

A Call from Bishop Seage

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have been in contact with the Mississippi Food Network (Statewide Food Bank). There are more than 400 local food pantries that receive food from the Mississippi Food Network. These local food pantries are seeing a huge increase in families requesting food assistance. In addition, they are experiencing limited volunteer support.

We are asking all Clergy to reach out to the local food pantry in your area to assess current needs in your parish community. In addition, please extend an invitation to your parishioners requesting support and prayer for the local food pantries and the many families they are assisting.

Each of the food pantries that make up the Mississippi Food Network are required to take the following safety precautions:

- No face-to-face contact; gloves and masks are required.
- Handwashing practices are required.
- Meals and food must be distributed via curbside pickup only.

How can you help?

There are three ways parishioners around the state can help:

1. Financial assistance — Each food pantry is non-profit and can provide a tax receipt;
2. Contribute NEEDED Food Items — Check with local food pantries (self-stable protein is always needed!); and
3. Volunteer to assist in distributing food boxes or meals via curbside pickup.

As clergy of the Diocese of Mississippi, we know you are looking for safe ways to help our neighbors in need. Please contact your local food pantry and prayerfully consider ways that you and the parishioners of your parish may help during the COVID 19 crisis.

For More Information, please contact Cassandra with MS Food Network at 601-973-7085, or the Rev. Molly MacWade with St. Philip's at 601.540.8447.

Peace be with you, +Brian

A Reminder We Aren't in Control

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

-Matthew 27:62-66

We never ordered the palms or lilies, did we? A devoted few won't have any need to go into the woods collecting ferns for our Palm Sunday procession. There will be no washing of the feet corporately (though I hope you do it at home), no stripping of the altar, and, on Easter Day, the choir will not lead the parish family in singing "Wake Up Happy Morning" to the accompaniment of a spectacular brass ensemble.

No, this year it's back to the basics. Certainly, this will be a Holy Week none of us will ever forget. So many of the customs we are used to, and I admit, so much liturgically that I am formed and called to do, can't feasibly happen. There is an overwhelming yearning to get everything back to "normal," though we may find, when all this is over, that there are some things we may not be in a hurry to get back to. That is a sermon for another day.

When people ask me about my call to the priesthood, it has always been celebrating the sacraments. The Altar is home base for me, not the pulpit. Beyond that, walking alongside people in life's most fragile moments is a significant part of my call.

Now we all find ourselves in our works of life scrambling to modify, reinvent and survive with the current reality of things. I do not have a savviness and resourcefulness for technology, unlike most of my generation. I am jostling to learn the art of Zoom and YouTube Live streaming because well, I must.

But as I have said from the beginning, I wonder if there is some real opportunity here. There is a moment of grace to examine why we are here as a church during this time away from each other. Holy Week is approached the same way. I hope we know, no matter the pageantry, no matter the accurate rubrics or, for southerners, no matter if the seersucker, white bucks or ladies' hats are worn on Easter Day, Holy Week will happen. Because something we forget all the time, as the religious authorities and Pilate and forget too — we are not God.

God always has means of reminding us. And it is not through catastrophes like COVID-19. This virus is not here for God to teach us a lesson. But COVID-19 can help us "hit the reset button," as my mom said to me this week.

Being human we tend to try and "make the tomb secure by sealing the stone." We do all we can to control and guard things. We have even gone so far as the wider church to assume the practices we put into place as the right ones. Episcopalians have a pretty awesome way to do it, if I say so myself. We also quickly assume ours are the only ways through which God can work. Though this year may show us resurrection in a whole new way.

Guarding our way can bring out the worst in us. Did we secure the tomb and seal the stone? No and no. We can't seal the Spirit for ourselves. No matter what we try, Sunday the stone will be rolled back. The tomb will be empty. After three days, Jesus will rise from the dead. Let the Spirit go.

Maybe Easter this year will be a reminder that we aren't in control of when and how resurrection happens. No matter how much we guard our way, it's often when everything is on the verge of being toppled when the light of the world really moves us. When humanity attempts to contain God, the Spirit has ways of overturning stones. Because that is what resurrection does — it opens all our tombs, whatever those may be.

Your servant in Christ,



Music for Our Ears

In the past week or so I have seen several pass-along Facebook games, several of which include names of songs or a request to list a favorite tune. Some of these shared games have been great fun and an enjoyable way to pass the time.

However, as I listen to online services from other parishes and cathedrals, I am reminded by the power of music to inspire us, to calm our fears and to feed our souls in a rather scary time.

Besides our regular Morning Prayer online "broadcasts," I plan to record some videos of hymn tunes and perhaps some familiar organ pieces. If you have a favorite hymn or remember a prelude or voluntary that you particularly like, you may text me at 601.479.2544 and let me know what you would like to hear. Not only would you hear a favorite tune, but this would be a wonderful way for parishioners to hear the organ during this time of uncertainty. It is my sincere hope that each of you stays safe and sings your favorite tune!

—David Benson

We welcome Anne Harris Crow, born March 10, in Meridian. Parents are Michael & Mary Lawrence Crowe; and grandparents are Larry & Lisa Love.

Welcome to Amanda Joyce Ray, born March 17, in Nashville, TN. Parents are David & Anne Elise Ray and grandparents are David & BJ Ray.

Finding Your Aha Moment

While doing a little "self assessment" the other evening, I told myself that I was doing well with fear and anxiety in these scary times. When I prepared to go to bed, I looked down at the empty bag of Ritz Crisp and Thins and was shocked to see that my body was telling me a different narrative! That empty bag was my "Aha" moment to wake up and face those fears, suppressed from conscious thought. The best way for me to do that, is to offer them up to God with the simple prayer "help me." Please help me to see and acknowledge my fears and to put away the snack food! To quote Henri Nouwen, "By inviting God into our difficulties we ground life — even its sad moments— in joy and hope." By bringing these feelings and thoughts to God I can discover how God is the One who invites me to healing. In these scary times may I come to better understand one of our St. Paul's Core Values: to "Grow in the Knowledge and Love of Christ."

—Lynne Taleff

Lift Up Your Hearts

Our buildings may look empty and the usual noises of parish life are somewhat muted but our spiritual connection to each other as parishioners remains alive. Like the first disciples called by our Lord, our world has been turned upside down by events that we could never imagine. In the midst of all the uncertainty that surrounds us there are three things that we hold fast:

We love each other, we love St. Paul's and we believe that we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

In this time of self quarantine, social distancing and virtual worship, I pray that we will "lift up our hearts" to seek new ways for God to reveal unique and powerful experiences among us.

—Rob Calcote

Can You Help?

Saint Paul's pastoral care ministry required a little out-of-the-box thinking to reflect the realities of how the COVID-19 virus has impacted our community. For those of us who perform this mission of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, we have had to abandon that which we know best: regular visits to hospitals, altar flower delivery and home communion — literally, all our personal face-to-face, heart-to-heart, ministries. Sadly, those we visit are the most vulnerable to the virus; we cannot risk a visit.

But we can substitute other forms of contact while maintaining social distance from those we love. In this spirit, we would like to ensure that those in hospital or homebound receive regular phone calls and other communications and that their personal needs, groceries, etc., are tended to. Several of our congregants have family or caregivers who can assist us in the effort, but there are several who are very much alone and need our help. It is our hope that our efforts to meet those needs will be successful.

If you can help with this effort, please contact me.

— Faithfully, Linda Carrier



Blankets Donated

Our own Lynne Taleff was part of a Delta Kappa Gamma Society of Meridian a blanket donation to Anderson Regional Medical Center. This is the fifth year they have made a donation of blankets for patients.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is a teacher society that promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. From left: Lynne Taleff, Janet Berg, Rhonda Denton, Lorie Anderson, Bonnie Jordan, Cheryl Thomas and Karen Rhodes.

We Remember in our Prayers

Our Parish family: Bob Deen, Claire Hanschke, Dixie Pigford, DJ Wells, Edgar Morrison, Jerry Greene, Jo Van Devender, Ivy Jane Sutton, Milo Joseph Sutton, Mary Scott, Norma Veach, Peggy Carrico, Robin Hall, Scott Carmichael, Terry Rush and William Godwin.

In our senior living communities: Deanie Carmichael, Elise Leach, Joyce Welsh, Linda James, Lora Jones and Nita Neville.

Extended family and friends: Alice Miller, Ally Gressett, Allyson Furr, Amanda Lockey, Amanda Rainey, Anita Sumrall, Anna Meyers, Art Matthews, Barbara Hopper, Barbara Robinson, Baston Geiger, Bill Selman, Bob Hill, Bobby Dale, Bridget Mann, Brooke, Brooks Moore, Cathy Parker, Charlie Smith, Charmin Edwards, Chelsie Abston, Cheryl Drennan, Christina Harris, Clay Hamilton, Cory Gaylord, Davey Simmons, Diane Dunn, Delroy Ming, Edesser "Dess" Reid Ward, Rob & Aislinn Ward, Elise Higbe, Frank Baker, Frank Barrett, Freddie Bea Watson, Gary Dawkins, George Farr, George Ferguson, Helen Valentine, J.T. Lee, Jada Dooley, James, Jim Bateman, John, Justin Site, Ken Fisher, Kim Lovette, Kylie Temple, Lee Davis Thames, Leigh Ann Key, Lou Dubose, Marilyn Mohr, Martha Mazingo, Mary Hallwell, Mary Ann Howell, Michelle Nelson, Mike Lundy, Mike Stanton, Noah White, Norman, Patty Fishburn, Rick, Sandra Nicholas, Ronald Carozza, Sandy Carrier, Sallie Gercens, Hannah Thompson, Seth Thompson, Stephanie Turner, Theodore, Tom Schram, Tony Sansone, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Wilfe Manning and Zack Martin.

For those serving in the Armed Forces, for all who serve overseas and their families, especially Andrew Behm, Shum Benson, Connor Covert, Graham Ford, T. J. Melton, Nick Mullen and Zack Thomas.

For those who have died, especially: Hannah McNichol, Mary Irby; mother of Denise Wright and Rita Pegues; and Nelson Hall.

We pray for our Bishop Brian, our Rector Austin and his family and our Deacon Betty.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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| April 2David Hamilton, Robert Loeb | April 19Connie Arline, Cheri Barry, Patsy Moran |
| April 4Sarah Slade | April 20Terry & Sabina Ivy, Liam Tucker |
| April 5Rob Calcote, Brooks Holladay,
Randy Pool, Brooke Sims | April 21Jean Anderson, Gil Carmichael |
| April 6Gloria Chancellor | April 22Britton Dunn |
| April 8Scott & Kelly McQuaig, David Roberts | April 23Deanie Carmichael, Judge Little,
Margaret Van Dyke |
| April 10Chris Burchfield, Jacqueline Hogan,
Phyllis Nuckolls | April 24D. Jean Anderson, Nancy Davis |
| April 12Chris & Perrin Burchfield, Cara Ivy, Steven Ivy | April 25Claire Hanschke, Jerome & Lisa Kittrell,
Suzie Pool |
| April 14Robin Hall, Rose Hudson | April 26Catherine Little |
| April 16Janet Chalk, Joane Mackey | April 27Joe White & Jean Merrell |
| April 17Lindy Deen | April 28Libby Davis, Will Simmons, Kelly Watson |
| April 18Jennifer DuPont, Mardi Page | April 29Sellers Breaux |

Family Ideas for Observing Holy Week in the Home

Palm Sunday

LEARN: Watch a short video about Palm Sunday on YouTube, like “God’s Story: Palm Sunday” by Crossroads Kids.

PRAY: Read Psalm 118:26 and pray: Praise God, praise God, praise God we say, welcoming Jesus along the way, Waving our branches of palms we say, Hosanna, hosanna along the way. Welcome Jesus, our blessed king. Praise God, praise God, praise God we sing.

WORSHIP: Watch our online Morning Prayer service or sing or listen to your favorite worship song. Or you can pick up the Book of Common Prayer and practice Compline at home. Worship in a way that works for your family.

BLESS: Call a friend, family member or parish member and ask them how they are doing. Reach out and “touch” someone!

GO: Draw or make palm leaves from materials you have at home. Have a palm parade at home and shout Hosanna!

Maundy Thursday

LEARN: Watch a short video about the Last Supper on YouTube, like “God’s Story: The Last Supper” by Crossroads Kids.

PRAY: Read John 13:34-35 and pray: A new commandment, you gave at the table, to love one another as you made us able. When we love one another, all will know it is true that we and our friends, indeed, follow you. So let us remember the commandment to love so the world becomes more like heaven above.

WORSHIP: Watch a service online, or sing or listen to your favorite worship song. Or you can pick up the Book of Common Prayer and practice Compline at home. Worship in a way that works for your family.

BLESS: Write a letter to a friend, a classmate, or a teacher. What do you love about them?

GO: Have a candle light family dinner and maybe even wash each other's feet.

Good Friday

LEARN: Watch a short video about the Stations of the Cross on YouTube, like “Children’s Stations of the Cross” by Victor Hoagland.

PRAY: Read John 19:30 and pray: When Jesus died that day on the cross all creation together sighed, "This is a great loss." Time grew empty and the afternoon dark as the light of the world had not even a spark. The women stood by at a distance in tears wondering what would become of their fears. Fear not, the

angels soon will say. Jesus's death has given us the way.

WORSHIP: Watch a service online, or sing or listen to your favorite worship song. Or you can pick up the Book of Common Prayer and practice Compline at home. Worship in a way that works for your family.

BLESS: Who do you need to forgive? Make a list of those you would like to forgive or those from whom you seek forgiveness.

GO: Discuss with your family: What does it mean to say "I'm sorry."

Holy Saturday

LEARN: Watch a short video on prayer on YouTube, like :God’s Story: Prayer” by Crossroads Kids.

PRAY: Read John 19: 41-42 and pray: We speak few words this day that is hollow, this day that sighs with one great sorrow. We sit in the garden next to the tomb knowing that soon it will be a womb.

WORSHIP: Try to pray the whole daily office in the Book of Common Prayer as a family (Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer and Compline). Think of people you know that need prayer, dedicate an hour to pray for them as an Easter Prayer Vigil as a family.

BLESS: Ask a friend how you can specifically pray for them today.

GO: Write a prayer or draw an image inspired from one of the stories you have heard this week. Display them in your family's worship space.

Easter Day

LEARN: Watch the lesson about Easter.

PRAY: Read Matthew 28:5-7 and pray: Through Jesus, God's love claimed victory over death, and opened for us the gate of new life forever. Lead us, risen Christ, into the mystery of Easter and fill us with your Holy Spirit so we can join you in building your kingdom of justice and love.

WORSHIP: Watch our online Morning Prayer service or sing or listen to your favorite worship song. Or you can pick up the Book of Common Prayer and practice Compline at home. Worship in a way that works for your family.

BLESS: Share the good news with your family and friends. Maybe make a "He is Risen!" sign to hang in your window.

GO: Celebrate with an Alleluia! Create a butterfly to signify the Resurrection and place at your home altar. See following article for some directions.



Share the Easter Message with Everyone Around Us!

How do we think of change, transition and new life?

When we see a caterpillar, it looks like a fully formed creature. It crawls, climbs trees and eats and eats and eats. Then, apparently out of nowhere, everything changes. It wraps itself up in a chrysalis and the caterpillar we once knew is gone. Or so it seems. We wait for days and weeks. Nothing seems to change. And then slowly but surely emerges a butterfly — transformed and beautiful. All that could not happen without a time of unknown stillness.

Butterflies are a symbol of new life, change and hope.

We are all in a period of waiting. The life we knew has changed. But there is hope. There is hope in God's love. There is hope in Jesus. There is hope in the resurrection.

Join us in sharing this symbol of hope far and wide. We invite you and your family to create butterflies, many, many butterflies! Share to, or tag, St. Paul's Facebook page, let's cover social media with the GOOD NEWS of resurrection! Create your own butterfly or follow one of the links listed below for more ideas.

You can string these butterflies from your trees, share them with your neighbors, mail them to friends and family far away. You can write a prayer on each. You can list something for which you are grateful. You can name your butterfly. You can sidewalk chalk butterflies on your driveway. Wouldn't it be great to have our lawns, our trees, our neighborhoods, our city filled with butterflies? In these times we can share hope and love with everyone, everywhere.

Origami: <https://binged.it/2xpUyB5>

Tissue Paper: <https://bit.ly/2y8hUeE>

TP Roll: <https://bit.ly/2JiBiYX>

Coloring: <https://bit.ly/3asy80w>

*Courtesy: St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA.



Create a Home Altar

FIND A SPACE: Creating a specific place for your home altar can be simple. Find a place where it is easy to gather. You don't even have to have an altar, just make sure you have an intentional space that you can gather with your family without distraction.

GATHER ITEMS: Here are some suggestions. But get creative! Cloth Candle Cross Icon or

other sacred art Objects from nature Rosary or prayer beads Bible, Book of Common Prayer, or other devotional Paper and pen/crayon/marker.

WORSHIP TOGETHER: Working as a family to build a home altar or sacred space can be a meaningful way to create order and peace.