



GOOD NEWS LETTER

... In the Age of Coronavirus ...

Dear Friends

I miss seeing each of you in the flesh! My hug quota is very low and the kids (and Ashley) are tired of me asking for hugs! Simply stated, I cannot wait until we are reunited in the flesh.

In the space we occupy until our reunion, the non-linear progression of grief (based on the work of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler) provides a helpful lens to see our life in this age of Corona.

The original steps, Denial -> Anger -> Depression -> Bargaining -> Acceptance are drivers that do not act linear, but cyclically. Anyone who has walked the dark road of grief knows exactly what this circular arch is all about. Just when you think you have accepted our "stay-in-place" order, you are bargaining that if we keep washing our hands it will not last until June 10th (yikes!).

As uncomfortable as the above is to acknowledge (who wants to say I'm grieving), it is comforting to acknowledge that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus and weeps with us. God weeps with us right now – pause, and let that sink in.

So while we are in this pandemic we know one true fact, and that is that God is with us. He hung on the cross and entered hell so that we would know that whatever life gives to and takes from us, there is no place that is without the love and presence of Jesus. Now, pause and let that sink in.

Not only is He with us, but we, too, will be resurrected when we breathe our last. The ending of the pandemic is unknown, but our story has already been written. Heaven. Now, pause and let that sink in and let God's love wash over you.

Back to grief, Kessler is working on another step in the circular life of grief: Meaning. Kessler writes about meaning:

I wanted meaning in those darkest hours. And I do believe we find light in those times. Even now people are realizing they can connect through technology. They are not as remote as they thought. They are realizing they can use their phones for long conversations. They're appreciating walks. I believe we will continue to find meaning now and when this is over.

It is in these places of meaning that we see those little rays of hope that pierce through the fear, nerves, and uncertainty. Meaning gives way to laughter, love, hope and God.

David Brooks captured this idea in a recent column:

It's the story we tell about this moment. It's the way we tie our moment of suffering to a larger narrative of redemption. It's the way we then go out and stubbornly live out that story. The plague today is an invisible monster, but it gives birth to a better world.

There it is, or as Paul wrote, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

What will be revealed? Easter. Eternal Life and full communion with God and all the saints in light. **Easter Joy to each of you along with many virtual hugs!**

Peace,
Willis

Sunday, April 5th

10:30am Liturgy of the Palms, Service of Morning Prayer with Dramatic “zoom” Passion Reading



Virtual Holy Week Schedule

Wednesday, April 8th

7:30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday, April 9th

12 noon, Brown Bible Study: Deconstructed Communion with questions and answers. Bring any and all questions related to Communion and our Brown Bag Bible Study will be half teaching and half conversation.

Friday, April 10th

Noon. Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 11th

The Collect for Holy Saturday.

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen. (BCP, 283).*

Sunday, April 12th

Easter Day! 10:30am. We will gather over Zoom and celebrate the Resurrection with a service of Morning Prayer.

A few notes:

- * Sunday Service begins with a few minutes of “visiting” or a “virtual” coffee hour.
- * Invite your friends and neighbors
- * Sunday services are recorded and posted on the Website
- * Links and information always found at www.stmarksfincastle.org

Virtual Service information for remaining of April

Sundays: 10:30am, Service of Morning Prayer

Wednesdays: 7:30pm, Service of Evening Prayer

Thursday: 12,noon, Brown Bag Bible Study (zoom, eat lunch and read the Gospel According to Luke)

Other Notes: See information in the Holy Week schedule above

How long will Church worship virtual? We don't know this exactly - -right now Governor Northam's ban on gatherings extends until June 10th, but we will continue to evaluate this as the information changes. Let us all continue to pray for the world and our community.

FEELING DISCONNECTED? HERE'S HOW TO CONNECT

If you have access to a desktop computer, laptop computer, or smart phone or tablet that are connected to the internet, you can watch Willis's sermons, participate in the Brown Bag Bible Studies and in the Wednesday night Evening Prayer Services.

Here's how:

First, you need to go to this website on your computer: <https://zoom.us/>

Once there, you will need to sign up using your e-mail address and create a password (write it down!). When the time comes for the service or meeting, Willis will set up the "meeting" and send you an email "invitation". If you scroll down a ways it will say "join zoom meeting" and there will be a link for you to click and a meeting ID number. That should take you to the meeting. Also, you do not need to "stream" the service to join in virtually. Simply call in as if it's a conference call (there will be a phone number for this purpose).

You can also visit the website and on the right hand side of the home page, see the box which says "virtual Church links". Click on the one you want. PDF versions of the bulletins are on the home page also.

This may seem daunting at first, but once you have tried it and succeeded, you will be able to join in with other parishioners in worship. E-mail Gina (office@stmarksfincastle.org) or Willis (willis@stmarksfincastle.org) if you have any questions about any of the above.



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

We would love to know what you have been doing to occupy yourself during these days of social distancing. For those of you who have Facebook, post a picture of you or an item, or whatever you want, on the St. Mark's Facebook page for others to see and to help provide others with encouragement and ideas! The St. Mark's Facebook page isn't just for bring you information, it's for you too. Feel free to post something!

For those without Facebook, you could send an email to the church (office@stmarksfincastle.org) or attach a digital photo to an email of your activities, or maybe lack of activities (!), so that we can put a little something in the newsletter or on the website.



“The Peace of Wild Things”

Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



Learn about Various Church Teachers!

You’ve heard the name Augustine, but who really was he?

How about Cyril of Alexandria?

How about Julian of Norwich?

How about Martin Luther (well, that’s not fair, you’ve heard of Luther, but he’s too good not to include)

What about Zwingli?

How about Barth?

Adult Education Videos coming to you!

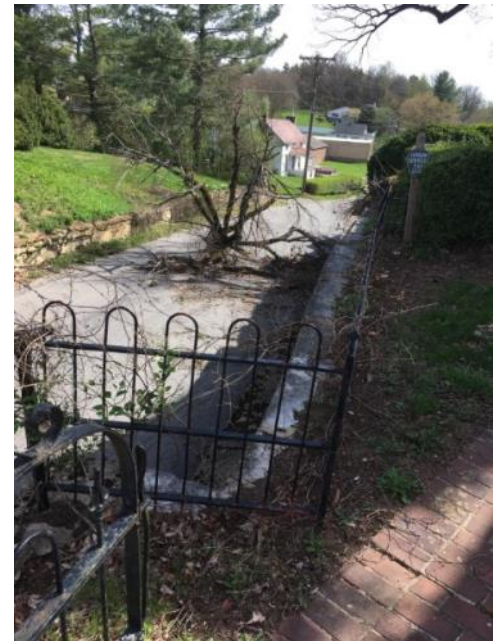
Beginning the week after Easter, be on the lookout for some video teachings on the above. Who are they? What would they say about life in the time of Corona? These 20-30 minute videos will be part reflection and part meditation. Write down your questions, call/email/text me or wait until we are back together again.

Logan Elementary School



Photos of what fellow St.Mark'sians did on a Sunday afternoon

Sunday afternoon (March 29) after some strong wind gusts, Angela Coon noticed some ominous noises from the front of our Church. She took some pictures and called Carole. The top 2/3 of the tree on the left as you face the church had decided to relocate down into the road. Carole arrived to direct traffic away from the scene and I showed up with my tractor and chain. Walter Michael arrived in a small fire truck from another call and hooked up the chain to the tree and tractor. 3 Peter and Jackie directed me and traffic while keeping a safe social distance. Mike Parish assisted as needed. VDOT arrived after the tree was moved to the Ministry Center parking lot to cut it up and clean up any debris. Mark Parish arrived with his award-winning chain saw as VDOT was finishing up. It takes a village. ===Chuck Geiger



The Botetourt Food Pantry will operate at normal hours each Saturday, 9:30-12:00. The food distribution will be done as a drive through process.



Clients will be asked to stay in their cars and volunteers will bring the food out to you. Food will be already boxed up. **We ask clients and volunteers to stay home if you have any symptoms.** We appreciate your patience. We want to keep our volunteers and clients safe. If you have any questions, please contact Martha Rodgers at 540-597-0025.



Senior Warden's Message about Pledges and Donations

My Fellow Parishioners:

Firstly, let me say that I hope you are well and that grace is with you as you endure the challenges which COVID-19 has placed upon us.

Secondly, let me say that we are blessed in so many ways. A wonderful parish, a caring rector, a talented staff to support him and us, and a beautiful church, being among them. And even though we are inconvenienced by quarantines and limited stocks of some household supplies, St. Mark's continues making the best of things and doing the utmost to meet everyone's needs.

Those needs at times like this can be especially challenging, but they remain needs nonetheless. In fact, it's at times like these when even more needs usually arise, whether they be spiritual, physical, or emotional. Also it is times like these that St. Mark's -- all of us -- rise to the occasion to do the best possible to help each other and to help others in the broader community.

Given those many growing needs, our ability to address them is critically dependent on our financial support. I'm asking that each one of us do our utmost to fulfill our pledges for the year in a timely fashion. For those who may be blessed enough to afford something additional, please consider giving more, since that could go a long way to offset pledges that cannot be met due to loss of income and to offset our current total lack of plate offerings.

Please continue to give to the extent that you can. You can mail checks to the church office, drop off checks at the office — Sue is working 3-4 days per week, or you can arrange online payments (either credit card or bank account) by going to the St. Mark's website (<https://www.stmarksfincastle.org/>) and scrolling down the homepage to the "Give to the Church" button.

As we take care of each other as Christ wants us to do, I encourage you to take care of yourselves as well. Stay in touch with friends, get some fresh air, relax. And if you have a need, don't hesitate to reach out to Willis, to the We Care Ministry (Carole Geiger), or me.

May the love and peace of Christ be with you,
Mike Parish,
Senior Warden

Website links you may want handy:

The Lectionary Page - you can find readings for every day of the year and LOTS of other information

<https://www.lectionarypage.net/#april>

The ZOOM Website, where you can sign up

<https://zoom.us/>

The Diocesan Home page where you can also find current COVID-19 information

<https://www.dioswva.org/>

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer

http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/formatted_1979.htm

Mockingbird website

<https://mbird.com/>

For the Kids—Bible Word Search (readers)

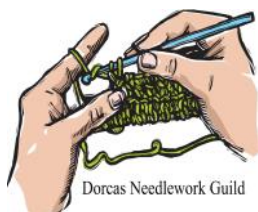
<http://biblewordgames.com/kidswordsearchpage1.html>

Botetourt County website

<https://botetourtva.gov/>



Working from our home machines and



sewing boxes, several stitchers have been making face masks and other items for use by shut-ins, caregivers, and others who request

them. For more information, contact Gret Kidd at touchofivory@juno.com. You can also reach Gret, Sally Field, or Carole Geiger by phone – please see your church directory.

We Care Team

Even though everyone continues to practice good habits of remaining at home as much as possible and doing everything possible to prevent the spread of any kind of illness, we all continue to pray for one another. If you would like to receive the bcc (blind copy) updates on prayer requests and needs, please contact Carole Geiger at geiger.caroleb@gmail.com.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
(111 S. Roanoke St.)
P.O. Box 277
Fincastle, VA 24090-0277



willis@stmarksfincastle.org (The Rev. G. Willis Logan)
office@stmarksfincastle.org (Gina Painter)
540-473-2370 (Phone)
stmarksfincastle.org



When the sometimes controversial preacher, Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), was a pastor in Brooklyn, New York, he received a letter with two words on it: "April Fool." Immediately, Beecher wrote a letter to a New York newspaper describing the letter he had received and then commented, "I have heard of men who wrote letters and forgot to sign their name, but never before met a case in which a man signed his name and forgot to write the letter."

April Birthdays

- 3 Pat Gordon
- 5 Sherry Vinson
- 8 Cassidy Holley
- 9 Connie Diez, Bill Gaul
- 11 Ann Layman
- 16 Sally Field
- 19 Gracie Rokicka
- 24 Edward Neil
- 25 McKinley Saunders, Hazelleigh
Garland
- 27 Will Gaul