



# SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

306 N. Division Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 • (734) 663-0518 • [www.standrewsaa.org](http://www.standrewsaa.org)

**Sunday, April 26, 2020**

*The Third Sunday of Easter*

Dear Friends:

A world-wide pandemic shuts down the nations, a swarm of locusts devastates east Africa, tornadoes tear through the deep South on Easter, and snow in Michigan in mid-April. That's just the past three months; it's biblical in proportion. OK, you have our attention!

And many people ask, "Is God trying to send us a message?"

The answer is, Yes. God is ALWAYS trying to send us a message, but it is not in the form of a virus, or a storm, or any other eruption of nature. What we are seeing, and experiencing, and enduring is the world being the world, and we are not in charge of it. At best we are stewards of the world God has given us. That is a message God has been trying to get through our heads from the beginning. Yet a combination of human pride and a long-engrained, gross misreading of Genesis 1:26-28, have left humanity with the notion that the world is ours do with as we wish, with little regard for those around us, or for who or what may come after us.

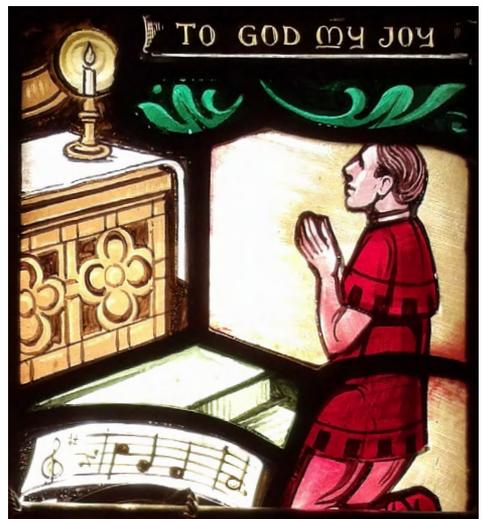
This is not a new story, nor a new problem. The human race has never lived in harmonious peace with itself or the world, with no fear for its safety or prosperity. We've relearned that lesson the hard way these past few months. What will we take from that lesson? How will life be different a year or two from now? And what part can we play in shaping that life for the better, not just for ourselves but everyone?

The COVID-19 pandemic is just the latest disaster – massive fires, super storms, rising sea levels, to name a few others – to draw attention to the lack of stewardship we have exercised over the world. The catastrophic results of which consistently

have the harshest impact on those with little power and few resources – the poor, the elderly, ethnic minorities, people on the margins of society, as well as the natural world itself.

If, when the vaccine is found and we all have received it, we think, "problem solved, things can get back to normal now," we will have missed the opportunity of a lifetime and committed a great and grave sin of not heeding our God-given responsibility. God has given us a wonderful and marvelous world that when treated with faithful, thoughtful stewardship can provide for everyone living on it. The opportunity for the world to be that has not been lost. That is God message to us. Will we pay attention to it and allow ourselves to act on it? Our lives may depend on our answer.

God bless, *Fr. Alan*



Above: The lower right corner of the Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina stained glass window at St. Andrew's K. Riedel

Hear the prelude as performed by the Eric Whitacre Singers:  
<https://youtu.be/5nfz1CfvK0s>

## The Collect

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, “Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

## The Response: Psalm 116

Hear the psalm as performed by the Lincoln Cathedral Choir:  
[https://youtu.be/79sThR6MT\\_I](https://youtu.be/79sThR6MT_I)

- 1 I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, \*  
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.
- 2 The cords of death entangled me;  
the grip of the grave took hold of me; \*  
I came to grief and sorrow.
- 3 Then I called upon the Name of the Lord: \*  
“O Lord, I pray you, save my life.”
- 4 Gracious is the Lord and righteous; \*  
our God is full of compassion.

- 5 The Lord watches over the innocent; \*  
I was brought very low, and he helped me.
- 6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, \*  
for the Lord has treated you well.
- 7 For you have rescued my life from death, \*  
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
- 8 I will walk in the presence of the Lord \*  
in the land of the living.
- 9 I believed, even when I said,  
“I have been brought very low.” \*  
In my distress I said, “No one can be trusted.”
- 10 How shall I repay the Lord \*  
for all the good things he has done for me?
- 11 I will lift up the cup of salvation \*  
and call upon the Name of the Lord.
- 12 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord \*  
in the presence of all his people.
- 13 Precious in the sight of the Lord \*  
is the death of his servants.
- 14 O Lord, I am your servant; \*  
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;  
you have freed me from my bonds.
- 15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving \*  
and call upon the Name of the Lord.
- 16 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord \*  
in the presence of all his people,
- 17 In the courts of the Lord’s house, \*  
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.  
Hallelujah!

### **The Epistle:** 1 Peter 1:17-23

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at

the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

### **The Gospel:** Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking

to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Anthem:** *O Sacrum Convivium*

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

*O sacred banquet! in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory to us is given. Alleluia.*

Hear the anthem as performed by the SWR Vocal Ensemble:  
<https://youtu.be/PACOS2H8WiQ>

## The Prayers

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Sermon

Fr. Charles Witke

This past Lent we had to make a most unforeseen adjustment with which we still live: in that season of renunciation we had to give up something we didn't expect: gathering for worship at St Andrew's, our church. Human beings can find even small changes hard to take; but even though we are not together, and not celebrating the Eucharist, we are still the Church in our virtual gathering. It may be a teaching and learning moment for both you and me.

And it has and will continue to be a teaching season for us too; an opportunity to sense community by its absence, and to realize its essence in our separated selves. Our community, in reading this, makes visible the invisible truth that during the shared time of worship, we create something together. Yet there's something of our shared work that nevertheless remains invisible this morning.

Perhaps it was like that for the two followers of Jesus going to Emmaus from Jerusalem in today's Gospel, three days after Jesus' death. Like us after Easter, they had been expecting something very different to be going on by now, after Jesus' triumphal Passover entry into Jerusalem: joy, not sadness. This out-of-touch stranger tells them stories from their

own tradition to interpret to them the tragic events they walk away from, challenging their fears, awakening their minds finally, and quickening their souls.

The slow and hopeless walk for these two from Jerusalem back home to Emmaus begins to change when Jesus joins them. So much so that when their destination is reached, they ask the stranger to stay with them at their destination. Their guest becomes their host when he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And at that moment, they realize it is Jesus, and he vanishes from their sight. The report they will make back in Jerusalem is that they knew Jesus not by seeing him, but rather that he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Maybe Emmaus awaits us too, even without the bread. Jesus comes to us too who like those in the story maybe do not know scripture very well. And he comes to Cleopas and his companion, who is unnamed. It might well be you or me. They are heading back home after giving up, the way some of us do sometimes.

St Luke in his narration takes care to show us that Cleopas and his fellow disciple are radically changed by their encounter on the road. After their sorrowful journey home, and after what happened at table where they stopped for the night, at the very same hour they got up and hastened through the dangerous night to return to Jerusalem. After they invited in the stranger, homeless for the night, they received the gift of the Resurrection. On the road they had told Jesus they had hoped Jesus was the one to liberate them. Now he has indeed done just that, and they become liberators themselves, and will return to Jerusalem to continue the struggle. The gift of Resurrection to Jesus' followers is a gift to be acted upon, not passively received.

And no sermon is ever finished until a congregation hears it, questions it, and thinks with it about the things that matter most to them. I hope that is happening now.

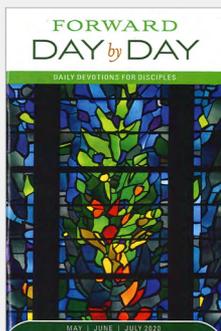
Almost two thousand years after Luke's account of what happened on the road to Emmaus, we still gather to learn from scripture and will in future gather to break bread. Though apart, we are still the Church. This community, in a world radically changed, continues with us today as we grow to learn new ways of being that Church, not just hearing but also doing the Word: now, and after crisis ends, continuing to seek ways of meeting the world's needs and enacting a set of values and priorities that respect the dignity of every human being: to continue what Jesus the liberator had indeed done, just as the couple at Emmaus hoped he would: to redeem, to liberate the world from hatred and all the rest that separates

us from each other and from God. As we will eventually go on setting about this in our own time and changed circumstances, we too may not immediately recognize Jesus in the stranger. But if we are faithful to the Emmaus story, when our present trials are past, we will learn that this story continues, and hinges on disciples doing simple things such as showing hospitality to someone unknown, the stranger in our company, and having conversation as equals, and making sure there is a meal to share: all this being a concise but profound teaching which reveals the nature of Christian community even in unusual circumstances. For we have truly been given the gift of Christ's Resurrection, setting before us the gift of life to share.

**Postlude:** *Alleluyas*

Simon Preston (b. 1938)

Hear the postlude as performed by Frederick Swann, organ:  
<https://youtu.be/yOSUYD8r0jE>



## Announcements

**The May-July edition of the “Forward Day by Day” devotional booklets are now available.**

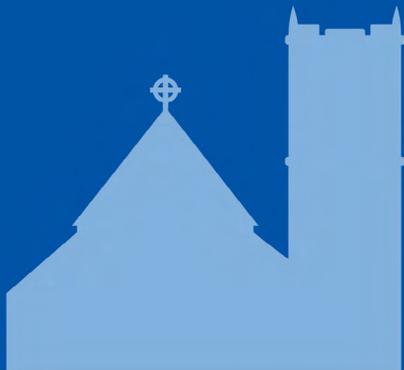
If you would like one sent to you, please send an email with your mailing address to: [agibson@standrewsaa.org](mailto:agibson@standrewsaa.org), or leave a message on the church voicemail at 734-663-0518, ext. 201.

## STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

*Are you on our email list?*

To be added to the church's email list, please contact Kathy McPherson at [kmcpherson@standrewsaa.org](mailto:kmcpherson@standrewsaa.org).

*Please know that your privacy is important to us. We do not add anyone to our email list until they have specifically requested it. If you know someone who isn't getting our emails, have them email Kathy.*





Episcopal  
DIOCESE OF MICHIGAN

## The Bishop's Fund for COVID-19 Relief

Dear Friends,

I need your help.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, over [one million Michiganders are unemployed](#). Many families do not have enough money to buy food to feed their families. Food banks throughout southeast Michigan are [struggling to meet the increased need](#).

**We can make a difference.**

**Our Diocese has partnered with All Saints', Pontiac and Christ Church Cranbrook to create a dollar for dollar matching fund of up to \$100,000 that will be donated to food bank distributors throughout our diocese, so that they may buy more food to feed all of us who are hungry.**

**You can contribute to this fund at [edomi.org/COVID19relief](https://edomi.org/COVID19relief).**

Every dollar you share counts, and every donation you offer is a blessing to the families who will be helped. Perhaps you may choose to give a portion of your CARES Act government check to assist our fellow Michiganders in need. Susan and I have contributed. I invite you to join us.

Our beautiful state of Michigan is in the midst of a journey unlike one we have ever before seen. Yet, this is a time when we, people of faith, are called to embody our beliefs by giving away a portion of what we have, we are called to love one another as God has loved us.

While the challenges we face are daunting, I know we can significantly help the women, men and children who are most in need.

Thank you so very much for all you have done, by praying, staying home, and reaching out.

All my best and in Christ,

*The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry  
Eleventh Bishop of Michigan*

