

I turn today to some practical matters.

To often we separate the practical from the spiritual. However, the Church has long held that the practical life is a key component of the spiritual life. The practical life is literally how we practice our faith. It is "what we do" in terms of our worship and works of righteousness.

At this time, more than ever, we need to emphasis our practices. As we move into the current landscape of isolation and distancing the Church is changing by enabling more liturgies to be celebrated via the Internet. This is a good thing, but lacks the essential component of being Incarnational. In other words, we are not physically present with others, and perhaps, less physically present with ourselves in this experience.

What do I mean? Are we participating or watching services? The answer to this question is obviously that we should be participating. We need the physical interaction of our worship as much as the mental and "spiritual"



COVID-19 Update (Policy Update)

The latest letter from Bishop Daniel is [here](#).

The Governor has issued a shelter in place order effective tomorrow.

Here is the latest, but be prepared for change. Offered with humor, we used to say "Semper Gumby" in the Army. It means "always flexible". So, here we are, being always flexible.

The Bishop has suspended Public Worship. He did this before the Governor issued the shelter order. While Bishop Daniel gave "wiggle room" to celebrate this Sunday, but in keeping with the Governor's order, effective immediately I will be abiding by Bishop Daniel's suspension directive.

This does not mean that worship ceases. It simply means that our worship is not a "public" event. Bishop Daniel is requiring that all priests celebrate the Holy Eucharist on Sundays. I will do this at St. Matthew's at the normal time of our second service.

Bishop Daniel is limiting those present at the Eucharist to no more than five (5) including the priest. If you desire to be present at a celebration of the Eucharist, please email me at frhalt@protonmail.com. I will fill requests on a rotating basis. This may be very frustrating to some, but I ask your patience and prayers.

aspects. So here are some practical tips for maintaining a practice that is Incarnational. These are especially important on Sundays.

1. Be present at the actual time services are being held. This way we can all be together even though separated.
2. Prepare for worship as you would if you were "coming" to church. In addition to what ever prayers you offer before services, take a shower, get dressed, put down the coffee cup. How we physically prepare will have an impact on our spiritual experience. Also, it shows the respect and love we have for our fellow Christians, even if we are not in the same space.
3. If possible, take your device to a location that is different from where you watch TV. If you have a home chapel or a prayer corner, participate in that space. An office or even the dining room is better than the TV room as it will be less distracting.
4. Gather anyone in your home and participate together.
5. I can't stress this enough, do what we do in worship. Don't be passive. Participate! Make the gestures we make in worship. Say the responses. Sing the music. Stand when we stand. Kneel when we

However, just because you cannot attend in person, does not mean you cannot worship. I encourage you to take advantage of our Facebook Live stream of the services. If you need help with this, please let me know.

I do have permission from the Bishop to offer the Blessed Sacrament outside the Sanctuary for the duration. Just as you can order "carry-out" from your favorite restaurant, you can order "carry-out" or "drive-through" Communion. (Yes, this is a strange thing for Episcopalians, and I don't want to get used to it, but desperate times....). Approximately 10 minutes after Sunday Mass, I will have the Sacrament with me on the sidewalk if you wish to receive "drive-up" style. This option will be available for 30 minutes. If you prefer to receive at home the Sacrament will be delivered by the clergy to you on your stoop immediately after the "drive-up" style closes. The Sacrament will be contained in small baggies so that no person to person contact is needed. Please email frhalt@protonmail.com if you wish to receive via "drive-through" or "delivery" and the number who will receive. I do ask that, if you are wish to commune, you especially participate in the live-stream of the service.

While I hope that restrictions will be lifted sooner rather than later, we need to be prepared to worship online for an extended period of time. With that remember that your local congregation still needs you. This is a time for us to pull together even more strongly than to dissipate ourselves across the myriad options in the virtual world.

Also, as needs arise, pastoral or otherwise, please do not hesitate reach out.

I know that these days have shocked us, and may appear overwhelming, but I know that our God is with us and will see us through. May each of us turn to God with all our heart at this time. Remember to be patient with one another, love one another, and let others see the fruit of the Spirit living in you!

Dave

Meals

Thank you for the generous outpouring of support for this

kneel. It might feel strange at first, but it will have a positive effect on both your experience of the "event" and your spiritual life.

6. Make your space as holy as you can and reflective of the church. Light a candle. Burn incense.

7. Make a Spiritual Communion. A form for this is linked in the box "A Couple of Links". The form is longer than is given during an actual Mass. It may be done at any time. During Holy Communion please say private prayers of devotion.

8. After the Sunday Mass continue with your own version of the 8th Sacrament: Coffee Hour. Have a meal. Sit down and chat. Don't be in a hurry to get back to Netflix, TV, or even a good book. Continue to be present with anyone who is with you. If you live alone, call a fellow parishioner and talk about the service and life.

9. Be gracious. I am sure that this will take all of us "some getting used to", and mistakes will be made.

10. Pray for each other!

Here is a short video outlining the above.

ministry. The freezer is quite full at this time.

We also have packages of Tender Mercies meals from Midwest Food Bank.

If you, or someone you know, need(s) a meal at this time please let us know, or stop by the office when it is open.

From the Jr. Warden

The work of the church goes on through plagues, pestilence, and disasters. Those of you who are practicing social distancing and staying home can still contribute your tithing to keep St. Matthew's providing worship and other services to the parish. Weekday morning Mass at 7:30 a.m., Evening Offices at 5:30 p.m. and Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. are being streamed on St. Matthew's Facebook page. You can contact your bank to have a direct check mailed at whatever interval you choose. You can mail in checks to St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 1920 E. Oakland Ave, Bloomington, IL 61701.

Please remember that Outreach is not able to hold the book sale this spring and will not have money to support Advent Chakupewa's medical education expenses or any of their other causes. Donations to them can also be made, be sure to note those special funds in the memo line of your check.

Yours in Christ,

Gary Ploense
Jr. Warden

Service Times (Updated)

All services are live-streamed. The services themselves are closed to "public" participation. Sunday Mass is limited to 5 in attendance including the clergy.

Daily Mass at 7:30 AM Monday-Saturday

Great Litany at 5:30 Thursday Evening

Sunday Mass at 10 AM.



Worship in a time of distance.

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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

Evening Prayer at 5:30PM Sunday-Wednesday. (Weekdays may or may not be live-streamed based on clergy schedule).

Great Litany and Supplication sung on Thursday at 5:30PM.

Stations of the Cross at 5:30PM on Friday's.

Lenten Series

We will meet this week on Zoom. Documents will be posted to our website on Wednesday morning. All are invited.

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Zoom meeting ID is: 758-764-632

If you do not have Zoom it can be found at zoom.us

If you need assistance to use Zoom, please call the office.

A Couple of Links

[St. Bede's Breviary](#) (Daily Offices)

[Book of Common Prayer](#)

[Spiritual Communion \(Update\)](#) (An Anglican Rite).

[Prayer of Elder Paisios for the World](#) (I have found this quite helpful at the current time).

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, please call Fr. Dave.

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 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.

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

Bulletin for March 22

is available by clicking of the link below:

[March 22 4th Sunday of Lent](#)

The Daily Devotional Reading

is available by clicking of the link below:

[Good News Daily](#)

Worship Serving Schedule

Thank you to all of you who faithfully serve in the ministry of the Altar. At this time we are suspending the scheduling of servers to keep you safe and to reflect the changing circumstances we face.

A service will always be held on Sunday, but the numbers allowed to be present will necessarily be limited. If you wish to serve at any service where you will be present, you are invited to do so.

We will resume scheduling as events allow.

Thank you again, and may God bless you.

St. Matthew's Weekly Activities as of March 22

Coffee Hour fellowship is suspended temporarily.

Sunday-7:30 a.m.-Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m.-Holy Eucharist
5:30 p.m.-Evensong

Monday-7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing
11:00 a.m.-Private Music Lessons *

Tuesday-7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing
10:00 a.m.-Quilters (?)

Wednesday-7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing
1:30 p.m.-Private Music Lessons *
5:30 p.m.-Evening Prayer
6:00 p.m.-Adult Study via Zoom

Thursday -7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing
9:00 a.m.-Moms in Prayer *
2:00 p.m.-Private Music Lessons *
5:30 p.m.-Great Litany

Friday-7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing
5:30 p.m.-Stations of the Cross

Saturday-7:30 a.m.-Daily Mass for healing

Please be flexible and observant of possible changes to events during this period of concern.

*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 22, 2020

Hymns: #593, #646, #339

Old Testament

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will

kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Psalm 23

Dominus regit me

1 The Lord is my shepherd; *

I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.

3 He revives my soul *

and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; *

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who

trouble me; *

you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.

6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Epistle

Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

Live as children of light- for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,

and Christ will shine on you."

The Gospel

John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and

opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for

judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Birthdays & Anniversaries March 22 - 28

Anniversaries

Martha & Roger Hollis

Birthdays

Gus Mather

Pam Laws

Dedications for this week:

*The Sanctuary lamp is lit in honor of
the ordination anniversary of*

Rev. Tim Leighton

by The Leighton Family

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 22nd

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which giveth life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Contact Information

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

