

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
The Episcopal Church in Athens since 1842
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Easter Season - May, 2020

-From Fr. Ben: Weird Easter

While making a routine visit to the clinic this past week, I met a friend, an active evangelical pastor. Of course we greeted each other at six feet, wishing each other a Happy Easter. I mentioned that I had attended an online service lived streamed from the Redeemer and asked how his Easter was. I knew that he hadn't had any in-person worship at his church either.

"It was good, it was a weird Easter" was his reply.

Hmmm ... Weird Easter? I would have said, different. But isolation gives me a chance to ruminate (aka: let my mind wander) and to think about Weird Easter.

To the best of my knowledge, in the Koiné Bible (Greek New Testament), the adjective weird never appears. And yet.

Depending upon which Gospel tradition you read, the cast of characters present at the tomb Easter morning and the recorded events vary: Mary of Magdala and the other Mary witnessing an earthquake, the fainting of the Roman guards and the angel rolling back the stone (Matthew); the same two Marys and Salome finding the stone already rolled back and an angel sitting on the edge of the tomb (Mark); the same two Marys and Joanna finding the tomb empty and the appearance of two angels (Luke); and, Mary of Magdala, then Peter and the other disciple all finding simply an empty tomb (John). No matter which account you choose, when you actually think about it, it doesn't seem to get any weirder than that. The first Easter morning: beyond description, odd, bizarre, queer, weird.

Beyond description: as the Gospel authors struggled with finding the exactly right scenario to report (there accounts differ slightly). Odd: an empty tomb. Bizarre: angels, God's messengers, first imparting the good news. In a word: Weird.

Weird isn't actually so inappropriate now that I

think about it.

So actually, for most Christians, excepting those who thought they would tempt God by ignoring the sanity and safety of social distancing, this Easter was much like the first Easter. An empty tomb - an empty church; but someone present, announcing he is not here - he is risen.

Also, remember every Sunday is the celebration of the Day of Resurrection, so we won't have to wait an entire year for Easter to roll around again. We'll be back before then, celebrating regularly his resurrection. Until then:

Περίεργο Πάσχα (Weird Easter!!)

Ben+

From Bishop Kevin:

A Phase Approach to Regathering

Surrender! Have you surrendered, yet?

As many of you heard me say in the cathedral live stream Easter Sunday - this particular moment is one where we are called to let go and trust in the Risen Christ - despite our best instincts to do it alone - we must walk together knowing that God walks with us on this journey as well.

This is what the Easter season is about - our thinking anew as to how we are to reach out and bring Christ's love to a world so desperately in need. This crisis offers us an opportunity to lean into our ethical responsibility for the common good and to address the growing inequalities that that this pandemic has exposed.

I have heard from so many of you just how jarring it is to not be able to gather in community with others. I hear your longing for the Eucharist. I yearn for that time when we will be together again in celebration. And yet, I am so heartened by your innovative spirit - by the ways you are gathering together virtually in coffee hours, Bible studies, creative prayer and worship opportunities and other fellowship moments to

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stay connected. I've heard story after story of people who have overcome their fears of technology to reach out!

Many are anxious and wondering how and when we will return to gathering in-person for fellowship and worship. At this time, **I'm calling on all congregations to remain closed to all in-person worship.** We must continue to rely on our medical professionals to ensure that we return when we are safely able and have all the proper precautions in place. And though we have been longing for a specific and set date that we could look forward to – when things would suddenly go back to “normal” – what has become clear is that the events that surround us are much too complex to provide us that kind of certainty.

Rather, we are working with the Presiding Bishop's office, other dioceses, similar organizations and diocesan leadership bodies to develop a phase approach for return.

A phase approach means that we do not set dates for when we return to worshipping in-person, but instead look at the circumstances surrounding us to decide what actions we should be taking in the present, and what actions we should take in the future when circumstances change. With guidelines from the United States and commonwealth governments, and other experts in the field of health, we have created a set of phases that describe appropriate church protocols based on health characteristics in our communities. Our goal is to continue to “be church” safely in every circumstance.

We are currently in **Phase I**, which is characterized by:

- Widespread community spread of the virus
- Overtaxed health system
- Short medical supply
- Lack of availability of vaccine, therapeutics, and counter measures
- Lack of protective supplies (e.g. gloves, masks, sanitizer) for general public

As long as these characteristics remain, we will continue to be in Phase I, which requires the following protocols:

- Gathering for online worship, formation, and community
- Limiting service ministries to safe protocols dedicated to essentials such as feeding ministries

Once the situation improves, and we see the following changes, and move to **Phase II**:

- Fewer than 50 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people for at least 14 days (determined by regions designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania)
- Safe treatment of all patients requiring hospitalization without resorting to crisis standards of care
- Testing all people with COVID-19 symptoms
- Active monitoring of confirmed cases and their contacts
- Case-Based Interventions including quarantine while awaiting test results, traced relationships over 14 days, and quarantine for close contacts with diagnostic testing

Phase II means we can adopt the following protocols:

- Church offices open in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued online worship, formation, and community
- Small church worship under 25 may restart in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued health safety protocols:
 - Wear masks
 - Wash hands
 - Sanitize frequently
- More specific guidelines will follow once Phase II health characteristics are closer to being met.

Once the situation improves so that there is:

- Negative community spread
- Global vaccination
- Widespread therapeutic availability
- Comprehensive testing for virus and immunity

Then we will enter **Phase III**:

- Church offices opened
- Missional and administrative capacities created
- Worship in churches
- Increased small group gathering
- Increased missional gathering
- Continued online worship, formation, and community
- Continued pastoral calling
- Return to service ministries with addition of new community relationships

For more information about all the phases, you can visit diobeth.org/COVID19.





Though it can be difficult to no longer operate with a specific “date-to-open” in mind, this phase approach allows us to safely and effectively plan for the future. And the lessons we learn in our current phase will help us be a more resilient, loving, and missional church in the future.

Please know that you all remain in my thoughts and prayers and that I need to hear from you. Please continue to reach out to our Diocesan Staff, particularly the Rev. Megan Dembi, if you have specific questions about our phased return to worship and ministry.



Trinity Episcopal Church - May 2020

Easter Season

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Trinity Cycle of Prayer: 5/3 Don Barton, Joe Barber. 5/10 Barbara Bean, Jan Beck. 5/17 Kay Horton, Jake Parshall. 5/24 David, Chela, Brandon and Sean Bubniak. 5/31 Marie Bubniak, Rick Bubniak.</i>		<i>Kajo Keji: 5/3 Emmanuel Parish Logili. 5/10 St. Peter Logu and Kanyi Parishes. 5/17 St. Paul Loopo Parish. 5/24 Mutongo Parish. 5/31 St. John Akuboro</i>	<i>Bethlehem: 5/3 Prince of Peace, Dallas; Youth Council. 5/10 St. George's, Hellertown, St. Stephen's, Whitehall. 5/17 Grace Church, Honesdale; Diocesan Peace and Justice Network. 5/24 Christ Church, Indian Orchard, The Rev. F. Graham Cliff; New Bethany Ministries. 5/31 St. James' and St. George's, Jermyn.</i>	1 St. Philip and St. James	<i>Mary Patterson</i>	2 
3 Easter 4	4 AA 8:00 pm <i>Patrick Kelley</i>	5	6 AA Intergroup 5 pm AA 7:30 pm <i>Kim Murray Noah Gurney</i>	7 AA 5:15 and 8:00 pm	8	9 <i>Hazel & Ron Hunt</i>
10 Easter 5	11 AA 8:00 pm <i>Lyude Paul Savannah Paul</i>	12	13 AA 7:30 pm <i>Colleen Barton</i>	14 AA 5:15 and 8:00 pm <i>Theo Lentz</i>	15	16 <i>Dave & Shelly Fish</i>
17 Easter 6	18 AA 8:00 pm	19 <i>Phil Kelley Amanda Bivins Caleb Hunsinger</i>	20 AA 7:30 pm	21 AA 5:15 and 8:00 pm	22 <i>Patricia Martin</i>	23 <i>Ginny Ford</i>
24 Easter 7 <i>David Bivins</i>	25 Memorial Day AA 8:00 pm	26	27 AA 7:30 pm <i>Dan Gerhart</i>	28 AA 5:15 and 8:00 pm	29	30 <i>Virginia Caum-Lake</i>
31 The Day of Pentecost  <i>Kim & Chuck Cornell</i>			<i>Anglicans Around the World 5/3 The Anglican Church of Japan, The Most Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu. 5/10 The Anglican Church of Kenya, Bishop Jackson Ole Sapit 5/17 Anglican Church of Korea, Bishop Moses Nagjun Yoo. 5/24 The Anglican Communion, Archbishop Justin Welby, The Anglican Consultative Council, The Most Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, the staff in London and at the U.N. 5/31 The Anglican Church of Melanesia, Archbishop Leonard Dawea.</i>			Trinity Sunday is June 7 

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Know of my love for you, and that I, diocesan staff, and your friends and colleagues are available to support you through this time. For I am convinced that it is only together that we can walk through this moment and through this moment we will discover that God is building something we cannot yet fully see or know.

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Resources for worship at home

(Some of this is a repeat from last month, but important for all of us, so it is included again)

If you do not have a Book of Common Prayer at home and do not have Internet access, please call the church and we will deliver one to your house, leaving it on the porch. It is also available as a link on our website, trinityathens.org.

The Rev. Trula Hollywood is saying noonday prayers on Facebook.

Canon Anthony (Tony) Pompa, the dean of the Cathedral, offers a short daily message in these difficult times, also on Facebook. It truly is lovely.

If you're not on Facebook, this might be a good time to consider joining to keep in touch with not only the clergy who are offering these daily prayers but also your family and friends, many of whom are probably there. Social distancing, should more aptly be called physical distancing because we all need to be in touch and support each other in ways that we can. If

you need help with that or any of the other online resources, please call the church office and Barbara will be happy to help.

The Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, (nativitycathedral.org) continues to livestream Sunday services. To watch these, visit livestream.com/nativitycathedral. Also, The Rev. Melinda Artman is livestreaming Sunday worship on Redeemer's Facebook page. They also include an order for worship on their website (redeemersayre.org).

Please remember the people on our parish prayer list as you say your own daily prayers: Andrea, Joe, Holly, Don, Patricia, Todd, John, Jenny, Marie, Barbara, Frank, Mina, Richard, Martha, Chuck, Ginny, Ritchie, Justin, Brian, Lucile, Mary, Mark, Billy, Ruth, Julia, Larry, Mary, Joyce, Allyson, and Clayton.

The calendar includes the Anglican, Bethlehem, Kajo Keji, and our own parish cycle of prayer, birthdays and anniversaries for you to include as well.

Remember that the church's expenses still go on while we are apart, so please keep your pledge current by mailing it to PO Box 9 or 701 S. Main, Athens.

Continue to check on your friends and neighbors who live alone. A friendly phone call or a card would be most welcome. This time of physical distancing does not mean that we cannot continue to do what our Lord commanded - that we love one another.



Stay Home - Stay Safe

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Easter Season

May, 2020

To seek and serve Christ in all people