

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
The Episcopal Church in Athens since 1842
703 South Main Street (office at 701) Athens, PA 18810
The Rev. Benjamin Lee Lentz, Long-Term Supply Priest

Office: Voice and Fax: 570-888-5715
Parish Administrator, Barbara Cameron Caum: 570-888-8981
Web site: www.trinityathens.org - information@trinityathens.org
[Facebook.com/Trinity.Episcopal.Church.Athens](https://www.facebook.com/Trinity.Episcopal.Church.Athens)

Holy Week - Easter - April, 2021

Rumination: April, 2021 Start of Easter Season

The Rev. Benjamin Lee Lentz

Caveat: Ruminations – a much nicer word than ramblings – are the product of the mind of a retired priest with too much time on his hands during a pandemic. Ruminations are research driven epiphanic insights (more or less). Who knows where a rumination will end up? Even the author is frequently amazed.

Recently, I read an article about how America can learn from a biblical approach to history – allowing contradictory stories, such as moments of glory existing simultaneously with shameful moments. This led me to start thinking about various approaches for understanding history (ancient vs. modern), which in turn directed me to ruminating about the accounts of Easter and faith.

The premise of the article that I read is true enough. Close study of biblical narratives reveal that they are replete with inconsistencies and even outright contradictions. For example, humans are created after vegetation in Genesis 1:11 – 27 but before vegetation in Genesis 2:4 – 9. Or in 1 Samuel 17:50, David kills Goliath, whereas in 2 Samuel 21:19, Elhanan does. On a larger scale, the book of Joshua proclaims that the Israelites conquered “the whole land” (e.g. Joshua 10:40), but the book of Judges describes the survival of many Canaanites and other peoples. We also know that David was a preeminent king, but we also know that he got another man’s wife pregnant, then killed the husband.

Then my thoughts wandered to the fact that we

don’t look at history the same way as the writers of the Bible. The archaeologist, as well as biblical scholar, Carol Meyers, says: “The way people in biblical antiquity accounted for their past is not the same as it is in the modern world. Nowadays we expect ‘history’ to provide an accurate narrative of real events, though we still realize that any two eyewitness observers of an event will recall it in different ways, depending on their individual interests and prior beliefs.” [“Does the Bible Relate to History”, Carol Meyers, Duke University Professor of Religion]

The authors of the various books of the Bible were narrating stories in a manner that would explain the world to their readership. The authors took ‘oral tradition’, a rigorous recitation of narratives, and put them in to written form, lest they be forgotten as well as to be more widely available. They were not, by modern standards, recording history. They were recording, as best they could, the interaction of God with the world.

This brings me to what Easter can and should mean to us as Christians.

Each gospel author was telling the story of the events of Easter in a fashion that would help their readership to understand the importance of Jesus in their individual lives, helping them to see more clearly what God was doing in the world. Surely there are discrepancies in their versions. Should the discrepancies bother us?

If we see the Bible as a modern history text book, then we will most certainly have problems, leading to all sorts of linguistic contortions – all in hope of getting the stories to fit

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together. However, if we recognize the Bible as an instrument leading to faith, the inconsistencies become minor.

If I were to ask you to tell me the story of the Passion and Easter, without opening your Bible, I am sure there would be events you would omit.

Those event weren't important enough for you to remember because they didn't necessarily contribute to what you believe, in your heart, to be relevant to your understanding of your salvation.

And that's 100% fine with me – although I don't like when filmmakers do it, but that's for another rumination. It's okay if you do it personally.

Faith in the scriptures as the word of God is not a faith in the particulars of who specifically said what, when and where. Faith in the scriptures is the inherent knowledge that God has your back, even in death.

He is risen! Happy Easter!

Fr. Ben

When will we return to in-person worship?

The Diocese of Bethlehem has issued new guidelines for returning to in-person worship. In part, the Bishop, Standing Committee, and Diocesan Council write:

In continuing dialog with health officials, neighboring dioceses, ecumenical partners, and most importantly, you, the people of the Church, we believe it is now time to consider reopening our doors to indoor gatherings.

As we realize this fond hope, we must do so with care. Throughout the crisis, we have been guided by the best scientific and medical information available. Currently, positive trends in infection rates, declining community spread, and increased vaccinations indicate that a careful, limited reopening is now possible.

What is the process we need to follow to reopen? To consider indoor gathering and worship, each parish must determine the following:

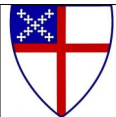
- Your county's 7-day Average New Cases per 100,000 to be less than 25 for 2 consecutive weeks
- The Vestry's consensus to open for indoor gathering/worship
- The agreement of the Rector/Priest-in-charge to open for indoor gathering/worship

Parish leadership should prayerfully consider these three elements and notify the Bishop in writing (email or letter) of any decision to gather indoors.

What if the infection level goes higher than the goal after we have reopened? Parishes should track the 7-day Average New Cases per 100,000 for their county. If the 7-day Average New Cases per 100,000 increases to 25 or more for 2 consecutive weeks, indoor gathering should be suspended until the 7-day Average New Cases per 100,000 returns to less than 25 for 2 consecutive weeks.





As we began this article, the number was 23 - two days later it was 27, and has risen 80% in the last two weeks. We were under 25 and were considering re-opening, but obviously we cannot. Bradford County is designated a "high risk area." In dark red on maps and charts. Trinity's leaders feel that we need to wait until the curve begins to go down - it would have been a shame to open only to have to close again in a week or two.

[There is a link to the entire letter on our website - trinityathens.org]



Trinity Episcopal Church - April 2021

Holy Week
Easter

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday							
Trinity Cycle of Prayer 4/4 David and Shelly Strange Fish. 4/11 Charles and Virginia Ford. 4/18 Marguerite Franks. Holly Flood. 4/25 Dan and Marny Gerhart.		 Anglicans Around the World 4/4 Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. 4/11 The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean, Archbishop James Richard Wong Yin Song. 4/18 The Church of Ireland. 4/28 The Anglican Church in Japan, Bishop Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Look for a link to our Easter video - watch your email or Trinity's Facebook page. </div>		Diocesan Cycle of Prayer 4/4 St. James, Dundaff; Clergy of the Diocese of Bethlehem. 4/11 Trinity, Easton. Clergy Widows and Widowers. 4/18 St. Margaret's, Emmaus, The Rev. Jane Arrington Bender, PIC. St. Matthew Society. 4/25 St. John's, Hamlin, The Rev. Ronald Miller. Diocesan Staff.							
		There are no services at Trinity. Holy Week and Easter Services will be livestreamed from the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bishop Kevin is celebrant and preacher. As soon as Bradford County's average new case rate drops, we will resume services on Sundays at 10, hopefully sometime this month. You'll be notified by mail or email.			1 Maundy Thursday Livestream 7:30 p.m. Cathedral AA 5:30 pm 		2 Good Friday Livestream Noon Cathedral 		3 Holy Saturday Livestream Great Vigil 5 p.m. Cathedral				
4 The Sunday of the Resurrection Easter Day Livestream 10:30 a.m. Stephen Lake		5 AA 7 and 8 pm https://livestream.com/nativitycathedral		6		7 AA Intergroup 5 pm AA 7:30 pm Kelly Murray, Jan Beck, Jr., Melissa Hill		8 AA 5:30 pm Chela Bubniak		9		10	
11 The Second Sunday of Easter Rachel Cama Nemer Anna Markevitch		12 AA 7 and 8 pm		13		14 AA 7:30 pm John Gurney		15 AA 5:30 pm David Bean		16		17	
18 The Third Sunday of Easter		19 AA 7 and 8 pm Jim Patterson		20		21 AA 7:30 pm		22 AA 5:30 pm		23		24 David O'Dell	
25 The Fourth Sunday of Easter		26 St. Mark AA 7 and 8 pm		27 Martha Pierce		28 AA 7:30 pm		29 AA 5:30 pm Liberty Hollywood		30		Kajo Keji 4/4 Kudupi Parish. 4/11 St. John Limi Parish. 4/18 Lubule, Koiba Parish. 4/25 St. Mark Dwani Parish.	

April at Trinity

Worship on Sundays in the church is currently suspended due to Covid-19. Please read the article from the vestry on page 2 about guidelines for reopening for in-person worship.

Resources for Holy Week. **Palm Sunday**, the beginning of Holy Week, is March 28th. Palms will be available in front of the church along with copies of *The Passion*, as was done last year. We also have a newly designed booklet, "The Way of the Cross," also known as the Stations of the Cross, that is on our web site; or, if you don't have online access,



The Way of the Cross

contact the office and one will be mailed or delivered to you. There is also an excellent booklet, "Holy Week at Home," which offers a wealth of ways to travel the Holy Week Journey on your own.



You'll see on the Calendar that services will be livestreamed from the Cathedral on Maundy

Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The link is

<https://livestream.com/nativitycathedral>

Other churches will be doing the same - our neighbors at Church of the Redeemer livestream on Face-

Book each week, and there are services from St. John the Divine as well as the National Cathedral. A quick search on line will get you the links.

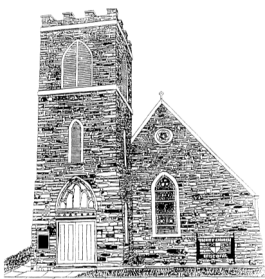
The Good Friday Offering - Since 1922, Episcopalians here have supported the ministries of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East through the Good Friday Offering. It is vital that we continue to share in this burden, and not let our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem carry the cross alone. Please consider mailing a donation to Trinity and note "Good Friday Offering" on the *for* line of your check. All funds directly support the ministry.



An Easter Video is being planned. It will be similar to the one we produced for Christmas, with an introduction by Fr. Ben, music, and a sermon. It should be ready by late Holy Saturday when we will send you an email with the link.

Spring is here - new growth is beginning all around us, and soon we will be able to gather together and grow together in our faith family at Trinity. It will be wonderful to see everyone again and it will be soon!

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To seek and serve Christ in all people