



ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

276 Church Street, Montrose, PA 18801

Office 570-278-2954, Mon. to Thu. 8:15am to 1:00pm

Click on link to email St. Paul's: stpaulsmontrose@epix.net

Click on link to go to our Website: <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org>

Click on link to go to our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmontrose>

Mission Statement for St. Paul's: To proclaim God's love by word and example and to seek Christ in one another.

May 3 - 9, 2020

The Readings for Sunday May 3:

First Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Psalm: 23

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Gospel: John 10:1-10

Message from Bishop Kevin: Phase Approach to Re-gathering

Posted on April 28, 2020

Surrender! Have you surrendered, yet?

As many of you heard me say in the cathedral live stream Easter Sunday – this particular moment is one where we are called to let go and trust in the Risen Christ –despite our best instincts to do it alone (or there cannot be survival without surrender!)-we must walk together knowing that God walks with us on this journey as well.

This is what the Easter season is about – our thinking anew as to how we are to reach out and bring Christ's love to a world so desperately in need. This crisis offers us an opportunity to lean into our ethical responsibility for the common good and to address the growing inequalities that that this pandemic has exposed.

I have heard from so many of you just how jarring it is to not be able to gather in community with others. I hear your longing for the Eucharist. I yearn for that time when we will be together again in celebration. And yet, I am so heartened by your innovative spirit – by the

ways you are gathering together virtually in coffee hours, Bible studies, creative prayer and worship opportunities and other fellowship moments to stay connected. I've heard story after story of people who have overcome their fears of technology to reach out!

Many are anxious and wondering how and when we will return to gathering in-person for fellowship and worship. At this time, I'm calling on all congregations to remain closed to all in-person worship. We must continue to rely on our medical professionals to ensure that we return when we are safely able and have all the proper precautions in place. And though we have been longing for a specific and set date that we could look forward to—when things would suddenly go back to “normal”—what has become clear is that the events that surround us are much too complex to provide us that kind of certainty.

Rather, we are working with the Presiding Bishop' office, other dioceses, similar organizations and diocesan leadership bodies to develop a phase approach for return.

A phase approach means that we do not set dates for when we return to worshipping in-person, but instead look at the circumstances surrounding us to decide what actions we should be taking in the present, and what actions we should take in the future when circumstances change. With guidelines from the United States and commonwealth governments, and other experts in the field of health, we have created a set of phases that describe appropriate church protocols based on health characteristics in our communities.

Our goal is to continue to “be church” safely in every circumstance.

We are currently in Phase I, which is characterized by:

- Widespread community spread of the virus
- Overtaxed health system
- Short medical supply
- Lack of availability of vaccine, therapeutics, and counter measures
- Lack of protective supplies (e.g. gloves, masks, sanitizer) for general public

As long as these characteristics remain, we will continue to be in Phase I, which requires the following protocols:

- Gathering for online worship, formation, and community
- Limiting service ministries to safe protocols dedicated to essentials such as feeding ministries

Once the situation improves, and we see the following changes:

- Fewer than 50 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people for at least 14 days (*determined by regions designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*)
- Safe treatment of all patients requiring hospitalization without resorting to crisis standards of care
- Testing all people with COVID-19 symptoms
- Active monitoring of confirmed cases and their contacts
- Case-Based Interventions including quarantine while awaiting test results, traced relationships over 14 days, and quarantine for close contacts with diagnostic testing

We will enter Phase II, which means we can adopt the following protocols:

- Church offices open in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued online worship, formation, and community
- Small church worship under 25 may restart in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued health safety protocols:
 - Wear masks
 - Wash hands

- Sanitize frequently
- More specific guidelines will follow once Phase II health characteristics are closer to being met.

Once the situation improves so that there is:

- Negative community spread
- Global vaccination
- Widespread therapeutic availability
- Comprehensive testing for virus and immunity

We will enter Phase III, where we will adopt the following protocols:

- Church offices opened
- Missional and administrative capacities created
- Worship in churches
- Increased small group gathering
- Increased missional gathering
- Continued online worship, formation, and community
- Continued pastoral calling
- Return to service ministries with addition of new community relationships

For more information about all the phases, you can visit diobeth.org/COVID19.

Though it can be difficult to no longer operate with a specific “date-to-open” in mind, this phase approach allows us to safely and effectively plan for the future. And the lessons we learn in our current phase will help us be a more resilient, loving, and missional church in the future.

Please know that you all remain in my thoughts and prayers and that I need to hear from you. Please continue to reach out to our Diocesan Staff, particularly **the Rev. Megan Dembi**, if you have specific questions about our phased return to worship and ministry. Know of my love for you, and that I, diocesan staff, and your friends and colleagues are available to support you through this time. For I am convinced that it is only together that we can walk through this moment and through this moment we will discover that God is building something we cannot yet fully see or know.

One Plus One Plus One Equals One



We were lucky today. The rain held off and we took our Springer Spaniel, Sophie, for a walk at Salt Springs State Park. We chose one of the easier trails today and therefore were not huffing and puffing straight up the side of the mountain. Well at least it seems like we're climbing Pikes Peak on some of the more difficult trails. Today's trail had gradual slopes and a lovely flat path through the forest.

The leaves are barely starting to come out on the trees, so the light filters through the branches. There are numerous different mosses that nestle in the decaying leaves on the ground and around the fallen trees. Some look exactly like miniature Christmas trees and others are like a velvet covering on rocks. My favorite is one that is bright green and stands upright but is so soft and cushiony that I imagine Rip Van Winkle could take a pretty cozy nap on it.

As we headed out of the field and into the trees, a subtle fragrance surrounded us. I kept looking around for some large bush that would be capable of sending out this scent. No bushes in bloom. Earlier I had pointed out to Dan the tiny pink flowers that were scattered in patches along the path. Each one on a delicate stem about an inch long nosed its way out of the damp bed of leaves. Out of curiosity, I bent to pick one. I held it to my nose thinking 'no way could these tiny flowers make this woods smell like honeysuckle.' One sniff and I

realized I was wrong. That one tiny blossom had an almost imperceptible sweet smell. Coupled with the thousands of its kind, they filled the woods with a very noticeable fragrance.

I couldn't help but think about the similarity with the church in general and with our church in particular. There is a good reason why we are called the body of the faithful, a community of believers, a church family though we are individuals, each with our own gifts. Whether you are on the Altar Guild, or host coffee hour, or make phone calls, or serve on the Vestry, or attend services regularly, or pray for all the rest of us, you make a difference. No way could we all serve in the same capacity. We surely would not want all of us to be ushers at the same time. We'd be knocking each other over at the door. But when we each do our part in service to God, the church can do amazing things. Each tiny part benefits the whole. As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many."

All of us are members of the body of Christ at St. Paul's, and in the wider church. Just as each of those tiny flowers combines its scent with thousands of others to produce a fragrance to fill a forest, so we too work together, each with our own gifts, for the greater good. During this time of compassionate distancing, use your gift in whatever way you can.

I recently heard of a priest who put signs inside his church over the doorways. The signs read, "The church is now leaving the building." We have left the building, so together, let's be the church!! Lynne Graham

Need a Daily Meditation Guide?

Betty has the next issue of Forward Day by Day (May, June and July). If you would like a copy to be sent to you, please call the office at 570-278-2954 and leave a message. The meditations are written by a different author each month. The daily readings are listed for your convenience in finding them in your Bible. A scripture verse from the readings is highlighted and the author relates the passage to our lives to make it meaningful. If you have never used a daily devotional, now is an excellent time to start with Forward Day by Day.

For those who are ill or have requested our prayers: Margaret Burgh, Kathy Warriner, Joe Welden, Naomi Bennett, Justin, Rita Leigh, Fr. John Wagner, Eric Fr. Arthur & Mo. Jenny.

Pastoral Emergency or Non-Emergency

Contact: you can call the parish office during office hours. After hours call Arthur Jones at 570-665-1707 or email him at JonesAL0@sewanee.com

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

I realize that most of us are stuck at home with concerns about family and finances. That's the bad news, but if there were to be an upside it is this: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds. " Apparently, neither has the Corona Virus prevented the USPS from delivering mail. That means that we still receive bills on a regular basis and we have payroll to make. If it is at all possible under our current conditions, please send your tithes and pledges to the church office at 276 Church St., Montrose, PA 18801. Another option would be to slip your pledge under the office door if you happen to be going by church. Thank you for your attention to this request. We will just continue to do the best we can with what we have. God's peace, Lynne

2 Photos this week.

“The Father Arthur Missive” [The F.A.M.]

Written by the Reverend Arthur Jones, III – on Monday, April 27th, 2020.

Verses 2 and 3 of the 103rd Psalm reads thusly: *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.”*

Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. This is Father Arthur. As many of you know by now, I've been under the weather since the afternoon of Easter Sunday. Since then, I've been relegated to complete bedrest all day, every day. Late last week, I was finally tested by a local physician, and it's official: I have Coronavirus. (So does Mother Jenny.) As a direct result, I'm now following not only the best medical directives of my personal care physician, but also those of the local Health Department, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and our Diocesan Office in Bethlehem, PA.

I've been in daily contact with Bishop Kevin and Missioner Sandy at the DioBeth office. Per Bishop Kevin's pastoral directive, I cannot do the Daily Offices virtually – or Morning Prayer with Homily virtually on Sunday mornings. Bishop Kevin has been a wonderful pastoral presence for me and for Mother Jenny (he's her Bishop, too). It's not an exaggeration on my part when I say that for all intents and purposes, I'm married to the Episcopal Church. I serve as your Priest-in-Charge both under the direction and at the pleasure of Bishop Kevin. I took vows before God, family members, friends, bishops, deacons, and fellow priests to steadfastly honor and abide by all canon laws of the Church. My vows include teaching and preaching God's Word, living my life as a living

sacrifice to God's grace and mercy, serving God's people to the best of my ability, and helping to facilitate the growth of our beloved communities/parishes. I take my vows very, very seriously. While Bishop Kevin is my friend, my brother in Christ, and my priest – he's my Bishop first and foremost. When he asks me to do something, I'm duty bound to fulfill his request. Therefore, when Bishop Kevin orders me to rest, I must comply.

According to my doctor, I'm highly contagious right now. So the most responsible course of action for me is to rest, hydrate, follow my doctor's instructions, remain inside, and keep everyone informed of my health status. I've been told by medical experts that while everyone's body responds to Coronavirus differently based on several factors, the prognosis is that it may take weeks for me to experience a full recovery (assuming there are no unforeseen setbacks). There are no shortcuts and no miracle cures between where I am currently and where I want to be. As severely ill as I am right now, there are no prescriptions and no drugs for those with this illness. While it's a medical fact that Mother Jenny and I have COVID, there remains a great deal we still don't know. Our doctors have shared with us that while we both will have some degree of immunity once we fully recover, no one knows the extent of that immunity – or how long it will last (days, weeks, or months). Sadly, it's also unknown if Mother Jenny and I could be re-infected with Coronavirus at some point in the future.

I've remained in touch with the Senior Wardens of our Susquehanna County parishes. Through their patience and kindness, you're receiving this missive letter from me; along with the homily transcript I would have preached yesterday (April 26th) live from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Montrose for the congregants of the EPUSC had I been healthy.

Please know that although I may not be physically present, I'm praying with you and for you. I'm praying with your families and for your families. I'm thinking about our parishes individually and collectively.

God has promised to never leave us nor forsake us. I'm holding on to that divine fact now more than ever. I urge you to do the same.

May the Lord be with you. May the Lord be with us all.

Most Respectfully,
Arthur+

Spring has Arrived in the Memorial Garden



Every year, the cold of winter melts away and spring brings a new beginning. Although none of us are there to see and enjoy them, Lucinda's bulbs that were planted last fall are starting to flower. Daffodils and crocus are showing why we plant them. When flowers bloom, so does hope – hope that we will soon be worshipping together again.

St Paul's Church, 1918

Another early postcard of St. Paul's turned up on EBay. This is a colored one and quite handsome. Postcards started in 1905 and we have a number of views of the church on them. Of interest, it was posted to Binghamton on September 12th, 1918 – the height of the 1918 Flu Pandemic. 195,000 Americans died that October.

