



The Episcopal  
Diocese of Albany

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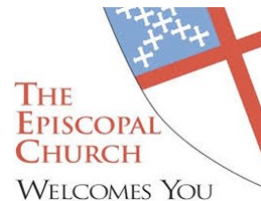
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TO:

## St. Philip's Episcopal Church



The Rev. Kathryn M. Boswell,  
Rector and Priest

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## CommonLife

April—May 2020 Volume 10 Issue 1

### *Welcoming the weary, dedicated to discipleship*

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-

Dear brothers and sisters,

If I gave you a box of crayons and a sheet of paper and asked you to draw a picture of the Church, what would you draw? Some of you would draw our red brick building, our bell tower and our bright red, welcoming doors, with our twin roofs spanning a sanctuary for worship and a hall for food and hospitality. Some of you might draw the Church from the inside, the dark wood of the ceiling beams arching over the pews where we sit every Sunday, the altar hung with the colors of the season. You might draw the candles lit and glowing. You might draw bright flowers on the altar (this is your picture, after all, so the Lenten prohibition about flowers need not apply!) What would your drawing look like?

I ask that question, because these days Church isn't looking quite like we have always thought Church should look. These days the bright red doors of our beautiful building are closed and locked. The candles are not lit – except for the sanctuary light by the aumbry, shining its light on the corner where the Blessed Sacrament waits for us. The pews are empty. The kitchen and Parish Hall are quiet and bare.

And yet, the Church isn't sleeping. It hasn't gone into hiding at all. Here, in this strange time of pandemic and stay-at-home orders and social distancing, the Church is alive and well. In fact, it seems to me, the Church is finding some exciting and creative new ways to be the Church. Because, as we knew all along, but so often forget, the Church isn't bricks and pews and candles and folding tables. It never was. The Church is all of the faithful people, gathered in the name of Christ, who make that building a holy place.

These days we are not able to gather in one place physically, and that has been very hard, along with so many hard things we are facing. But we are learning how to gather in other ways. We aren't giving in, and we aren't giving up. Instead, we are reaching out. We're finding technology, that beast we have so often grumbled about, something we can put to good use. We are calling one another, keeping in touch, checking in with those who are alone. We are using Facebook, the ultimate Beast, to pray together in the morning and before we sleep at night. We are carrying on our Bible study by email (still working out the kinks in that one.) We are sharing Holy Eucharist with our Bishop on Sunday morning. And, if you wish, you are still able to listen to (or read) my weekly sermon on our website.

Some of these new practices might be things we will hold onto just until we are joyfully back in our old building again, back to "normal" life. But we might consider if God is using this time to enlarge his Church in some ways. There are people praying Morning Prayer and Compline with us who live far away, people who rarely if ever enter a church building. Many of you are reaching out to one another in a more active way than you have before, as we wait for this crisis to end. And when it does end, it might be that the Church has – it may be that we have – changed a little, maybe for the better. It may be that we have grown a little bigger and a little brighter and a little saltier – who knows?

May the love of God shine brightly in each and every one of you,  
Kathryn+

## *Palm Sunday 2020*

For those of you who are praying Morning Prayer along with me, I will include the service for Blessing the Palms on Sunday morning April 5. And I hope to be able to deliver blessed palms to each of your doors, as we lay our hearts down before our Lord and prepare to enter the week of his Passion.



## *Holy Week 2020*

Obviously, Holy Week 2020 will not be like any other Holy Week we have ever experienced. But that doesn't mean we will let it go by without our solemn observance of the Passion and Death of our Lord. As I have offered Morning Prayer and Compline on Facebook each day, **I will be offering services of Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday during Holy week. Each service will be live at noon on my Facebook page** – and of course, they can be watched at any time. If anybody out there is not on Facebook, and would like to be able to see these services (or the daily services of Morning Prayer and Compline), I can send them to you by email at your request.

But Easter! It would seem almost unthinkable to try to celebrate Easter sitting alone at home watching a screen. Fortunately, Bishop Love has said that every congregation in the Diocese of Albany should be planning even now to hold a no-holds-barred Easter celebration a week or two after the stay-at-home ban has been lifted. In his own words:

*“Recognizing how important the celebration of Easter is to all of us, I encourage each of our parishes to plan a glorious Easter celebration for the first or second Sunday after we are able to resume public services in our Church buildings. While the Church has created a liturgical calendar to ensure an orderly way of worshiping God, remembering and celebrating the life and holy acts of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is important to remember that Jesus is the Lord of time. He is not controlled or restricted by the calendar. In Hebrews we read, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8). Given our current situation, I believe it would be very appropriate for us to celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, of His passing from death to new life, as we ourselves pass from this time of separation from one another to the time we can be joyfully reunited with one another in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

After all, think of the Church in times of war or other crisis, which has always found a way to celebrate, even under the most difficult circumstances. We will not let this illness prevent us from rejoicing in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the breaking of the Kingdom of Light into our dark world. So, stay tuned for more about that. In the meantime, let us gather thankfully as we are able, whether by phone or social media or email, and let us keep our suffering world close in prayer daily.



## *Pray for our world*



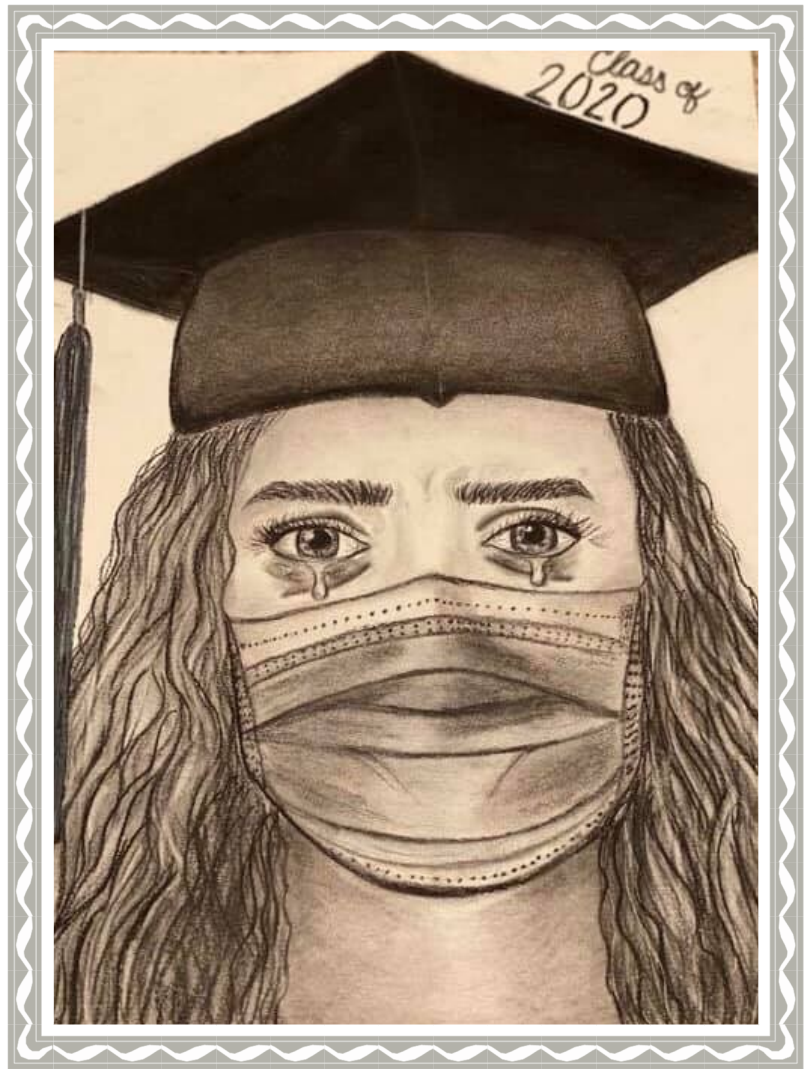




This drawing has been shared on Facebook in recognition of the many, many young people whose planning and hard work, whose hopes and dreams, have all been put on hold by the COVID-19 threat. For all the young people who should have been walking down the aisles of their school auditoriums this spring, I offer these prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer*.

*O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant our young people, in all their doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have them to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save them from all false choices, and that in your light they may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Direct them, O Lord, in all their doings with your most gracious favor, and further them with your continual help; that in all their works begun, continued, and ended in you, they may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

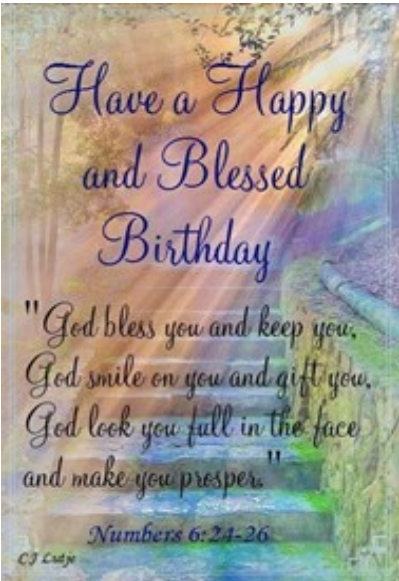


**April Birthdays**

- 2nd—Susan Smith
- 3rd—Lindsey Levison
- 6th—Wyatt Boswell
- 14th—Tristan Curran
- 19th—Carroll Boswell
- 20th—Roseanna Boswell
- 26th— Lucille Waterson
- 27th— Bethanne Maple
- 29th—Jacob Beaulieu

**May Birthdays**

- 2nd—Shirley Rookey
- 6th—Gary Hargrave
- 8th—Tom Hargrave
- 9th—Sam Colbert
- 12th—Andrew Smith
- 14th—Riley Doyle
- 16th—Gary Galo
- 18th—Joanne Howe
- 26th—Char Kovich
- 29th— Joe Hargrave
- 29th —- Donna McLean



**April Anniversaries**

- 19th—Bob & Millie Weaver

**May Anniversaries**

- 23rd—Donna & Errol McLean
- 24th— Matthew & Melanie Morgan





O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,  
 Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown;  
 O sacred Head, what glory, what bliss till now was Thine!  
 Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, was all for sinners' gain;  
 Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.  
 Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
 Look on me with Thy favor, vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,  
 For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?  
 O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be

Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

Be Thou my consolation, my shield when I must die;  
 Remind me of Thy passion when my last hour draws nigh.  
 Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, upon Thy cross shall dwell,  
 My heart by faith enfolds Thee. Who dieth thus dies well.

Lyrics by Bernard of Clairveaux (drawing by Rembrandt van Rijn)

# Lord, Let Me Walk

Alton Jack Middleton

1. Lord, let me walk that lone-ly road with you, Un-der the

2. Lord, let me cool your lips baked like clay, Un-der the

3. They gave you gall and sour wine for your food, Un-der the

4. Lord, must the jour ney al-ways end this way, Un-der the

1. weight of the wood. Lord, let me walk that

2. weight of the wood. Dried up like rain on a

3. weight of the wood. Fa-ther, for-give them; they

4. weight of the wood? How-man-y times have we

1. last mile in your shoes, Un-der the weight of the wood.

2. hot, dust-y day, Un-der the weight of the wood.

3. don't know what they do, Un-der the weight of the wood.

4. nailed you up to-day, Un-der the weight of the wood?

Refrain

Free-dom can be found, lad-en down,

Un-der the-weight of the wood.



Wisdom from Lucille Waterson by Max Lucado, from his book "Anxious for Nothing"

Today, I will live today. Yesterday has passed.

Tomorrow is not yet. I'm left with today.

So, today, I will live today. Relive yesterday? No.

I will learn from it. I will seek mercy for it.

I will take joy in it. But I won't live in it.

The sun has set on yesterday. The sun has yet to rise on tomorrow.

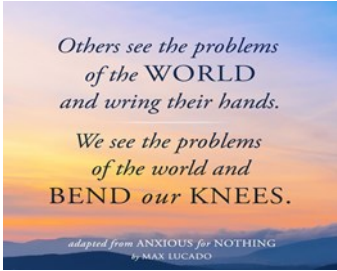
Worry about the future? To what gain? It deserves a glance, nothing more.

I can't change tomorrow until tomorrow. Today, I will live today.

I will face today's challenges with today's strength. I will dance today's waltz with today's music.

I will celebrate today's opportunities with today's hope.

Today.



✂

This Bread I Break

*Dylan Thomas*

This bread I break was once the oat

This wine upon a foreign tree

Plunged in its fruit;

Man in the day or wind a night

Laid the crops low, broke the grape’s joy.

Once in this wine the summer blood

Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,

Once in this bread

The oat was merry in the wind;

Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down.

This flesh you break, this blood you let

Make desolation in the vein,

Were oat and grape

Born of the sensual root and rap;

My wine you drink, my bread you snap.

Some spiritually nutritious movies and shows for those long days at home, from Carroll Boswell

Being confined to home, as we are now, the most immediate temptation is to watch TV, so I thought I would suggest a few movies and shows that will be worthwhile to watch. I tried to pick ones that have a spiritual content as well as entertainment value, shows that will get you to think about serious questions in a new way. Might as well make the most of our time.

1. **Call the Midwife** This is a series based on the life of Jennifer Worth, who was a midwife in the 1950's at Nonnatus House, an Anglican mission in the east end of London. If you think you are not interested in a show about delivering babies (I'm talking to you men), then you are quite wrong about this one. It is one of the best shows I have ever seen.

2. **The Crown** Another series, this one based on the life of Queen Elizabeth. It is true to the historic events, though of course it must fill in the private lives of the people with speculation. It is like a real-life Downton Abbey. Perhaps surprisingly, it has quite a lot of spiritual content; Queen Elizabeth was a devout Christian thrust into a role she never wanted and this is the story of how she was able to handle it all.

3. **Barchester Towers** This is a short seven part series about the clergy in the fictional town of Barchester in England in about 1850. It is a comedy, and like all good comedies, makes very serious points in a delightful way.

4. **Dorothy L. Sayers Mysteries** Dorothy Sayers was a Christian, a friend of Tolkien and C. S. Lewis and one of the first good murder mystery writers. Several attempts have been made to make her books into movies, but the good one is from 1987 and includes the books “Strong Poison”, “Have His Carcase” and “Gaudy Night”, with three episodes each.

5. **Emanuel** This is a documentary about the 2015 shooting in Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. It interviews the relatives of the victims, the pastor, and gives related news clips of the events, very well done and very moving. They decision of many of the church members to forgive the murderer publicly was very controversial at the time and that is discussed as well. Documentaries suggest something boring, but this one isn't.

6. **Harriet** A movie about the life of Harriet Tubman, who is so closely identified with the Underground Railroad in the years before the Civil War. She was a devout Christian and ascribed her success in getting slaves to freedom to God giving her specific leading. Harriet Tubman was a genuine American hero and this movie shows why.

7. **All Saints** Based on a true story of an Episcopal priest in Texas who transforms his waning congregation by welcoming Karin refugees to their parish and helping them settle in the county. The Karin were a tribe who lived in Vietnam and fought with Americans and lost most of their homes in the war.

8. **Best of Enemies** Another movie based on a true story about the close friendship that developed between a black woman civil rights leader and the white leader of the local KKK. Two people whom no one could have expected to become friends, but their friendship lasted their whole lives. These were events that happened in the 60's in a little town in North Carolina. It give hope.

9. **Entertaining Angels** This is the life story of Dorothy Day, one of the founders of The Catholic Worker in the 1930's. It traces her life from her early years in the Communist party to her conversion to her work in New York City. Kathryn, who has studied Day’s life, says the movie stays fairly true to the reality. Dorothy Day is a modern spiritual hero.

10. **The Good Lie** The true story of a family of kids in Sudan whose village was massacred by Sudanese militia. They were some of the 20,000 orphaned Sudanese children known as the Lost Boys. They spent 13 years at a refugee camp in Kenya before being allowed to immigrate to the US right after 9/11. Most of the movie is about their adjustment to their new lives in Kansas City. Reese Witherspoon stars as their social worker.

11. **Merry Christmas** Also based on a true story from the trenches in World War I. On Christmas Eve an unlikely series of event leads to two captains, a German and a Scot, declaring a mutual cease fire so they can celebrate Christmas together. It is astonishing that this is a true story. One of the best movies I have seen. It is filmed in English, German and French as appropriate, with subtitles when necessary.

And don't forget the two movies about Fred Rogers, **A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood** and **Won't You Be My Neighbor?**. This should keep you busy until the virus gives up. And you will be glad for the ones you get to watch.

(These are all wonderful, y’all. Enjoy! Mtr. K+)



## *The Order of the Daughters of the King St. Philip's Chapter*

### *The Colors of the Order*      White and Blue

White is for purity and the bright light of truth.

Blue is for the joyful days of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### *The Cross of the Order*

The cross of the Order was officially adopted in its first Constitution on November 5, 1891. The senior cross of the Order is a modified Greek Fleury Cross inscribed in Latin, "*Magnanimitur Crucem Sustine*", the watchword of the Order, meaning, "With heart, mind and spirit uphold and bear the cross." At the base of the cross are the Letters "FHS", initials that stand for the Motto of the Order: "For His Sake."

One of the duties and responsibilities of a Daughter of the King is she follows a daily Rule of life, fulfilling the vows of prayer and service.

During this unique time in our county and in our own lives, as we are not able to see and meet one another on a personal level, and in order for the Daughters to add those who are in need of prayer, following is contact information to share names and needs for prayer—remember always that all prayer requests are kept confidential by the Daughters of the King members unless otherwise instructed.

Chaplain: Mtr. Kathryn—315-212-5507; [stphilips@live.com](mailto:stphilips@live.com)

President: Karen Morgan—315-353-8879; [ktmorgan@twcny.rr.com](mailto:ktmorgan@twcny.rr.com)

Secretary: Romi Sebald—315-322-3385; [romisebald@gmail.com](mailto:romisebald@gmail.com)

Ann Crump—315-268-2407; Irene Hargrave—315-353-2888; Helen Harris—315-353-2017;

Lynn Howe—315-265-3482; Millie Weaver—315-769-2597; Cheryl Woodward—315-212-8801.



From *Surprised by Hope*, by N.T. Wright:

[Easter] ought to be an eight-day festival, with champagne served after Morning Prayer or even before, with lots of alleluias and extra hymns and spectacular anthems. Is it any wonder people find it hard to believe in the resurrection of Jesus if we don't throw our hats in the air? Is it any wonder we find it hard to the resurrection if we don't do it exuberantly in our liturgies? Is it any wonder the world doesn't take much notice if Easter is celebrated as simple the one-day happy ending tacked onto forty days of fasting and gloom? It's long overdue that we took a hard look at how we keep Easter in the Church, at home, in our personal lives, right through the system. And if it means rethinking some cherished habits, well, maybe it's time to wake up. That always comes as a surprise.

...we should be taking steps to celebrate Easter in creative new ways: in art, literature, children's games, poetry, music, dance, festivals, bells, special concerts, anything that comes to mind. This is our greatest festival. Take Christmas away, and in biblical terms you lose two chapters at the front of Matthew and Luke, nothing else. Take Easter away, and you don't have a New Testament; you don't have a Christianity; as Paul says, you are still in your sins. We shouldn't allow the secular world, with its schedules and habits and parareligious events, its cute Easter bunnies, to blow us off course. This is our greatest day. We should put the flags out.

In particular, if Lent is a time to give things up, Easter ought to be a time to take things up. Champagne for breakfast again—well, of course. Christian holiness was never meant to be merely negative. Of course you have to weed the garden from time to time; sometimes the ground ivy may need serious digging before you can get it out. That's Lent for you. But you don't want simply to turn the garden back into a neat bed of blank earth. Easter is the time to sow new seeds and to plant about a few cuttings. If Calvary means putting to death things in your life that need killing off if you are to flourish as a Christian and a truly human being, then Easter should mean planting, watering and training up things in your life (personal and corporate) that ought to be blossoming, filling the garden with color and perfume, and in due course bearing fruit. The forty days of the Easter season, until the ascension, ought to be a time of balance out Lent by taking something up, some new task or venture, something wholesome and fruitful and outgoing and self-giving. You may be able to do it only for six weeks, just as you may be able to go without beer or tobacco only for the six weeks of Lent. But if you really make a start on it, it might give you a sniff of new possibilities, new hopes, new ventures you never dreamed of. It might bring something of Easter into your innermost life. It might help you wake up in a whole new way. And that's what Easter is all about.



*The Church Speaks*

*“What then, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.”  
1 Corinthians 14:26*

Because we are going through this season of physical separation from one another, this April/May issue of CommonLife is brought to you by.....you. I invited you to share with one another whatever God put on your heart, to encourage one another, to lift one another up, to build up the Church. Here is the generous abundance of your response. Thank you all!

(I share these in the order in which they were received. There is no hierarchy of offerings here; let God order all as he wills. He’s so good at that.)

**A Song by Ellen Galo “Blessed be the Power” (in memory of Ginny Marks)**

Bless'd be the pow'r of the Word of the Lord, who speaks from His very own heart, Heard from the center of centuries past, comes echoing through our hearts.

What does it mean, this clamoring call, that penetrates us as a breeze? Insistent footsteps of hearkening saints - the voice of the Three times three!

Looking within, see momentous inspiration - Looking without, see the pall: How does one handle the reconciliation of self, and the Word, and the call?

O lift up your hearts, see the truth of His Word - He will make His own come to pass; Only trust in the love of this redeeming flood, as you find yourself fully immersed! You may think you're drowning - you're being baptized! - and your soul from the Jordan will rise in the knowledge, conviction, true affirmation of Christ's resurrection life!

So be it the miracle, God's loving grace, as He bids us respond to His call, As we gather the crumbs from the fishes and loaves, His mercy embraces all - His mercy encompasses ALL !



**A Meditation by The Rev. Helen Harris “Love in Action”**



In the blink of our eyes, we have suddenly come under attack by a disease which has frightened all of us. As we approach Holy week, we are reminded of the words of Paul in Romans. “Agape,” which means “Love in Action.” On the night before Jesus was crucified, he gathered with His disciples for what would be called the Last Supper. He knew his time on earth was soon ending and he would be leaving to be with the Father.

On the night before Jesus was crucified, he gathered with His disciples for what would be called the Last Supper. He knew his time on earth was soon ending and he would be leaving to be with the Father.

Jesus humbled himself by washing the feet of his disciples by taking the role of a servant. He gave the disciples and us a new commandment that we should love one another as He has loved us. Jesus showed how much he loved the disciples with this action with all of his heart. He watched on that night as he was betrayed by one that he loved. He surely must have had fear, knowing what lay ahead for him, knowing soon he would endure great suffering.

God reminds us never to be afraid that He is always with us.

We watch our world suffering with this disease but we put love into action as Jesus did when he gave his life for us on the cross. We are to follow love into action by loving our neighbors, friends, family to be a servant as Jesus was a servant. Charitable love, our love for God, our God who loves us.

**A Prayer from Shirley Rookey**

Heavenly father walk through my house and take away all worries and illness and please watch over and heal my family and friends. Bring quiet where there is chaos, bring light where there is darkness and put love in our hearts In Jesus name. Amen.

**Comforting verses**

Psalm 4:8 I lie down in peace, at once I fall asleep; for only you, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 52:8 I am like an olive tree, flourishing in the house of God, I trust in God's unfailing love, now and forever.

John 15:16 “You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name.”

Ps. 23:1 “The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need.”



**A Poem from John Ohst “Tough Times”**

Without a microscope, we can’t even see it, but all over the world it’s changing our lives. Like science fiction, it’s hard to believe, but affecting sons, daughters, husbands and wives.

One of the first things to go were the many sports that we loved to watch or loved to play: the games of the pros, high schools, and colleges were canceled or postponed to another day.

Then schools themselves were closing their doors; libraries, churches, concert halls, and theaters too. Gone are the extra special things we wanted to read or listen to.

The food stores have stayed open so we can buy things to eat, and several restaurants offer take-outs, But we can’t stay and relax in a seat.

So what can we do to lighten these dark days? Our options are quite limited, but there are a few ways.

The food pantries need more donations To fill up their shelves. So many folks are out of work, it’s getting hard to feed themselves.

Take food & medicine or make phone calls to the elderly who are shut in, especially in our own neighborhood. That’s one place to begin.

Connections with communities, with families and friends, are very crucial now till this pandemic ends.

Many people in Italy open their windows and sing now some people in Texas are doing the same thing.

Music has magic To lighten our mood. It’s kind of like getting good emotional food.

Get music from You Tube, DVDs, or radio, or dust off those great old LPs, for sweet sounds to fill our souls, to soothe and to please.

For more benefits at home where we are now confined, we should make positive choices in any way we can find.

Home sports include no-net Ping Pong around tables and chairs, with cats chasing loose balls that fall down the stairs.

When Kobe Bryant was a youngster, he’d roll up his dad’s sock and toss them around making game-winning shots.

Play Scrabble or rummy for competitive times. Read stories to each other. Write stories or rhymes.

Have good times in the kitchen making popcorn or fudge, or fresh chocolate chip cookies, (if you don’t mind the smudge).

Yes, 2020 is a tough year, And it probably will get tougher. Many days will be difficult. Many people may suffer.

But North Country people are pretty tough too. We have faith in God and each other, and with those, we can pull through.

Poems from Karen Morgan

“Garden Wall”

by Jack Perkins

We humans, trusting Genesis,  
Presume dominion over all.  
So, wresting rocks from nature’s hold  
Where stream or glacier let them fall,  
We call them ours  
And build a wall.

The wall says, *This belongs to us,*  
*A proof of Man’s supremacy.*  
*Here people rule and order reigns*  
*And shall until eternity.*  
Such be our thoughts,  
Our vanity.



But truth to tell  
We’ll soon be gone.  
Then who will walk the paths we trod?  
And when we find our futile wall,  
Will they perhaps believe it odd  
How we confused ourselves with God?

“In The Garden”

by Lodene Brown Hathaway



In the garden,  
watered by Jesus’s sweat and tears,  
flourished Love beyond compare.  
And a tree grew, took into itself  
the agony. Do not wonder  
why the olive tree is burlled  
and twisted. Endlessly  
of God’s torturous decision  
it wrings itself.

A Song from Irene Hargrave “Cares Chorus” by Kelly Willard

I cast all my cares upon You  
I lay all my burdens down at Your feet  
And any time I don’t know what to do  
I will cast all my cares upon You

I cast all my cares upon You  
I lay all my burdens down at Your feet  
And any time I don’t know what to do  
I will cast all my cares upon You

I cast all my cares upon You  
I lay all my burdens down at Your feet  
And any time I don’t know what to do  
I will cast all my cares upon You  
I will cast all my cares upon You



(Based on 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Humble yourselves, then, under God's mighty hand, so that he will lift you up in his own good time. Cast all your cares upon him, because he cares for you.”)



A thought from John Ohst

“...another point to ponder concerning isolation. Last year, if we needed an item or just wanted something, we’d just hop in the car and drive to town to get it.. Now, with reduced public contact, we first ask ourselves, “Do I need this right now. Could I get it later? How important is it that I have it? Do I have anything at home that will substitute for it? ” All these questions, of course, are ones we should ask even under normal conditions, but we have become accustomed to instant gratification, as on the Toyota billboards: "You want it. You got it.”



A prayer written by Bishop Ken Clarke from Northern Ireland, who is a friend of our Diocese

Unshakeable God, at this time of national crisis and personal pain, we look to you for help and hope. We don’t understand what is happening. We are fearful and apprehensive. We grieve to see people dying. We are anxious about the future. We are fearful about surviving financially. We are really just about hanging in. We can’t get a grip about what is going on. It hurts to see people suffer. It hurts to see doctors, nurses, and care workers stretched to their limits. It is so painful to think of those in isolation who are deeply worried. It is heartbreaking to see those who are bereaved. It is distressing to know that some people are utterly alone. We cry out to you for help and hope. We ask your forgiveness for our pride and folly. We repent of our selfishness and sin. Show us your mercy Lord. Heal our land. God of compassion, stretch out your hands of healing. God of grace, show us your mercy. God of truth, may your Word bring hope. Lord Jesus, walk with us in our pain, fear, and confusion. Once again calm the storm. Once again heal the hurting. Once again bring hope and help. Bless all who are serving selflessly to care for others. Give our leaders wisdom and vision. Help them to make the right decisions at this unprecedented time. Strengthen and protect all who are still working. Thank you for the thoughtful actions of many people. Thank you for all whose lives are marked by acts of kindness. Thank you for churches seeking first your Kingdom, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. Thank you that in you, the unshakeable God, there is rock solid hope for the present and future. Thank you that you are the God of the Cross and the God of the resurrection. Breathe afresh your Holy Spirit upon us, upon our nation, and across the world at this time. In the powerful Name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.