

MY DEAR THEOPHILUS

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

While distanced by Covid, Christians around the world join together in prayer for unity. The ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18 to 25 January) is taking place against a backdrop of global lockdowns and restrictions on movement. The annual event is one of the largest annual prayer observances and is usually marked by churches of different denominations uniting in towns and cities across the world for seven days of joint prayer and worship services.

JANUARY: CHRISTMAS SEASON, NEW YEAR, EPIPHANY AND ORDINARY TIME ALL WRAPPED INTO ONE MONTH

Dear Parish Family:

January is a full liturgical month! While in the Christmas season still within the Twelve Days of Christmas; we usher in the New Year, move into Epiphany and then into Ordinary Time ever closer to Lent.

We greet each New Year with such anticipation and the hope of a new start. To be sure 2020 was a very difficult year for everyone. We greeted 2021 hoping that everything would be better. However, the problems of 2020 are still with us.

The liturgical year is a reminder that there are highs and there are lows in life. The liturgical year starts with the anticipation of the coming of Christ and we celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation, Christmas, with the birth of the Christ child.

At Epiphany, travelers from the East, Gentiles, come to visit Jesus and recognize him for who He is, the Messiah who comes to bring salvation to them too. It quickly turns dark as Herod, ever fearful of losing his power wants to kill the child Jesus, takes innocent life by executing baby boys.

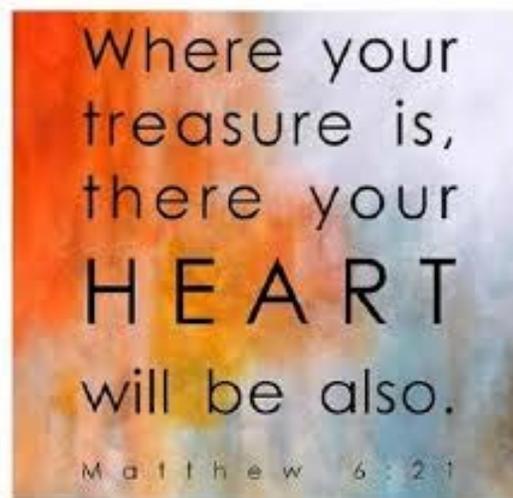
We immediately move into ordinary time with the Baptism of Jesus by John in the River Jordan, and Jesus' public ministry begins with the announcement that the Kingdom of God is at hand, so repent, turn your hearts and minds, and follow Jesus. And follow we will, into Lent, into the wilderness with Jesus for 40 days and 40 nights reminiscent of the Israelites wondering in the bad lands of the desert. Then into Holy Week and the crucifixion awaiting the Resurrection of Jesus.

Life has its high and low points, but one thing is constant—the presence of God in our lives at all times in the sure and constant hope of the Resurrection. You have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ—that is eternal.

Your servant in Christ,



The Rev. Chester J. Makowski, Rector



Christ tells us: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Mt. 6:21. Please remember the Parish for your annual pledge. This Parish is tremendously generous, but 2020 saw a marked

downturn in giving since we were not meeting to worship together and were live-streaming our worship services.

2021 St. Luke's Episcopal Church Pledge Card
In appreciation for God's blessings I/we pledge the following:

\$ _____ per week \$ _____ per month \$ _____ per year

Name(s): _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____



Please make all checks payable to St. Luke's Episcopal Church.
Please return by placing in the collection plate by January 17, 2021
Amazing things can happen when you offer your talents,
skills, experience, and financial support!

Bishop Doyle Approves Diocesan Episcopal Church Women Board's Resolution of Dissolution

Decision has no impact on local ECW Chapters including their formation, existence, or functioning

During the January meeting of the diocesan Episcopal Church Women (ECW) board, the body voted to dissolve itself during the 2021 year. This decision, by way of a Resolution of Dissolution- approved by the IX Bishop of Texas, the Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle- comes after thorough review of the board's purpose over the last several years. **This move however, does not in any way impact or change how local ECW chapters form, exist, or function within their congregations.** While the board has worked to restructure itself and redefine

its true purpose, it ultimately determined that there is no substantive need for its continued existence within the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

There is no required oversight from the diocesan board allowing local ECW chapters to form and become established, function autonomously, or even independently decide to dissolve. Most recently, while the diocesan board has served several purposes, its primary responsibility and most significant contribution has been limited to planning the annual meeting and retreat for all chapters. That event has realized declining attendance. The body agreed that such little contribution to the diocese does not constitute the purpose of a diocesan board.

Bishop Andy Doyle stated, “The diocesan Episcopal Church Women board has done exceptional work over the many years since its formation. Because it has completed its purpose so well, ECW chapters within the Episcopal Diocese of Texas are able to effectively perform their ministries within their congregations without guidance or leadership from the diocesan board. For this reason, I agree that the season for the board has come to an end, and I appreciate its tremendous contributions within the diocese.” The bishop also said that he appreciates and wholeheartedly supports the board’s decision.

Prior to its dissolution, the board shall dispose of its existing funds across several ministries and institutions within the diocese and will also appoint permanent trustees to administer its Vera Gang Scott Scholarship Fund for women, which will remain intact. Any additional funds will be given to the United Thank Offering.

For further information regarding this matter, please contact Tammy Lanier, the diocesan communications director, at tlanier@epicenter.org.



***FEATURED HOLY PERSON OF
THE MONTH
THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
January 25***

St. Paul the Apostle was the greatest of the early Christian missionaries. He first appears in the Acts of the Apostles under the name of Saul. Saul was raised in the Jewish faith as a Pharisee trained in the strict observance of God's Law. He believed the Law should be obeyed by himself and all Jews. Saul was upset by the early Christian Church, believing that the early Christians had broken away from their Jewish traditions. He actively persecuted the Church in Jerusalem. As the first Christian martyr Stephen was being stoned to death, Saul watched the cloaks of the persecutors (Acts 7:58).

Paul then traveled to Damascus to further persecute early Christians. On the road to Damascus Saul had an encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles 9:1–19, Galatians 1: 13–14). Jesus asked, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Paul replied, "Who are you, sir?" Jesus responded, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9: 4 – 5). Jesus then sent Saul into Damascus to wait for further instructions. Saul was shaken and blinded by the experience. When a Christian named Ananias came and baptized Saul, his blindness went away. As a result of this encounter Saul became a follower of Christ. He was now convinced that fellowship with the risen Jesus Christ, not the observance of the Law, was all that was needed to receive God's promise of salvation. (Galatians 1:11–12; 3:1–5)

Saul, whose name now became Paul, went to Jerusalem to consult with Peter (Galatians 1: 18). After his first missionary journeys, Paul was called by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. He spent the rest of his life journeying on his missions, establishing local churches, and writing to them when he heard of their accomplishments and failures. Paul's letters are the earliest records of the life and history of the early Church. As inspired by the Holy Spirit Paul's letters are part of the Canon of the New Testament. As a record of the happenings in the early Church

for them and offer help as appropriate. It's also important to remember that there is no single way to offer help, because everyone is unique and has their own story. Here are some do's and don'ts from the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) curriculum to help you have a supportive conversation with a friend or loved one:

1. **Don't force someone to talk.** There's not going to be a one-size-fits-all solution, and you may have to have more than one conversation. That's OK! Let the other person go at their own pace.
2. **Acknowledge changes cause by the pandemic.** This seems intuitive, but acknowledging that this event is having wide-reaching effects is the first step to accepting that things have changed. It can be hard to accept that the "normal" we once knew is still on hold and adjusting may be difficult for some. It's also typical to feel anxious, stressed or angry. Try talking about these emotions and letting the other person vent if they need to.
3. **Listen and communicate without judgement.** When someone opens up to you about how the pandemic has impacted them, remain calm and patient. How they react to change is personal, and it's important that you genuinely listen.
4. **Don't interrupt.** Ask questions and pay attention to their tone when they speak – a little [empathy](#) can go a long way.
5. **Discuss coping strategies.** Ask the person how they would like to be helped. Self-care is always a great place to start, so ask if they have an activity or hobby they like to do. It can also be helpful to encourage them to take a break to relax, avoid technology, and discourage unhealthy coping mechanisms like substance use.
6. **Accept their experience.** Reactions to stress are as unique as the people who experience them.

7. **Share resources.** You may not be able to personally offer someone the help they need, and that's OK. Keep a list of local and national mental health resources handy so you can share that information when appropriate. [Here](#) is a list of national resources to help you get started.
8. **Encourage professional help.** If you notice someone you know is having a harder time coping, encourage help from a mental health professional. Many providers are offering telehealth services to make access to care easier while complying with physical distancing guidelines, and local resources like community centers may be offering mental health programs, classes and support groups to help.

These tips are a great place to start when offering support, but here's one more: Keep your mental health in mind, too. Your well-being matters, so take care of yourself first. For more tips and resources to support loved ones during this challenging time, take a [Mental Health First Aid course](#) and check out our other [blogs](#) to help you #BeTheDifference for those around you as we all continue to cope with changes COVID-19 has caused.



HOSPITAL VISITS

Given COVID-19, visitations are restricted by hospitals. Nevertheless, if you know of anyone who needs a home visit because they cannot get to Church, please call the Parish Office, or let Fr. Makowski know. We will see if the hospital will allow Fr. Makowski to call on them. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call Fr. Makowski at 713.299.7675.

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER

Praying is something that we all can do, young and old, rich and poor, tall and short. Please pray for everyone in our Parish, those who have asked you to pray for them and especially those who have no one to pray for them.



PLEASE BRING PORK & BEANS FOR MANNAFEST



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

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NOTICE

PURSUANT TO SECTION 30.07, PENAL CODE (TRESPASS BY LICENSE HOLDER WITH AN OPENLY CARRIED HANDGUN), A PERSON LICENSED UNDER SUBCHAPTER H, CHAPTER 411, GOVERNMENT CODE (HANDGUN LICENSING LAW), MAY NOT ENTER THIS PROPERTY WITH A HANDGUN THAT IS CARRIED OPENLY.

CONFORME A LA SECCIÓN 30.07, DEL CÓDIGO PENAL (TRASPASE POR PORTADOR DE LICENCIA PARA EL LIBRE PORTE DE ARMAS DE FUEGO), PERSONAS CON LICENCIA BAJO AUTORIDAD DEL SUBCAPÍTULO H, CAPÍTULO 411, DEL CÓDIGO DE GOBIERNO (LEY REGULADORA DE ARMAS DE FUEGO), NO DEBERÁ ENTRAR A ESTA PROPIEDAD CON UN ARMA DE FUEGO A LIBRE PORTE.

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CONFORME A LA SECCIÓN 30.06, DEL CÓDIGO PENAL (TRASPASE POR PORTADOR DE LICENCIA CON UN ARMA DE FUEGO OCULTO), PERSONAS CON LICENCIA BAJO AUTORIDAD DEL SUBCAPÍTULO H, CAPÍTULO 411, DEL CÓDIGO DE GOBIERNO (LEY REGULADORA DE ARMAS DE FUEGO), NO DEBERÁ ENTRAR A ESTA PROPIEDAD PORTANDO UN ARMA DE FUEGO OCULTO.