: Chrissy Stoffer

E.M.: Shelley Carter

Monday Counter: Pam Laws

Coffee Hour: Nona & Harlan Noel

St. Matthew's Weekly Activities as of March 15

Coffee Hour fellowship follows worship in the Parish Hall.

Sunday-7:30 a.m.-Holy Eucharist

10:00 a.m.-Holy Eucharist

5:30 p.m.-Evensong

6:00 p.m.-MLT meeting

Monday-9:00 a.m.-B-N Community Co-operative *

11:00 a.m.-Private Music Lessons *

Tuesday-7:00 a.m.-Morning Prayer

10:00 a.m.-Quilters

Wednesday-1:30 p.m.-Private Music Lessons *

5:30 p.m.-Mid-week Holy Eucharist

6:00 p.m.-Adult Study

Thursday -7:30 a.m.-Holy Eucharist & breakfast

9:00 a.m.-Moms in Prayer *

2:00 p.m.-Private Music Lessons *

Friday-3:00 p.m.-Outreach Book/DVD/Bake Sale setup

5:30 p.m.-Stations of the Cross

Saturday-8:00 a.m.-Outreach Book/DVD/Bake Sale

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

** Authorized Group--St. Matthew's guests*

If you have anything you would like added to the schedule or announcements in the bulletin and news letter please send an email reply to the newsletter, or call the office.

Readings for March 15, 2020

Hymns: #692, #685, #686

Old Testament

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Psalm 95

Venite, exultemus

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, *
and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, *

and his hands have molded the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7 For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
*

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

8 Harden not your hearts,
as your forebears did in the wilderness, *
at Meribah, and on that day at Massah,
when they tempted me.

9 They put me to the test, *
though they had seen my works.

10 Forty years long I detested that generation and said, *
"This people are wayward in their hearts;
they do not know my ways."

11 So I swore in my wrath, *
"They shall not enter into my rest."

The Epistle

Romans 5:1-11

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Gospel

John 4:5-42

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

"Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

Birthdays & Anniversaries March 15 - 21

Anniversaries

Birthdays

James Gordon

Ruth Stock

Dedications for this week:

Third Sunday in Lent, March 15th

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may

assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contact Information

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

