

ACTS of ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

APRIL 2020



God's Grace

Hello from March 25! Amy and I are both feeling like we are writing for a time capsule, sending messages to our future selves. I have no idea what our "situation" will be by the time the ACTS is published. I can report back to you all that you are rocking this new normal that we've got going on!

Number of participants in various virtual/online gatherings:

Thursday Afternoon Prayers: 3	Sunday 8 am Liturgy of the Word: 27
Sunday Virtual Coffee Hour: 27	Tuesday Afternoon Prayers: 1
Wednesday Prayers: 16	Virtual Children's Church: 9
Saturday 5 pm: 9	

I know that Sarah is working with the altar guild and flower guild to figure out ways that we can make our online/virtual Easter celebration authentically us. She's sharing music with us to lift our spirits and our eyes toward God, and the e-news she sent us helps us approach our social distancing sabbath from a variety of perspectives. I know that Clay and Anne and Meg are working with Bethesda Help to get our nonperishable food donations to the food pantry and distributed to those in need. Kim and Bill and Cliff are working hard to make sure our building is cared for during its sabbath time. I have received emails from many of you asking, "What can I do?" "How can I help?" and my favorite of course: "Are you still accepting our pledge payments?" Why yes, yes we are.

I also know that many of you are hurting and are scared and are lonely. Some of you feel very stuck. The saints of St. Luke want to support you if possible. Please reach out to staff or vestry member and ask for help. Saints—please tell on each other! Let me know if someone is having a particularly hard time. And keep loving one another as you have already done, and have been practicing for a long time.

I am trying to frame this as a social distancing sabbath. A good chance for us to slow down. I think the slowing down part hasn't quite happened for a lot of us. Just remember, this is all very new to us—I **think** things will settle down, and when they do we have the opportunity to seek God in the quiet. It is our choice as to whether we offer this sabbath up to God and listen for what God might say when we can't rush around so much.

I just saw a parishioner post: "When you replace 'why is this happening to me' with 'what can this teach me,' everything shifts." We are all living with so much unknown. SO. MUCH. UNKNOWN. It is emotionally exhausting. But what can we learn through this lack of certainty? What does the Holy Spirit want to teach us, show us? The fact that not knowing what the future holds is undoing me

(God's Grace continued on page 4)

Community Engagement Cluster: Basic Needs

April 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



April Special Dates

All church activities will remain cancelled until May 16

5 April	Palm Sunday
8 April	Passover begins
9 April	Maundy Thursday
10 April	Good Friday
11 April	Holy Saturday
12 April	Easter Sunday
18 April	Garden Guild Workday
24 April	Ramadan begins

Birthdays

Greg Votaw	8
Mary Kimelblatt	15
Pat Rogers	15
Kristin Katulis	17
Sally Curtin	19
Nancy Voit	22
Eric Hutchins	24
Jack Orrick	26
Pete Rogers	27
Arlene Antonicelli	28

Community Engagement Cluster: Human Rights, Dignity & Safety

May 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



May Special Dates

All church activities will remain cancelled until May 16

9 May	Garden Guild Workday
25 May	Memorial Day
	Office closed
31 May	5 th Sunday

Birthdays

Karin Bolte	1	Kendall	
Jim Hawkins	2	Montgomery	16
Marta Montoro	9	Joaquin Schaefer	17
Theresa Wambach	9	Luke Bergeron	19
Liz Votaw	12	Charles Rice	22
Fiona Nellist	13	Zachary Bernier	22
Gayle		Roxanne Leal	23
Countryman-Mills	13	Bennett Sharp	26
Laura Edwards	13	Andrew Mills	28
Phoebe Milhollin	13	Hannah Fourcard	28

The ACTS is now distributed electronically using the email address that we have for you on file in the office. If you did not receive it, please update your email address. admin@stlukesbethesda.org

The parish prayer list is printed in the Sunday *Hot News* bulletin.

If you do not see your birthday listed during the year, please contact the office.



Amy Elsbree

Connecting

As I write this, it's March 20. I'm struggling for what to say. Our world is changing so quickly. Every eight hours there is a shift, a change to our daily way of life that none of us could have imagined. I fear that whatever I write today will feel irrelevant or shortsighted in just a week or two.

My intention all along had been to write about "connecting" for the April ACTS. The Vestry has spent time over the past six months talking about what it means for St. Luke's to be welcoming. We know that being welcoming involves connecting...not only with newcomers, but also with each other. We were exploring ways to strengthen our own connections throughout the parish, and to encourage more intentional links between

parishioners.

Ironically, the topic of how we connect with each other has never been more important than it is today, and it will still be important two weeks from now. It just won't be the in-person connections we had been imagining. In this time, without our Sunday routines and our regular fellowship gatherings, we need to redesign how we connect with one another. And, we need to rethink how we are connecting with God.

Fortunately, those are one and the same. If we are going to "be the church" without our church building, we will "be the church" each time we reach out to one another. And, in those moments, we are going to be closer to God. Likewise, when we participate in the worship activities Jessica is offering us each week, we will be doing it in communion (even without communion!) with each other and God.

Amidst all the things I could be worried about today, I am not worried about St. Luke's. We are a community that will sustain if not be strengthened through this period of uncertainty. In Jessica, we have the spiritual leader that was meant to be here with us during this time. We have Sarah working her wonders to ensure all our communications keep flowing and to provide us the platforms for connecting. We have Kim who is still providing critical administrative support as needed. We have a dedicated Vestry team watching for the health of the parish, spiritually, operationally and financially. Rest assured that we have "rainy day" funds that are available to tide us through these stormy times. And we have the commitment and love of all of you.

I do worry about each of us individually, though. I hope that you will consider picking up the phone and calling that person who you nod to in the pew most Sunday mornings. Or think of a parishioner that you may not know well but lives close by and plan a walk. Let's pour our energy into "being the church" and taking care of each other in a new way. Holy Week and Easter provide us a perfect focus for this effort. By the time you read this, they will be just around the corner. I look forward to "seeing you" then.

Amy

(God's Grace, continued from page 1)

shows me that I haven't been doing very well at living in the present. Living in the moment. Looking to the future is important, but if we spend all our time looking ahead, we miss what is happening right in front of us. Maybe we want to miss, avoid what is right in front of us. I get that. But as those options to be distracted become fewer and fewer, draw close to God and ask for God's help, God's peace and comfort and courage in facing this present moment. Give thanks for those blessings that are making themselves known in the right here and right now. The Holy Spirit loves to go to work at the darkest moments of our lives and bring about big and little resurrections. Pay attention. Breathe. Rely on God's grace. God is with us. Right here. Right now. And whatever happens in the future, we can trust God will be there with us, too.

Jessica

Announcement from Jessica:

Jessica has moved her sabbath day from Friday to Monday. She will not be checking email.
She is available for pastoral emergencies via her cell: 202-740-4183.

Bishop Mariann's Announcement to the Diocese of Washington

Dear Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington,

March 17, 2020

I give thanks to God for each of you and for your courage and creativity as we all adjust to the constraints required of us. Your entire diocesan staff is praying for you, that you may feel Christ's abiding presence as you tend to your loved ones and all within your sphere of pastoral concern. We are here to support you in any way we can. ...

In keeping with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent recommendation to cancel or postpone all gatherings of 50 or more people for the next 8 weeks and in consultation with the Presiding Bishop, **I am instructing all public services and other church gatherings be suspended until May 16th.**

Rest assured that if these recommendations are lifted—and we all pray that this crisis passes sooner—I will re-open our churches gladly. For now, I want us all to have sufficient clarity to prepare for what lies ahead, most notably, Holy Week and Easter Sunday without physically gathering in church.

The spiritual, pastoral and financial implications of this pandemic are beyond what any of us can fully grasp or predict. But you belong to a diocesan community and we are in this together. ...

The storm we are in will one day pass and getting through it is our primary task. How we pray now, how we lead now, how we support one another and our people now, how we serve our community in Christ's name now will inform our future ministries far longer than the storm itself.

Remember that Jesus is in the boat with us.



Faithfully,

Bishop Mariann

Episcopal Diocese
of Washington



PARISH

<p> ONLINE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Click the DONATE button on our church website: www.stlukesbethesda.org2. Enter the amount you want to give, select a fund, choose a frequency, and enter your email address.3. Click CONTINUE and enter your payment information to complete the transaction.	<p>Welcome to eGiving</p> <hr/> <p>What is eGiving?</p> <p>It's a way for you to make donations and pledge contributions from our website or via a text message.</p> <hr/>	<p> TEXT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Text SLCGIFT and any AMOUNT to 73256.2. Click the link you receive in the text message response3. Follow the prompts to complete your donation.
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Any questions, please contact Arlene Antonicelli (Financial Contributions Officer) at contributions@stlukesbethesda.org.

Since we will not be celebrating Easter in our physical space, gifts toward Easter Flowers will not be gathered this year.



Easter Offering Designation

Did you know that every day, **79 million Americans** choose between paying medical debt and covering basic expenses, and that 66% of all bankruptcies are tied to medical expenses?

For these reasons—and honoring St. Luke the physician, as well as the Lord's Prayer—the Community Engagement Committee selected **RIP Medical Debt** to receive the un-designated offering this Easter. RIP was founded in 2014 by two former debt collection industry executives who now put their expertise and compassion to work to *forgive* debt rather than *collect* it. RIP uses precise data analytics to pinpoint and forgive the medical debt of those most in need of relief, and then works with clients to repair their credit reports—which ties to the Easter story of resurrection. The return on investment is excellent—**every \$100 donated forgives \$10,000 in medical debt**—and to date, **RIP has abolished over \$1 billion in medical debt** with help from volunteer fundraisers.

To learn more, visit <https://ripmedicaldebt.org/>.

RIP also works to target nationwide “hotspots,” regions especially overburdened by medical debt. **Our contributions this Easter season will benefit our neighbors in the Appalachia Region**, where out-of-pocket health care costs are 40% above the national average and almost every state in the region suffered a decline in insurance coverage over the past year, making the situation more dire.

How to contribute: Please mail a check to church, made out to St. Luke's with “RIP Medical Debt” and your contribution number on the memo line. Or, you can put a check in the offering plate when we resume services. Your pledge payments, flower donations, etc. will be counted normally.

RIP
MEDICAL
DEBT

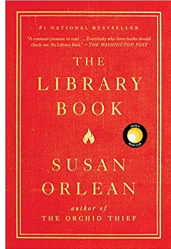
Thank you VERY much for living out your baptismal promises so generously!

Marta Montoro

Book Lovers

The Booklovers' May selection is *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean.

From Amazon:



Susan Orlean's bestseller and *New York Times* Notable Book is "a sheer delight...as rich in insight and as varied as the treasures contained on the shelves in any local library" (*USA TODAY*)—a dazzling love letter to a beloved institution and an investigation into one of its greatest mysteries. "Everybody who loves books should check out *The Library Book*" (*The Washington Post*).

The meetings are **Tuesday, May 19th at 7:30 pm** and also **Thursday, May 21st at 10:30 am**. Please join us.

Nancy Reding

The Bishop Walker School Annual Dinner

The Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys Annual Dinner was held at the National Cathedral on March 5. The event honored the legacy of James R. Woody, Founding Executive Director and President, who will retire at the end of this academic year after a remarkable twelve years of servant leadership. Mr. Michael Molina will become Head of School effective July 1. Currently based in Baltimore, he is a sought-after consultant supporting independent schools in crafting K-12 culturally responsive curriculum. He holds a J.D. from Yale Law School and a B.A. from Xavier University.

"Together we are transforming the lives of young boys through education, invigorating their hopes and dreams and rewriting the narrative of our communities." -James R. Woody

Marta Montoro



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement and Gratitude for Gifts!

In last month's *ACTS* column, our Senior Warden noted that the Vestry authorized a one-time gift of \$7,000 to the Community Engagement Committee for 2020 (due to earlier overages), in addition to the annual budget of \$22,000. The Committee appreciates this gift and is dedicated to spending resources wisely! Per the Committee Charter, it is required that its budget be published annually in the *ACTS* Newsletter.

Most of the Community Engagement budget is allocated to the various organizations that St. Luke's supports. Organizations supported by our parish have typically had one or more of the following characteristics:

- St. Luke's was a founding parish or individual parishioners of St. Luke's have established connections to the organization or activity.
- Members of St. Luke's are currently members of the Board of Directors, active volunteers, members of a parish liaison organization, etc.
- The organization or activity is part of a Diocesan program.
- The organization or activity is recommended by a Committee member to meet a current urgent need.
- The organization is eligible for non-profit designation or its activities are conducted under the auspices of such organizations.

The Committee targeted three organizations for increases in 2020 which previously received less than \$1,500. They are Bethesda Help, Bishop Walker School for Boys, and the Interfaith Works Women's Center. The one exception was Episcopal Relief & Development, known to us as Holy Cow. Each Advent season, Holy Cow is always a success on its own, thanks to your generosity! The most recent Holy Cow campaign raised more than \$14,000.

The Episcopal Center for Children ceased operations in June 2019. Subsequently, the Committee chose to support Interfaith Power and Light with an equivalent donation of \$1,000 in 2020. Their mission is mobilizing people of faith to respond to the climate crisis.

The remainder of the budget includes some allocated funds for each Cluster of activities, as well as a Miscellaneous Fund for new requests and emergencies. A key change in 2020 was adding a line-item for 5th Sunday "Be the Church Day" events, which have grown to become an important component of our Community Engagement efforts.

Please contact Marta Montoro, Miranda Marks, or Jenny Bradley with questions about the budget. If you are interested in participating in Community Engagement in some way—perhaps on a Cluster team, maybe coordinating 5th Sunday servant activities, or joining the Committee—please contact Co-Chairs Marta or Miranda. We would love for you to join us in growing these ministries!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement Budget

Organizations:	2019 Budget	2020 Budget
Bethesda Cares	2,800	2,800
Bethesda Help	1,250	1,500
Bishop Walker School for Boys	1,250	1,500
Cornerstone Montgomery	2,000	2,000
Episcopal Center for Children	1,000	-
Episcopal Relief & Development	500	500
Interfaith Power and Light	-	1,000
Interfaith Works	2,500	2,500
Interfaith Works Women's Center	1,250	1,500
Loaves and Fishes	2,000	2,000
Samaritan Ministry	4,000	4,000
Organizations Subtotal	18,550	19,300
Discretionary:		
Basic Needs Cluster	400	400
Human Rights Cluster	400	400
Looking to our Future Cluster	400	400
Miscellaneous	2,250	2,000
5 th Sundays	-	2,500
Total Discretionary	3,450	5,700
GRAND TOTAL	22,000	25,000
**Prior year excess directed by the Vestry	-	7,000

**Of this amount, \$3,000 is applied to 2020
 [\$2,500 for 5th Sundays and \$500 to increased organizational giving].
 The remainder will stay in reserve for future use.

Montoro Montoro

FINANCE

FINANCE REPORT FEBRUARY 2020

	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	'20 Actual Thru Feb.	% of '20 Budget *
<u>RECEIPTS</u>				
Offering Plate	\$ 18,175	\$ 20,000	\$ 12,189	60.9%
Pledge Payments	479,984	460,000	207,711	45.2%
Donations for Facilities	49,796	48,000	10,437	21.7%
Altar Flower Donations	4,825	5,000	311	6.2%
Miscellaneous	186		17	
Operating Receipts	552,966	533,000	230,665	43.3%
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 308,102	\$ 324,214	\$ 53,448	16.5%
Program Support	18,418	25,000	1,501	6.0%
Parish Operations	107,090	123,900	21,259	17.2%
Community Engagement	22,527	22,000	753	3.4%
Diocesan Giving	50,139	52,000	0	0%
Operating Expenses	506,276	547,114	76,961	14.1%
Surplus/(Deficit)	46,690	(14,114)	153,704	
Additional Funding – 2019 surplus	0	14,114	0	
Net income	\$ 46,690	\$ 0	\$ 153,704	

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE

\$83,237

* YTD FEB= 16.67% of the year

Budget Analysis: Thank you! We are starting out the year in an amazing position.

All financial obligations for the year to date have been met and bills paid.

If you need to be reimbursed for a purchase or need the Treasurer to pay an invoice, please obtain a Payment Request Form from the Office. An authorized person must sign the request. All requests for extra money or donations by committees, individuals or church members, should have prior approval of the Vestry before solicitation.

Jenny Bradley, Treasurer

CALENDAR

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 5th Sunday	30	31	1	2	3 Men's Shelter Dinner	4
5 Palm Sunday	6	7	8	9 Maundy Thursday	10 Good Friday	11 Holy Saturday
12 Easter Sunday	13	14	15	16	17	18 9:00 AM Garden Guild Work Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1 Men's Shelter Dinner	2

As of publication, Bishop Mariann has closed all church activities until May 16.

For further details, check the calendar on the church website

CALENDAR

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1 Men's Shelter Dinner	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 9:00 AM Garden Guild Work Day
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 12:30 PM <i>Your Dog's Friend</i> 5:00 PM Prayers and Reserve Sacrament 7:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i>
17 Loaves & Fishes 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM Children's Church 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist 1:00 PM <i>Your Dog's Friend</i> 5:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i> 8:00 PM <i>Youth AA</i>	18 10:30 AM <i>OASIS</i> 2:30 PM <i>OASIS</i> 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting	19 11:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 1:20 PM Staff Meeting 2:15 PM <i>Cornerstone</i>	20 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 12:00 PM Holy Eucharist 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	21 10:30 AM <i>OASIS</i> 1:00 PM <i>Cornerstone</i> 5:30 PM <i>Girl Scout Troop</i>	22 9:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i>	23 7:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i>
24 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM Children's Church 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist 5:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i> 8:00 PM <i>Youth AA</i>	25 MEMORIAL DAY Office closed	26 1:20 PM Staff Meeting 2:15 PM <i>Cornerstone</i>	27 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 12:00 PM Holy Eucharist 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	28 10:30 AM <i>OASIS</i> 1:00 PM <i>Cornerstone</i>	29 9:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i>	30 12:30 PM <i>Your Dog's Friend</i> 7:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i>
31 5th Sunday 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM Children's Church 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist 1:00 PM <i>Camp Tuckerman</i> 5:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i> 8:00 PM <i>Youth AA</i>	1 10:30 AM <i>OASIS</i> 2:30 PM - <i>OASIS</i>	2 11:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 1:20 PM Staff Meeting 2:15 PM <i>Cornerstone</i>	3 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 12:00 PM Holy Eucharist 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	4 10:30 AM <i>OASIS</i> 1:00 PM <i>Cornerstone</i>	5 Men's Shelter Dinner 9:00 AM <i>OASIS</i> 10:00 AM <i>OASIS</i>	6 12:30 PM <i>Your Dog's Friend</i> 7:00 PM <i>Cristo la Roca</i>

The calendar was accurate at publication.
We all know that any scheduled event can change at a moment's notice.

For further details, check the calendar on the church website

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Trinity Parish
6030 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-1852

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Phone: 301-530-1800 Fax: 301-530-1802
email: admin@stlukesbethesda.org
website: www.stlukesbethesda.org

THE REV. JESSICA K. HITCHCOCK
Rector
email: jessica@stlukesbethesda.org

ACTS of St. Luke's
Newsletter for members and friends of St. Luke's;
published monthly, except January & August.

ACTS Deadline: 15th of the preceding month

Holy Week

Online and Home Church Options Will Be
Posted To stlukesbethesda.org/blog

Maundy Thursday	April 9
Good Friday	April 10
Holy Saturday	April 11
Easter Sunday	April 12

Connect with the National
Cathedral using this link:

cathedral.org/worship

