

WELCOME TO ST. MARY'S

ST. MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, FAITHFULLY ANGLICAN SINCE 2012

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

DECEMBER 1, 2020

Sharing the Good News

Important December Dates: There is so much of importance going on at St. Mary's this month. Please add the following to your calendars:

Wednesday, December 2: 10 am Church Council meeting

11:30 am Midday Prayer on Facebook Live

Sunday, December 6: 10:30 am Advent II Eucharist at church and on line. **Food Pantry Sunday**

Sunday, December 13: 10:30 am Advent III Eucharist at church and on line

Sunday, December 20: 10:30 am Advent IV Eucharist at church and on line

Please plan on staying for a little time after church to decorate the church for Christmas.

Thursday, December 24: 10 pm Christmas Mass

Sunday, December 27: 10:30 am Christmas I Eucharist at church and on line

Here are some important news items:

1.) A reminder regarding our live-streaming of

services: This is a way for us to practice evangelism and to spread our love for Christ throughout the world. (really).

In order to make this happen more easily, ***I would ask you to become silent when I come behind the altar because any remarks made lead to hours of editing trying to remove them.*** Likewise, please remain silent for 10

seconds after the dismissal giving time for the camera to be turned off. Thank you.

2.) Food Pantry Sunday – The first Sunday of every month is Food Pantry Sunday, and as such it is time for our

FR. TOM'S SCHEDULE

Sunday

10:30 AM – Mass

Wednesday

Office hours 10 to 1 PM

1st Wednesday – 10 AM.

Church council mtg.

Thursday My visits to

SouthPark have once

again been curtailed.

Contact information

Cell/text.– 309-798-0739

Personal Email -

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Like us on Facebook

stmarysanglicanchatham

Visit our webpage at

saintmaryanglican.org

We're on Instagram at

st.marys.anglican

Please like us on YouTube

Join us at 122 W. Walnut in

Chatham, IL

donations to the Chatham Food Pantry. If you forget your food donations, you can make a donation in the Outreach jar on the welcome table next to the door and the money will go to the Food Pantry. Did you know that, in addition to providing food for the needy that the Chatham Food Pantry also provides guidance to the families that they serve on how to best use the food items that they distribute?

- 3.) **Operation Christmas Child** – On Tuesday, Nov. 17, Sylvia and I delivered our 12 boxes to Harvard Park Baptist Church in Springfield. Unfortunately, our donations were down this year. One of the reasons for this decrease was the lack of participation from our friends at Holly Brook and South Park. **HOWEVER**, did you know that you can use any shoebox? And that you can fill up boxes all year long?
- 4.) With the recent surge in **COVID** cases, I think it is best if we postpone our Bible Study for awhile longer. However, we will continue in-person services with all necessary precautions. Our attendance numbers never exceed 10, and as long as we exercise caution, not coming to church when we are ill, we will be fine. Here is a letter from the Bishop on the subject dated November 20.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pax!

In recent days we have received many inquiries asking whether the Diocese of Quincy is issuing new guidance regarding assembling for worship in person and reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. These inquiries are occasioned in part from the State of Illinois' announcement of moving to Tier 3 and also by news about the increasing spread of the Coronavirus in Illinois and nationally. We have also continued to hear of isolated cases of individuals in our churches contracting the virus and of course we are lifting these individuals up in prayer. We are thankful to God for the relatively small number of cases in our churches. We have been informed of a few deaths from Covid. While we are thankful that the number is small, every death is significant and an occasion for both sorrow over the loss of a beloved member of our church family and rejoicing over their entry into the nearer presence of their Savior Jesus Christ.

Back in March I established a Coronavirus Task Force which has provided valuable counsel as we have lived through this pandemic to date. The task force has MD's, an attorney, clergy and laity. I recently added a priest with a spouse who tested positive for Covid to give us additional insight. I convened a meeting of the task force Thursday night. These are some points I shared with them--

- From the outset I have not felt that the federal state or local government had authority to direct what we do in our churches. At the same time I am mindful of Jesus' direction to be subject to governmental authorities. What we have done from the beginning has been what I thought best with input from you and others. My focus as shepherd has been protecting the shepherds and the sheep-- both our clergy and our laity.
- Most of our churches have been meeting in person since May 31. Thanks be to God we're unaware of any outbreaks as a result of gathering in person. This suggests that our precautions have been effective so far in spite of the country and Illinois in particular going through a couple of spikes in cases.
- As I have continued to pray and listen to both God and clergy and the laity I am concluding that we are in different states and different locations within states. Our congregations have different demographics some older, some younger, many mixed. I am sensing that one size or one solution doesn't fit all.

- The person in the best position to assess what is best for a particular church is that church's rector or vicar. He knows the circumstances of his state's directives, the incidence of the virus in his local community and the makeup of his particular members.
- My inclination then is to ask each priest to pray and discuss in-person meeting with his vestry or bishop's committee. I don't intend to recommend a vote because I think each shepherd has to decide as I do what is best. But input is good. I want to ask each priest to email me his intentions for his church. 1.) **If he wants to continue gathering in person with live streaming for those most at risk he may do so.** If he feels in person worship should stop for a time he will have my full support.
- I intend to send out direction to remind everyone what the recommendations are for in-person worship—2.) **taking temperatures, masks required, social distancing, availability and use of hand sanitizer.** Communion in one kind unless 3.) **individual cups are used.** Health officials have said Covid fatigue has resulted in some becoming less vigilant about practices designed to prevent the spread of the virus. We must remain vigilant.
- I think the concern about family gatherings over the holidays is valid, but I don't believe we should be telling people what to do in their families. I intend to suggest priests encourage families to discuss whether they want to gather. It's up to each family to decide.
- Finally I intend to include in our guidance that clergy and lay leaders be prepared to respond quickly and cease in person worship if there is an outbreak of positive tests in a particular congregation.

We had a very good conversation. There was a clear consensus that we should rely on the rector/vicar to make the best decision for his people. So I am asking each rector/vicar to meet with his vestry/bishop's committee and discuss continuing to meet in person or going back to live streaming or other form of on-line worship. I would ask each rector or vicar to email me at bp9morales@gmail.com with their decision regarding in-person worship and any details they want to offer.

I'll be praying for you.

In Christ Jesus,

+BP J. Alberto Morales, OSB, DD
Quincy IX

My thoughts on the highlighted parts of the Bishop's letter:

- 1.) **We will continue to meet in person. Those who are concerned or feeling ill can watch from home.**
 - 2.) **We are already doing these things. We now have a hands free hand sanitizer dispenser as well as 4-ply masks and nitrile gloves available at the welcome table near the front door.**
 - 3.) **We do have individual, disposable communion cups to make it possible for everyone to share in both elements of the Eucharist. You'll need to let me know your choice before the service starts.**
- 5.) December offerings –** December is the last month that donation checks to the church need to be made out to "The Diocese of Quincy". Beginning January 1, 2021, checks will be made out to "St. Mary's Anglican Mission" and will be deposited locally in a more timely manner. Thank you for your faithful support of your church.

6.) Face Guards: I have ordered 10 face guards for us to use at church. There are a few of them under the altar table and more of them in my office. These will offer relief to those who are tired of wearing masks.

7.) Diocesan Award – St. Mary's has received a special reward from the Diocese, the St. Barnabas Award. This award has been framed and hung in the Parish Center. Please check it out if you haven't seen it yet.

Since the Bishop has asked that one person do all the readings each week, our **lector** schedule for the month of December will be:

December 6 – Diane

December 13 - Kathy

December 20 - Elisabeth

December 27 – Sylvia

On Christmas Eve, we will vary from this in order to give everyone a chance to participate.

OT - Sylvia

Psalm - Diane

NT - Kathy

Prayers - Elisabeth

If you cannot be present on your Sunday, could you please notify a substitute?

Board Meeting: St. Mary's advisory board will meet Wed., December 2, at 10 am in the Parish Center. Please note that, due to COVID-19 concerns, this meeting is open only to the three members of the advisory board.

Thoughts from the Vicar: As you have probably noticed, things look a little different at church now that we have begun the season of Advent and the new church year. For the time being, at least, our lectionary has changed from Matthew to Mark. The Gloria is omitted from the service until Christmas at which time it will be said again. You've also noticed the Advent wreath. The four candles stand for the four Sundays of Advent. The first candle is hope, the second is peace, the third (pink) is joy and the fourth is love. We begin each service with the candle lighting. At Christmas, we will light the large white Christ candle. You have also noticed the wreath on the wall. As has been our tradition in past years, we will add a blue or pink ribbon for each Sunday of the Advent season, which will change to a red ribbon on Christmas.

Another local tradition is the empty manger which awaits Mary and Joseph as they travel closer each week beginning at the back of the church.

Advent is not only a season to await the birth of Jesus, but it also the season when we look forward to His Second Coming. You may have noticed from the lessons of the past few weeks that the focus has been on this part of Advent. Whereas we know exactly when we will rejoice at Jesus' birth, we have no idea about when he will come again, so we must be sure that our wicks are trimmed and that we have plenty of oil, like the five wise bridesmaids.

We have 2 birthdays and 2 anniversaries in our church family this month: Birthdays: Fr. Tom (4) and Kathy (16); **Anniversaries:** Debbie and Kevin Brown (7) Tressie and David Kemp (16).

Could you please check over the prayer list below and let Fr. Tom know if there is anyone who needs to be added (or removed)?

Parish Prayer List

For Foley our Archbishop, for Alberto, our Bishop, for Tom, our Priest, and for Deacon Tom

For those fighting cancer: Jody, David, Alan, Sherry, Penny, Doug, Debbie and Archbishop Ben Kwami

For those in need of uplifting prayer: Father Larson, Bruce, Bonnie, Jerry, Donna, Jonas, Allan, Kathy J., Karl, Michael, Jim, Lois, Smitty, Russ, Melinda, Sara, Joan, Danielle, Debbie, Kevin, Naomi, Rachel, Frankie, Kar Lama Tamang, Gary, Kathy, Matt, Laurie, Julie Dazz and her husband

For those in long term care: Grace, Carol, Marilyn, the residents at Holly Brook and South Park

For the Church's ministry in Nepal: Mahendra, Dipendra, , Reshma, Tirtha, Purna, their families and Churches; the pastors, and the Transformation Spiritual Church

For the growth of St. Mary's Anglican Mission and St. Peter's Canton

And speaking of prayers, here are a couple that you might want to include in your daily prayers:

IN THE TIME OF ANY COMMON PLAGUE OR SICKNESS

O Almighty God, who in your wrath sent a plague upon your own people in the wilderness for their obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron, and also in the time of King David, sent a plague of pestilence which killed seventy thousand, but remembering your mercy spared the rest: have pity upon us miserable sinners, who now are visited with great sickness and mortality; and in the same way that you then accepted an atonement and commanded the destroying Angel to cease from punishing: so it may now please you to withdraw from us this plague and grievous sickness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, 1662 (ENGLAND)

IN TIMES OF SOCIAL CONFLICT OR UNREST

Increase, O God, the spirit of neighborliness among us, that in peril we may uphold one another, in suffering tend to one another, and in homelessness, loneliness, or exile befriend one another. Grant us brave and enduring hearts that we may strengthen one another, until the disciplines and testing of these days are ended, and you again give peace in our time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#44, BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (2019)

If by chance you are reading our newsletter for the first time and wish to receive it on a regular basis, please send me an email at the my personal email address on the first page so I can send it to you directly to you next month.
