

# MY DEAR THEOPHILUS

VOLUME 4 / ISSUE 3 (MARCH 2020)

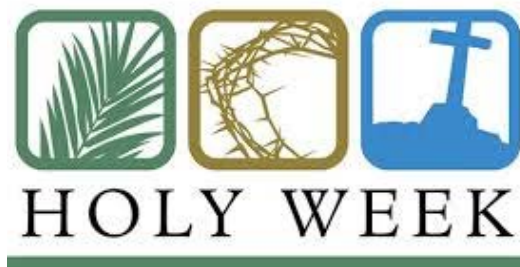
## NEWS FROM AROUND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

### Covid-19 forces Lambeth Conference organisers to rescheduled decennial gathering to 2021

The once-a-decade gathering of the bishops of the Anglican Communion, which was to be held in Canterbury, Kent, in July and August this year, has been postponed until 2021.

### Anglican Alliance consults churches and agencies on Coronavirus response

Anglican churches and mission agencies took part in a conference call to share experience of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Dear Parish Family:

What an extraordinary Lenten season this has turned out to be! Everything started out in the usual manner with the traditional Ash Wednesday liturgy. We began our Lenten Program for 2020, *Welcome the Stranger*, with Fr. Peter Funk, OSB and Br. Michael Gallagher, OSB. The Rev. Debbie Daigle celebrated Eucharist and was our speaker for the second in the series. By the Third Sunday in Lent, we along with the entire Diocese, were gathering together “virtually” on Facebook! Within a few days after that, every church in the nation was doing the same thing.

In the blink of an eye, in an instant, everything has changed. Well, almost everything.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul wrote: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be

able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:38-39. God and his love for you as expressed in and through Jesus Christ, my friends, never changes.

For the Apostles everything seemed to be going so well as they were heading to Jerusalem for the Passover. Our own St. Luke writes: “after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, ‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!’” Lk. 19:35-38. The crowd proclaims that Jesus is King! The Apostles were riding high! What could possibly go wrong? But in an instant, things seemingly did go so very wrong.

On Thursday, it was the first day of Passover, the remembrance of Israel being freed from slavery in Egypt when the angel of death passed over the homes of the Israelites that had lambs’ blood over the doors. Jesus shares the Passover meal with his friends, but when it happens the Apostles are not quite sure what to make of it. St. Mark tells us: “While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.’ They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, ‘Surely you don’t mean me?’ ‘It is one of the Twelve,’ Jesus he replied, ‘one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.’ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,’ he said to them. ‘Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’” Mk. 14:18-25. What? Betrayal? Eat my body, drink my blood? Why is he talking like this? Doesn’t Jesus remember how the crowds welcomed him? This is crazy talk!

Jesus then goes off to pray. St. Mark tells us: “They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them. ‘Stay here and keep watch.’ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Simon,’ he said to Peter, ‘are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.’ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. Returning the third time, he said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!’” Mk. 14:32-42.

And so Jesus is handed over to be tried by the Sanhedrin and by the Romans. The power of empire cynically asks, “What is truth?” and “Don’t you know that I have the power to crucify you?” The religious authorities cry out, “We have no King but Caesar!” The people scream, “Crucify him; crucify him!” Jesus is sentenced to death and crucified with the inscription over his head, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” The triumphal entry into Jerusalem less than a week before ends in a humiliating and painful death, the death of a condemned criminal. So Israel’s King dies. Jesus dies nailed to a cross. In an instant, it all seems to be over. Not only in Jesus’ life over, but so are the Apostles’ lives. All of their hopes and dreams that the Messiah had indeed come are now dashed. Now that Jesus is dead, they will be hunted down and killed too.

By his death, Jesus took onto himself all that evil could do. Evil had done its worst to the Word made flesh and God among us, by taking the life of Jesus.

But God is the God of the living. Death cannot hold Jesus in the tomb. The love between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit, raised Jesus to new life as the first born of all creation initiating the Kingdom of God! With St. Paul we can cry out: “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” 1 Cor. 15:54-58.

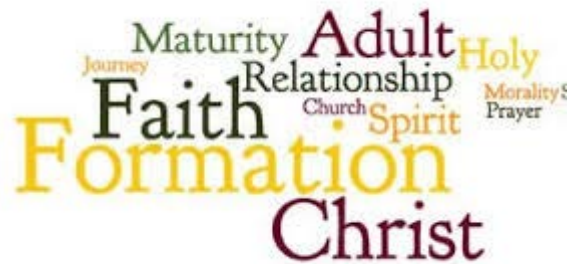
Holy Week is a living reminder that God’s love overcomes all things, even death itself, and that when we feel helpless and hopeless, when we encounter what seem to be countless minor deaths, when all seems lost, God takes death and conquers it. You and I are a resurrection people! No matter what happens, we are God’s own who have been baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection. We are raised to new life with Christ and in Christ for eternity.

Remember that this Holy Week.

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Chester J. Makowski, Rector





## ***ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION*** **by Wes Amason**

### **Adult Ed in Exile**

At the beginning of the year we started a study of the gospel John using N.T. Wright's *For Everyone* series. As recent events have resulted in the suspension of public worship services, the Church has had to find creative ways to worship as a congregation at distance. Inspired by the Reverend Makowski's online services, we have moved to a similar format for Adult Ed. We are currently using a Facebook page named Adult Ed. Anyone who is interested in participating in this can contact Wes Amason via Facebook, text/phone: 936-239-6249, email: [wamason1968@aol.com](mailto:wamason1968@aol.com).

### **Fear Not**

In his 1933 presidential inaugural address Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke the famous words:

"...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Consider the historical context in which these words were spoken. A few years earlier the world economy had collapsed, Hitler was already chancellor of Germany, Stalin was well established in Russia, Mussolini was taking control of Italy, and Imperial Japan had been asserting itself for some time. In less than a decade the world was going to endure the most destructive war in history. So whatever President Roosevelt meant, he did not mean that the world was a safe place. We have tendency to equate absence of fear with

safety. When the character Mr. Beaver in C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia describes Aslan (the Christ figure) he says:

"Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

The good King doesn't come to us and say that we will have no suffering or grief in this life. He actually says the opposite when he tells his disciples:

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Christ speaks these words as he himself is about to endure the cross. It is through the cross that he overcomes the world. The cross was the instrument of terror that the worldly empire used to establish and maintain its rule. In words of Buffalo Springfield:

"You step out of line and the man come and take you away."

In other words, be afraid of the powers that be or you will suffer and die. Rome made good on that promise many times when rebels challenged her authority. The great irony of history is that Christ conquered the powers that be and established his Kingdom through the means of the cross as well. Not as an instrument of terror to keep us in line, but by enduring the cross on our behalf to rescue us from this present evil age. May we hear the good King's words spoken to John in the apocalypse:

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive forever more, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."





***MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE MONTHLY REPORT – MARCH 2020  
BY GEORGE WOOD***

Scheduling for Mental Health First Aid (“MHFA”) training courses was initiated for the second and third quarter classes for the Adult Probation Department. At this time it is unknown when we will be able to resume these classes since the Episcopal Health Foundation has put all of the MHFA classes on hold.

A Meet-and-Greet dinner was held with candidates for the LIVE STRONG group. LIVE STRONG is the support group being led by Jo Mink and Jay Potter for selected participants recommended by the probation department. The first LIVE STRONG group meeting had been scheduled for March 17, but was postponed until further noticed. The probation department and the candidates are excited about the potential benefit of LIVE STRONG.

Two team members were scheduled to take a four day training class in late March at the Hope and Healing Center and Institute at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church (“HHCI”) in Houston to become Mental Health Peer Coaches. The class was postponed since the HHCI was closed for two weeks.

**ALTHOUGH THIS IS A FIRST FOR US, THIS IS NOT  
THE FIRST TIME FOR OUR NATION OR THE WORLD:  
THE 1918 FLU PANDEMIC**



What follows is an article from the Living Church's archives from 1918 with an introduction in the March 2020 edition in *italics* with a concluding comment from Fr. Chester in ***bold italics***:

From the Archives

*In the 1918 flu pandemic, St. Louis, by acting immediately to suspend public gatherings, was able to “flatten the curve” and limit the spread of infection. Philadelphia, which allowed a major parade to take place on September 28, saw a rapid spread of the disease in the weeks afterwards, resulting in the highest death toll for any major American city. The epidemic reached its height in Philadelphia during the week of October 19, when 4,500 people died, a rate of approximately 250 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.*

*The following excerpt from the October 26, 1918 issue of The Living Church reflects resistance by some Philadelphia clergy to the canceling of public worship.*

**Strong Protest Signed by Twenty-Two — Death of the Rev. Edward S. Hale**

The Living Church News Bureau, Philadelphia, October 21, 1918



Official reports indicate that the influenza epidemic has been the cause of more than 10,000 deaths in the state of Pennsylvania during the first half of this month. Philadelphia alone reported 711 deaths in one day recently, most of which were due to influenza, and undertakers were busy burying the dead first and applying for burial permits afterward. The clergy in many cases went to the cemeteries to perform the last sad rites of the Church, to find the graves undug or only partly dug, and the feelings of the mourners can better be imagined than described. However the unselfish devotion of the doctors and the nurses, and the work of volunteer agencies, coupled with the measures taken by the health authorities to combat the disease, have at last brought about a decline in the death rate and the epidemic is on the wane.

Public services in the churches are still prohibited except for small groups of people. Some of the clergy, while availing themselves of this concession, desired to go on record as opposed to closing the churches and limiting the number of worshippers, believing there never was a time when public prayer and supplication were more necessary on the part of all the people. A remonstrance to this effect, prepared by the Rev. Dr. Tomkins, rector of Holy Trinity Church, was signed by twenty-two of the clergy at a special meeting in the Church House last week. The protest was given to the public press, and a copy was sent to Dr. Krusen, director of health and charities.

It read as follows: "We, the undersigned clergymen of the Episcopal Church in the diocese of Pennsylvania, do hereby protest against the closing of all the churches and the suspension of public worship because of the prevailing epidemic. We recognize fully the seriousness of the situation, and we are doing all we can to help the sufferers and to prevent the spread of the disease. But we believe that such a trouble calls for renewed and redoubled public prayer and worship. ...

"None can deny," writes John Fiske, "that religion is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth." Religion bids us appeal to God at all times, and that not only privately, but by public prayer in church. Such has everywhere been the custom for centuries. And people, even those who are not professing Christians, expect it. They look to us as ministers of God to lead them in public supplication. A prominent physician writes:

“Many of the faithful looked that a way might be found to evade the regulation of the board of health, and that an opportunity might be offered those who valued their Christian privileges to approach the altar.’

“A layman writes: ‘Thousands of laymen have wondered, hurt and baffled, as to why a protest was not sent long ago by the clergymen of Philadelphia, at the time when sympathy, love, and power of our Heavenly Father need more than ever to be brought to a stricken people.’

“And another writes: ‘To close the churches and deprive the people of the Sacraments is worse than a blunder.’

“These are only suggestions of a widespread feeling that now is the especial time when our churches should call the people together for worship, strength, and prayer.

“The argument that people can pray in private, as well as in public, is the old and well-worn argument against all churchgoing. From the earliest days, even amongst the Jews, the people were bidden to come together and pray. The Christian Church has made public worship a part of her life as taught by the Master, and special prayers are placed in our Prayer Book to be used ‘in time of great sickness and mortality’.

“With due respect for those in civil authority, we believe that it is inconsistent to close churches and yet allow people to crowd together in cars and stores. ‘Business must go on,’ it is argued. But business is suspended by law on Sunday. And besides, in such a time of suffering and peril it is more important to pray to God, all the people being called together for that purpose, than to carry on business. Moreover, there is far less danger in a church, where people gather to pray for an hour or so, than in a crowded place where the people throng all through the day. But, more than that, we believe that God will care for His people when, in obedience to His will, they meet to plead with Him for deliverance from evil, to confess their sins, and to go to His altar in remembrance of Christ’s death and in accord with His command.

“We make this protest, not as declaring our intention to defy the ruling of the board of health, but to assure the people under our care, and the Christian people of Philadelphia, that we suspend our services unwillingly, and that we believe such a ruling is wrong.”

## A VICTIM OF THE EPIDEMIC

On Thursday, October 17th, occurred the death of the Rev. Edward Stuart Hale, one of the younger clergy of the diocese and rector of St. Stephen's Church, Manayunk, to which he was called in 1912. Death was due to pneumonia following an attack of influenza. He was an ideal pastor of his people, and he may have contracted the disease through his devoted attention to the sick and the dying. Interment was at St. David's churchyard, on Monday, October 21st.

***In view of the above, the actions taken by all of the Churches in March of 2020 during the COVID-19 situation restricting gatherings for public worship is not only necessary, but wise in the light of history. Given the technology, in our day we can "gather" via the internet to worship God and to pray for the nation and the world. Our forefathers 102 years ago made it through by the grace of God, and we will too! CJM+***



Dear Parish of St. Luke's:

We are living in very unusual times, but the Parish of St. Luke's continues to function as an integral part of our community. Please except this communication as an update on matters that are underway at St. Luke's.

First, we have accepted the bid of WESCO and Mr. Wesley Smith to renovate the sacristy, and bring it up to date and up to code. Our Altar Guild has operated for too long with substandard conditions, and this renovation will help considerably in all operations of our sanctuary. As soon as the

Coronavirus situation subsides, the contractor will begin making the necessary changes. We are looking forward to having this much needed renovation completed.

Second, we are very near the point where all of the bidding is complete on changes to the landscape surrounding our church. Our landscape committee has worked to solicit bids from various professional landscape groups in the area, and we are hopeful that we can “let” a contract for landscaping the church in the near future. We are much appreciative of all of the work done by members of the landscape committee, and we will be letting everyone know of the changes to be made, and when we can expect the completion of the contract.

Third, the Vestry has recently brought back a program where all members of the Parish are called by other members of the Parish so that we can “check in” with everyone to see if there are any needs from our fellow members. The program has received some nice compliments, but we want to hear from those that we may have missed (I believe that we attempted calling everyone). More important is that we want to hear from anyone if they have needs from us. We take this very seriously as we feel all of us collectively are “the body of Christ”, one team, one heartbeat. Let us know if you have any requests or any needs from St. Luke’s.

Fourth, a special thanks goes out to our Office Manager, Janette Holt. She has been a real “trooper” through these uncertain times, and has continued to work at various times to make sure that the business of the Parish is getting done. If you have a tithe or offering payment, call Janette to make sure that she is in the office before coming by. And the United States mail is still working if you would like to send the offering by mail.

Last, just a note from your Vestry. This national emergency has been difficult on all. Fears related to health and economic welfare can be scary, especially when loneliness is part of the condition. But have faith that “this too shall pass”. Make it a special point to worship with all of us at 10:30 Sunday morning by streaming the video\* of Father Chester in our sanctuary. Believe me, it will fill your heart with the joy of knowing that all of your friends are in attendance as is Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.)

See you Sunday via the internet!

Best Regards!

The Vestry

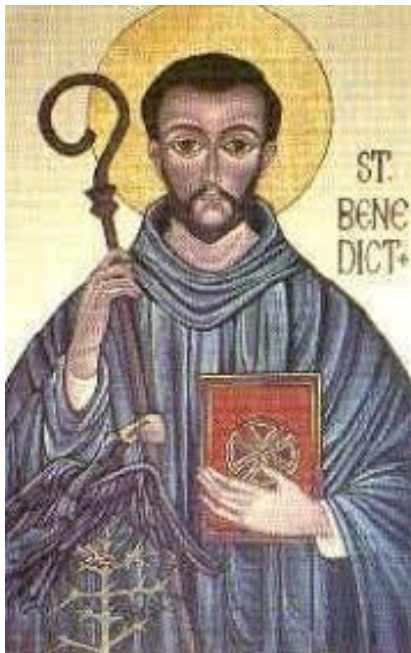
Charlie Tyler, Senior Warden

Carla Gore

Flo Cruz

Thelma Barry

Jim Lynn



***FEATURED HOLY PERSON OF  
THE MONTH  
BENEDICT OF NURSIA  
MARCH 21***

***By James Kiefer***

Benedict was born at Nursia (Norcia) in Umbria, Italy, around 480 AD. He was sent to Rome for his studies, but was repelled by the dissolute life of most of the populace, and withdrew to a solitary life at Subiaco. A group of monks asked him to be their abbot, but some of them found his rule too strict, and he returned alone to Subiaco. Again, other monks called him to be their abbot, and he agreed, founding twelve communities over an interval of some years. His chief founding was Monte Cassino, an abbey which stands to this day as the mother house of the world-wide Benedictine order.

Totila the Goth visited Benedict, and was so awed by his presence that he fell on his face before him. Benedict raised him from the ground and rebuked him for his cruelty, telling him that it was time that his iniquities should cease. Totila asked Benedict to remember him in his prayers and departed, to exhibit from that time an astonishing clemency and chivalry in his treatment of conquered peoples.



Benedict drew up a rule of life for monastics, a rule which he calls “a school of the Lord’s service, in which we hope to order nothing harsh or rigorous.” The Rule gives instructions for how the monastic community is to be organized, and how the monks are to spend their time. An average day includes about four hours to be spent in liturgical prayer (called the *Divinum Officium* -- the Divine Office), five hours in spiritual reading and study, six hours of labor, one hour for eating, and about eight hours for sleep. The Book of Psalms is to be recited in its entirety every week as a part of the Office.

A Benedictine monk takes vows of “obedience, stability, and conversion of life.” That is, he vows to live in accordance with the Benedictine Rule, not to leave his community without grave cause, and to seek to follow the teaching and example of Christ in all things. Normal procedure today for a prospective monk is to spend a week or more at the monastery as a visitor. He then applies as a postulant, and agrees not to leave for six months without the consent of the Abbot. (During that time, he may suspect that he has made a mistake, and the abbot may say, “Yes, I think you have. Go in peace.” Alternately, he may say, “It is normal to have jitters at this stage. I urge you to stick it out a while longer and see whether they go away.” Many postulants leave before the six months are up.) After six months, he may leave or become a novice, with vows for one year. After the year, he may leave or take vows for three more years. After three years, he may leave, take life vows, or take vows for a second three years. After that, a third three years. After that,

he must leave or take life vows (fish or cut bait). Thus, he takes life vows after four and a half to ten and a half years in the monastery. At any point in the proceedings at which he has the option of leaving, the community has the option of dismissing him.

The effect of the monastic movement, both of the Benedictine order and of similar orders that grew out of it, has been enormous. We owe the preservation of the Holy Scriptures and other ancient writings in large measure to the patience and diligence of monastic scribes. In purely secular terms, their contribution was considerable. In Benedict's time, the chief source of power was muscle, whether human or animal. Ancient scholars apparently did not worry about labor-saving devices. The labor could always be



done by oxen or slaves. But monks were both scholars and workers. A monk, after spending a few hours doing some laborious task by hand, was likely to think, "There must be a better way of doing this." The result was the systematic development of windmills and water wheels for grinding grain, sawing wood, pumping water, and so on. The rotation of crops (including legumes) and other agricultural advances were also originated or promoted by monastic farms. The monks, by their example, taught the dignity of labor and the importance of order and planning. For details, see *The Mediaeval Machine: The Industrial Revolution of the Middle Age*, by Jean Gimpel, (Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1976; Penguin, 1977, ISBN 0-14-00-4514-7).

Fr. Peter Funk, OSB and Br. Michael Gallagher, OSB are members of the order that St. Benedict founded.

Let us pray: Everlasting God, we give you thanks for the purity and humility with which you endowed your servant Benedict: Grant us grace, in union with his example and prayers, to hallow and conform our souls and bodies to the purpose of your most holy will; through Christ our Lord.





***PLEASE LET US KNOW IF SOMEONE NEEDS A HOME VISIT***

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. Either Fr. Makowski or one of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors will 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 on our Prayer List.



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

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***ONCE WE ALL GET TOGETHER AGAIN, PLEASE  
BRING PORK & BEANS FOR MANNAFEST!***



## 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.

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