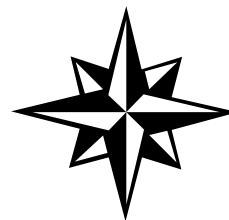


The Epiphany Star



EST. 1846

April 2020.



The Light Shines in Darkness.

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany - 225 West Main Street – Laurens, SC 29360 - epiphany@backroads.net
www.epiphanyoflaurens.org Church – 864-984-7000

The mission of Church of the Epiphany is to celebrate the light of Christ, proclaim the Gospel, deepen our faith, nurture and encourage all people.

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP ANDREW WALDO

(You will already have received this if you are on the Diocese E-Mail list)

March 19, 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." Ephesians 1:15-16

In this extraordinary time, I find myself filled with gratitude and love for our common life in Christ. I've begun making calls to each of our congregations—to rectors, vicars or priests-in-charge where one is in place, and to senior wardens where there is no long-term priest serving. It is important that we stay in touch and aware of one another's needs in what increasingly appears to be an extended time of trial. So I pray for each congregation and each clergyperson daily.

The challenge of social distancing for safety stands in stark contrast to our most primal Christian intentions: to be in close relationship with God and each other. Reports on this past Sunday's technologically engineered worship services across the Diocese were heartening. This was true both for the numbers of people participating and for our communal relief in feeling connected with each other—even if remotely. Perhaps this will be the time during which the Episcopal Church truly and widely embraces and develops its technology skills and uses! (If you need help, see Canon Alan Bentrup's technological primer on setting up remote meetings at www.edusc.org/technology.)

The physical realities of social distancing are challenging but deeply necessary to protect ourselves and to protect others. As the pandemic and estimates of future infection and death levels begin to grow exponentially even *with* social distancing, we must again reassess our gathering practices. **Effective immediately, I am extending the suspension of public, in-person worship throughout the Diocese of Upper South Carolina at least through April 30.** I am acutely aware of the multitude of consequences that will occur as a result of this suspension—pastorally, liturgically, financially, and relationally.

To mitigate these consequences, conversations are already taking place among clergy and pastoral care committees of the Diocese about best practices for tending to pastoral needs. Canons Alan Bentrup, d'Rue Hazel, and Jimmy Hartley are scheduling regular Zoom conferencing opportunities to facilitate these conversations at Convocational levels. These sessions will allow us to address other

areas of concern as well, such as, How do we ensure that congregations have access to Holy Week services regardless of their technological capabilities? Should we focus on Morning Prayer as our primary corporate technological worship? How do we tend to ongoing Christian formation?

For congregations in leadership transitions, we are addressing what adjustments we need to make in search processes to ensure safe, wise, and thorough discernment of God's call to clergy and the people whom they will serve.

This weekend, the Diocesan Executive Council (DEC) will meet—via Zoom—to consider, among other things, how we can corporately address and strengthen the most vulnerable congregations in our midst? It is clear that *all* congregations, and Diocesan House—and indeed virtually *all* places of employment—will be facing financial challenges. Thus, this is becoming a time during which we discover more deeply both our personal and corporate strengths and to use them to build up our communities and our abilities to respond to individuals.

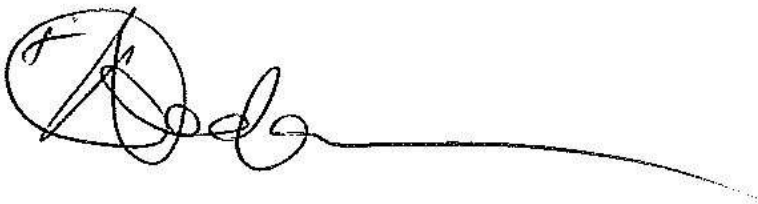
The White House hopes to send support checks to many Americans, checks that will be greatly needed, and much-appreciated by many of our congregants. Should this happen, some among us will have the capacity to manage without that extra assistance. If you are in that circumstance and do receive a check, you might consider donating all or part of that assistance to bolster your congregation's food, clothing, housing, or mental illness ministries, which serve some of the most vulnerable of all people. Or, you can offer extra support to your congregation, which is almost certain to experience new financial stresses.

Jesus says, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds." Remembering these words of comfort reminds us also of their challenge, especially in uncertain times, to trust God's love and care for us, come what may.

The apostle Paul, who built the Christian movement, rooted in love, against enormous odds and continual threats of violence reminds us constantly of our transcendent unity in the One who loves us more than we can ask or imagine, Jesus Christ.

Be safe. Call the lonely. Extend the help you can. Receive the help you need. And rejoice in the love that surrounds you.

Your devoted brother,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrew', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

+Andrew, child of God and servant of the Lord Jesus.

ON-LINE CHURCH SERVICES AND LENTEN MEDITATIONS AVAILABLE

With all in-church services being cancelled through the end of April, here are some links to on-line worship services and Lenten meditations that are available.

Washington National Cathedral, Washington, DC
<https://cathedral.org/>

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Columbia, SC
<https://www.trinitysc.org/live>

Episcopal Church of the Advent, Spartanburg, SC
Go to Episcopal Church of the Advent, Spartanburg on Facebook.com

Christ Episcopal Church, Greenville, SC
<http://www.ccgsc.org/online-worship-groups.php>

The Church of the Epiphany's expenses continue even though regular church services have been temporarily suspended. Please keep your donations and pledge payments up to date by mailing them to Treasurer Kara Horner at PO Box 742, Laurens, SC 29360 or you can mail them directly to the church at 225 West Main St., Laurens, SC 29360.



April 2020 Backpack Ministry Update

Due to the coronavirus, our program has changed. It has not stopped. Ford Elementary School Administration has requested that we continue the Backpack Ministry at their school. If any of the students in the program are unable to go to Ford to pick up their weekend food provided by the Backpack Ministry or if the school bus driver is unable to deliver the food on their lunch route, Ford Elementary School administration personnel will personally take the student's backpack to him or her.

Our issue is that quantities of food are limited. So we are purchasing as much as we can of an item at one time and then purchasing the item again (if it is still available) two or three days later so that we can get up to the quantity of 50.

Our other issue is practicing self-distancing. Instead of all of the Backpack Ministry volunteers working together on one day to pack the food, we are working independently: 1 or 2 people will unpack the food products and sort them for packing. Another 1 or 2 people will put the food in the backpack sacks. Another 1 or 2 people will deliver the backpacks to Ford Elementary School.

This will most likely be how the Backpack Ministry is handled for the rest of the school year.

Please contact Connie Daniels if you have any questions, comments or suggestions. Thank you for your donations and prayers for the Backpack Ministry.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

April 3:	Josiah Daniel Foggie	
April. 3:		Paul and Pontheolla Abernathy
April. 9:	Cassie Taylor Power	
April 18:	Brad Holmes	
April 24:	Linda Barksdale	
April 25:	John Calvin Hughes	
April 28:		Bill and Marilyn Ladd
April 28:		MJ and Jason Berryman

VISIT MISS LUCY'S GARDEN BLOG AT
WWW.GARDENEPIPHANY.WORDPRESS.COM