



EPISTLE

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville, Ohio

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

January 2021

WHAT'S NEXT?

As I write this, Christmas dinner is in the oven. In between preparing different parts of my meal, I've done a few loads of laundry, emptied the dishwasher and washed a few other dishes as I finished with them. The sun has set, and all-in-all it's been a fairly quiet day in the neighborhood. The neighborhood cat that seems to live on my front porch is doing okay, as long as I replace the ice in its bowl with water. It won't let me get close enough to touch it, and it's so jumpy I've named him or her "Spazz."

Spazz has seemingly had a rough life or two. There are scars, no doubt from some of the other neighborhood cats that don't seem to play well together. And its tail is about an inch or two shorter than normal. Today, it's bitterly cold and windy, and Spazz has huddled into the padded shelter I placed under a chair several weeks ago. That and the regular helpings of cat food seem to have helped Spazz feel right at home. All God's critters need a helping hand now and then. And I've noticed that the distance he or she keeps from me isn't as great as it once was.

Spazz isn't the only critter that's had a rough time lately. During a Zoom call with our Assisting Bishop Ken Price, one of my clergy colleagues said she was planning a Requiem for 2020. Later on I thought that it might be more appropriate to mark the end of this past year by digging a deep pit, tossing all the year's calendars into it, lighting them on fire, and then salting the ashes before filling the pit with concrete. Then, just to be safe, perhaps a few rows of garlic surrounding it might be advisable.

As we begin this next year, our celebrations may be somewhat muted. Friends and family may not gather together in person, and our parish life seems to remain on hold except for the weekly streams of worship services. We might find that we need more time to reflect on the past year as we wonder what 2021 will bring. While some may long for a return to normal, we don't really know what normal will be in the wake of a continuing pandemic and civil unrest.

What we do know is that normal has been put on hold. We have postponed our annual meeting, although we will put together the usual reports and make them available. Then, when we're able, we'll gather for our meeting and hopefully get to celebrate just being together again. We may need to consider some different ways we can do that, including where we meet. As the weather gets warmer, we'll consider the ideas that come our way.

In the meantime, let us not forget that our greatest "normal" is found in a name given by the prophet so long ago. Emmanuel. God-with-us. In our mourning what, and those, we have had to release this past year, in our anticipation and anxiety of what 2021 will bring, Emmanuel. Somewhere in all the stuff of our lives, God will meet us, perhaps even suggesting a different route for the journey. Like Spazz, we find that we need to trust that what we need will be provided, even if our prayers are a bit longer than "meow."

Maybe I am to Spazz who I hope God will be for me. Anyway, in the meantime, a feast of sorts is getting ready, and the aroma is the invitation needed to come to the banquet. May grace and peace be the invitation we send out to those who are in the same wondering, even fretful position we recognize when we look in life's mirror. Emmanuel. God-with-us. Come and see.

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.

JANUARY LECTIONARY

Jan. 3, Second Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalm 84

Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19^a

Matthew 2

Jan. 10, Baptism of the Lord

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

Jan. 17, Second Sunday after the Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-20

Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

Jan. 24, Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:6-14

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

Jan. 31, Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

January 1 is the Feast of the Holy Name, reminding us that on the eighth day after his birth, Jesus was circumcised and named. January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany, marking the end of the Christmas season. January 18, the Commemoration of the Confession of St. Peter, marks the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It ends on January 25, the Commemoration of the Conversion of St. Paul.

BISHOP TRANSITION NEWS

As you know, the Diocese of Southern Ohio has bade farewell with thanksgiving for the ministry of The Right Reverend Thomas E. Breidenthal. Bishop Briedenthal's last Sunday was November 29. You can view his farewell sermon on the diocesan website, www.episcopalianconnection.org. Also, on that website you can find updates to the transition process.

The Standing Committee, which has oversight of the diocese during the transition process, has contracted with Holy Cow Consulting to survey the diocese. As we have information about the survey, we will forward an online link to complete it, or provide printed copies for those without internet access. The survey will encompass many aspects of diocesan life, and will gather a variety of responses from the laity and clergy.

2021 PLEDGES

Most everyone who pledged in 2020 has submitted a pledge for 2021. There are a few who have not yet done so. If you want to submit a pledge, please contact the church office and a form will be sent to you, or you can submit it in writing yourself. If you wish to discuss your pledge, please contact one of the wardens or Fr. Rollins.



Offering
giving back to God