

## Ministry Links

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The Episcopal Diocese of  
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## The Good News

March 22, 2020



### For the Life of the World

This is the title of an excellent book by Alexander Schmemmann on the Sacramental Worldview of Christianity.

As Episcopalians we are a Sacramental People. We believe that we are not simply bodies containing souls, but a body and soul united by the grace of God. We believe that the created can be touched and transformed by the energy (life) of the Uncreated, and having been thus touched has a responsibility to work for the transformation of the world.

While it is Baptism that is our first touch of this sacramental grace, it is the Holy Eucharist that daily, or weekly, gives us a fresh touch of that Life and transforms us by grace. Once again our Lord Christ gives us his very self each time we receive. Each time we celebrate is another "breaking in" of the Life of God into the world, and so the Church's first "mission" is the continual celebration of the Sacraments. Outside of a few communities during Lent, rarely in the life of the Church has the regular communal participation in the Liturgy been suspended, and never across an area as large as Illinois. In normal times a Christian's first "duty" is to be present with the Body of Christ and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord.

These are not normal times. For the first time in the history of The Episcopal Church public worship will not occur in our parishes. The churches will be mostly silent and empty. The

faithful will not be communicated together. These are tragic times.

However, this does not mean we despair. We are the Church who commune with the Living God. We might not commune together in the Sacrament, but we are still living in the grace of God. It is a great benefit to us to receive his Body and Blood as it is full of grace, but we receive grace in other ways. When we invoke the Name of Christ in our prayers, and abide with Him in our hearts, we receive the grace of living in Him. Even if this crisis precludes our celebration of Easter, each contact with Jesus in prayer, each contact with Christ is an experience of Easter.

We also need to remember that each merciful act we do in His Name is well-pleasing to the Lord, and in so doing he imparts his grace upon us. Despite the distance that we must maintain as a community at this time, when we pray and act with mercy we are united in His Life, and nothing can separate us from this.

In some locations the Ancient Church had the custom to spend Lent in the desert and not celebrate the Eucharist to prepare to celebrate Passion week and Easter in all godliness. They set this time apart for fasting and prayer. This is our discipline now.

However, while we are confined to our homes, and are in a season of fasting and prayer, we do not need to be alone. The Church continues to pray, and can do so together. Please join as able to our live-streamed services each day. I will be doing the Daily Offices and a daily Eucharist from my home chapel. The Sunday Liturgy will still be celebrated, and provision for contactless "drive-through" or "delivery" of the Sacrament has been made.

On a practical note, as these days of isolation progress, please do not hesitate to call on your clergy. We are here for you.

This is not a time for despair or panic. Our good and loving God will see us through. The same Christ who delivered us from the bondage of Sin on the Cross, and broke the cords of Death in His Resurrection, is with us in these moments. Let us look to Him in hope and commend ourselves, and one another to His most gracious care.

We are preparing for a great and wonderful day, when we shall all gather and sing His praise and celebrate the Liturgy for the life of the World. May that day come quickly!

Dave+

**Please email or text me 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.**

### **Service Times (Updated)**

**All services are live-streamed. The services themselves are closed to "public" participation.**

Daily Mass at Noon (M-F)

Great Litany at 5:30 Thursday Evening

Sunday Mass at 10 AM.

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. I am working on a PowerPoint version.

### **Meals**

Thank you for the generous outpouring of support for this 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

### **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](https://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).

## **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

