



EPISTLE

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville, Ohio

Helping all people find a connection to God's community.

October, 2020

Dear Friends,

I like reading the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Scriptures. I think they contain much that can be as pertinent today as it was before the Babylonian exile several centuries before the birth of Jesus. Many times I've recognized that Isaiah, Amos, Micah, Ezekiel (the wild man among the bunch) seem to be speaking directly to me and to us in our own time.

Many of us consider the prophets to be those who only announce doom and gloom, but reading their words always finds a sense of hope undergirding everything else. The doom and gloom words are mostly those truths about ourselves we don't want to hear, or are afraid others are going to find out, and that fear hides us from the hope we need and seek.

The prophet's job is not to tell the future, but to tell the truth. That truth often points to consequences for decisions made and actions taken unless a change is made. That change is repentance, which is much more than saying "I'm sorry." True repentance is choosing to change the direction of our seeing and ultimately the direction of our lives. Saying "I'm sorry" and then continuing to do the same thing makes our words a lie.

I wonder if the circumstances of our time, you know, the century that has elapsed since late February, have a prophetic task. I wonder if we haven't taken so much for granted that they have become almost meaningless to us. But then, I remember a discussion several years ago about our celebration of Holy Communion every week. Some said that it took the "specialness" away from communion, and I said, "every meal isn't a Thanksgiving feast, but that doesn't mean I don't need to eat every day."

So much of our normal routines may never return, and a lot of what does return will be different in some ways. Our anxiety about not having what we've always had may be keeping us from seeing God ahead of us, calling us to know God and each other (and church) in new, and perhaps more glorious ways.

Dramatic changes in our lives cause us to need time to adjust. When a couple is married, the next year or so is about negotiating events such as where and when to celebrate holidays, vacations, and even more mundane tasks of life. If a child is born into the family, then things really change, which most of us will remember. Then children grow and change. And then, when a person dies, I think it takes at least a year of birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays to learn what life will be like as we continue to live.

The point of all this is to direct our attention away from what we're missing or unable to do, toward the truth that events beyond our control may be calling us to recognize. Because when we find that truth, when it becomes part of our lives, we will find God is with us. And when God is with us, so many other things fall by the wayside, and we discover more meaning, more grace, more love than we previously imagined.

We cannot predict the future. But we can understand the present, and continue to live together and with God, because we have the foundation of a past that keeps reminding us of all the other times God was with us, even if we didn't know it at the time.

Take some time to read the prophets, to find where their story resonates with your own. Because their story is very much our story. Because their story is also God's story.

A Statement of Mission



As Episcopalians in the
Diocese of Southern Ohio,
we commit to:

† Know the common story

Deut. 11:18-21

† Proclaim our common
faith

Matt. 28:19-20

† Pray our common prayer

1 Thess. 5:16-19

† Drink the common cup

Mark 10:38

† Serve the common good

Matt. 25:37-40

In the name of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is our common
ministry.

Dear St. Paul's,

Thank you so much for the Texas Roadhouse gift card. We will certainly enjoy it. We will miss and hopefully keep the friendships we have made there. Thanks again & God Bless.

Terry & Linda

Thank you so much for your cards, words, and prayers upon the death of my father, Arnold Rollins, in August. You have been present with me as I travel this new road, and know that your footsteps are seen on it, too.

Wayne Rollins



Our bishop has approved our return to the celebration of Holy Eucharist on October 18. At that time, it will have been just over seven months since we last joined together in this liturgy. On that date, we will once again vest the altar and place flowers on the reredos. And, in order to maintain some degree of safety, a few changes will be necessary in how we celebrate and receive Holy Communion.

We will continue to receive offerings as we have over the past several months. Offering plates will be on tables near the entrances to the nave. This means that the communion offerings of bread and wine will be on placed on the Credence table before the service begins, and will not be brought forward at the Offertory. And, for the time being, the prayers and responses during the Great Thanksgiving will be spoken. We may learn some of the older chants in the hymnal to facilitate singing responses without an accompanist.

One of the biggest issues we've been debating is how we consecrate the bread and the wine. Since the virus that causes COVID-19 is mostly spread by aerosols (despite the CDC's reluctance to buck political opinion), perhaps the most dangerous aspect of our celebration is the celebrant's voice projection over the exposed elements. Therefore, the hosts served to the people will remain in the ciborium with the lid covering them except during the elevation. A small amount of wine must be consecrated as part of the liturgy, and the chalice will be covered with a pall during the same time as the bread is covered.

Communion will be served in front of the chancel steps, and only the bread will be served at this time. Those receiving will be asked to maintain physical distancing, unless they are in the same family. For your assistance in this, it is exactly six feet from the back of one pew to the second pew away from it. The Celebrant will wear food service gloves to distribute communion, and take care to not touch the hands of others. To do this, each person is asked to hold their hands crossed, palms facing up, so the host can be dropped into the palms.

As we come to communion, please continue to wear a mask until after the host is received. At that point, you may move toward the appropriate side aisle, move the mask, and consume the bread. Then, return to your seat using the side aisles.

Things will be different, just as our times are different. We do not yet know if what we once considered "normal" will return to us. But what we do know is that our worship of God is what's important, and that God may not be as caught up in the details as we might want to be. (Although, there was that time when two of Aaron's sons were struck down because they offered incense at the wrong time.) What we do now is to attempt to ensure each person's safety as much as possible. Of course, the most dangerous part of Holy Communion has never been how we celebrate it, or the changes in how we celebrate. It has been, and will continue to be, how our celebration and reception of Holy Communion might change each of us.

LECTOR SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

October 4, Kim Bohler
October 11, Chris Nelson
October 18, Marty Davis
October 25, Peter Hemer

Altar Flowers

October 18, Millie Mote
October 25, Marty & John Davis

Holy Eucharist resumes on October 18, but no LEM needed for the time being.

As we resume our celebration of Holy Eucharist, there will be an offertory time when the altar is prepared. We will not pass the collection plates, but some time is needed as we move from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. If any musicians in the congregation would like to play a solo piece during this time, your assistance will be most appreciated. Please contact Fr. Wayne to volunteer.

OCTOBER LECTIONARY

October 4
Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:7-14
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

October 11
Isaiah 25:1-9
Psalm 23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

October 18
Isaiah 45:1-7
Psalm 96:1-13
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

October 25
Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18
Psalm 1
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
Matthew 22:34-46

October 4 is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It is a day where many traditions give thanks for animals, in the tradition of Francis who is said to have preached to birds (who didn't chirp or fall asleep!). Near the end of our service on October 4, we will bless any animals and their humans who may be in attendance. We do urge any of our four-legged friends to resist making an "offering" while in attendance, although if any want to join in singing a hymn, they may do so.



October 2020

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																					
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