

THE Harvest

Spring 2020 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

Church doors may soon open

Bishop Bascom issues guidelines
for how churches can resume
in-person worship, beginning May 24

Churches during the pandemic / Mask makers / Bishop's new novel

Spiritual communion offers riches of its own



WE ARE Eucharistic people. We are sacramental members of the Jesus Movement. As such, the 2020 coronavirus and the physical distancing being employed to reduce its spread, present us with unique practical, theological, liturgical and ethical realities.

Beginning with the opening chapters of Genesis, the Judeo-Christian tradition claims there is a Creator God who delights in materiality: water, plant life, animals, humankind have a tangible, material existence. Jesus, we believe, was God-with-us in human, fleshy form. The creation and incarnation are why we are sacramental people. We believe in outward signs of inward and spiritual grace.

We are Eucharistic people and rightfully so. Biblical scholars will tell you that Jesus's institution of the Eucharist is the most precisely attested actions and words of Jesus of anything in the New Testament.

The accounts of the Last Supper in Mark, Matthew, Luke and I Corinthians are near identical descriptions of Jesus' actions and statements on the night before his death. The behavior of his first followers and of Christians all the way to Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer make it clear that Eucharist is a central foundation.

The priest does not say the Eucharistic Prayer for us. We all do it, and the priest presides. As we recount salvation history and remember Jesus' death and rising, we are transformed.

We believe that in Eucharist the Risen Christ is with us and changes us to be more like himself: close to the love of God, compassionately serving and loving other people, transforming injustice into liberation for all.

And it is crucial to remember that we are Eucharistic people all week long, being the Body of Christ in our families, neighborhoods and work places. The sacrificial love that the Eucharist communicates is to mark who we are every day.

Our Canon Theologian, Dean Don Compier, describes this reality: "It is wonderful to think of the effects and realities and practices that go on all week. In this case, the last Eucharist we took, however long ago, is still operating, still conforming us to Christ, still knitting us together with all in the body... As Edward Schillebeeckx taught, the church is itself a sacrament!"

As churches now have the option of deciding to resume in-person

worship on May 24, but with strict guidelines on physical distancing and limits on the numbers who can gather, celebrating the Eucharist as we have been accustomed to doing it may not be feasible in every place, or at every moment.

However, whether worship is being done virtually or in person, I am encouraging church leaders to offer either Spiritual Communion or Eucharist in one kind at least once a month.


The term "Spiritual Communion" has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in communion with Jesus Christ.

It includes the consecration of bread and wine, in small amounts, but the elements are not received by anyone — those present or those watching online.

The elements are reserved until they can be shared with a community gathered in person. During this Spiritual Communion, people are invited to pray this prayer:

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Clergy have received my fuller thoughts on the theology and guidance on Communion today.

You can read more about Spiritual Communion on the diocesan website, www.episcopal-ks.org. 

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Editor's note:

In the Winter 2019 issue, we announced that budget cuts would reduce the number of issues of *The Harvest* this year from its usual four to three. In response, a member of the diocese who wishes to remain anonymous donated the amount needed to print the fourth issue in 2020. Our thanks go to our benefactor for this generous gift, and to all of you for reading.

— Melodie Woerman, editor

ON THE COVER: Church doors, like these at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, may begin to open for in-person worship under guidelines issued by Bishop Bascom. | Photo by Melodie Woerman

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The Episcopal Church is a community of 2 million members in 111 dioceses in 17 countries in the Americas and abroad.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry,
Presiding Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas is a community of more than 8,500 members in 44 congregations in eastern Kansas.

The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, *Bishop*

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News and notes from congregations

St. John's, Abilene has started collecting quarters to feed laundromat washers and dryers through the city's new Laundry Love program, which began earlier this year.

St. Paul's, Clay Center in early Lent highlighted practical things parishioners could do to exemplify the seven aspects of the Way of Love: turn, learn, pray, bless, worship, go and rest.

St. Paul's, Coffeyville Episcopal Church Women earlier this year gave \$1,000 to the church to help with the cost of supply priests.

St. Martin's, Edwardsville has installed new Internet service to the church and support buildings.

St. Andrew's, Emporia invited church members to come by the church to individually tackle some needed yard work projects while group clean-up days aren't possible.

St. Mary's, Galena members completed their Lenten study series on the Way of Love using Zoom video conferencing.

Epiphany, Independence welcomed Bishop Bascom for a visit on Jan. 5, after a visit to **Ascension, Neodesha** the day before.

Covenant, Junction City in March received a donation of \$1,500 from a local funeral home to support its weekly community meals.

St. Paul's, Kansas City hosted a fundraiser concert of music by Latinx musicians on Feb. 15 at the church.



PHOTO BY DEACON BOB HIRST

The Rev. John Bullock, Bishop Cathleen Bascom and the Rev. Ashley Mather, after Bullock's and Mather's ordination to the priesthood on Jan. 12

Two people are ordained priests during January cathedral service

A January ice and snow storm delayed by one day the planned ordination to the priesthood of the Rev. John Bullock and the Rev. Ashley Mather, moving it from a Saturday morning to the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, on Jan. 12. Bishop Cathleen Bascom was the celebrant.

Bullock and Mather both were ordained as transitional deacons in June 2019 after completing their theological education — Bullock at Bishop Kemper School for Ministry and Mather at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Bullock is finishing his internship year at St. Aidan's, Olathe, and Mather is serving as curate at Grace Cathedral. ☉

St. Margaret's, Lawrence encouraged parishioners to undertake some form of outreach during Holy Week, such as posting a "thank you" sign on the front door for delivery drivers, buying gift cards to a local res-

taurant or praying for neighbors on walks.

Trinity, Lawrence Christian education director Susan Hires gave parents a break from supervising schoolwork by offering a storytell-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Palms to go in Pittsburg

Members of St. Peter's, Pittsburg, were invited to stop by the church to pick up blessed palms and palm crosses to on Palm Sunday. Palms also were available to people who drove into the church parking lot, handed out by parishioner Jeanine Blessant. ☉

ing mix of crafts, music, gardening and beekeeping, streamed live on the church Facebook page twice a week.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth used the time when the church building was closed for some upgrades, including new wood floors, new carpet and new handrails on the chancel steps.

St. Paul's, Manhattan offered a daily offering called Noon Zoom, featuring coffee hour, prayers and music recitals by members.

St. Michael's, Mission created a Covid-19 Advisory Task Force, which provides weekly information to members, including links to helpful articles and medical information.

St. Matthew's, Newton participated in the "Way of Love 50 Day Bible Challenge" during Lent.

St. Aidan's, Olathe undertook some needed church renovations in April.

Grace, Ottawa on Palm Sunday left blessed palms outside the front door of the church for members to pick up for themselves and others.

St. Thomas', Overland Park offered hand-crafted prayers shawls for anyone in need of comfort during stay-home orders, with drop-off at the recipient's door.

St. John's, Parsons in January designated that unspent 2019 outreach funds be donated to local school districts to cover past-due lunch bills for students.

Epiphany, Sedan in January raised more than \$700 from members to support the work of NourishKC to feed hungry people in Kansas City.

St. Luke's, Shawnee is making sure Sunday school students are learning when the church building is closed, with teacher Debbie Fowler on Saturday dropping off supplies at students' homes so they are prepared for the next day's video lesson and activity.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka provided families with a butterfly pattern to be printed, colored and displayed, to take the place of handmade butterflies normally carried in procession on Palm Sunday.

St. David's, Topeka has used Zoom video conferencing for Sunday morning virtual coffee hours before members watch online services provided by other churches.

St. Luke's, Wamego offered a virtual flowering cross this Easter, with photos of flowers and flowering trees taken by members put together into an Easter Day slideshow.

Good Shepherd, Wichita spent Lent in a study of the gospel of John.

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St. Bartholomew's at St. Johns, Wichita provided palms for members to pick up for Palm Sunday, and palms were delivered or mailed to members not able to stop by the church.

St. James', Wichita announced that its annual Olde English Tea, which has occurred each spring for 90 years, has been postponed until spring 2021. Proceeds support local charities.

St. Stephen's, Wichita has welcomed weekly Wednesday video chats from their interim, retired Bishop of Western Kansas Michael Milliken.

Grace, Winfield offered parents of children living at home the opportunity for a virtual happy hour on April 3 via Zoom video conferencing. The invitation also went to parents at **Trinity, Arkansas City**. ☉

Clergy news

Deacon Charles Durland has been assigned to St. Paul's, Coffeyville, after completing his post-ordination internship. He was ordained a deacon on Sept. 12, 2019

The Rev. Jonathan Brice is the new rector of St. Luke's, Shawnee, beginning Feb. 1. He most recently was rector of Christ Church in Aspen, Colo. He was ordained in the Church of England in 1992 and served parishes and schools there before moving to the United States.

The Rev. Sid Breese earlier this year finalized a Letter of Agreement officially making him vicar of Epiphany, Independence and Ascension, Neodesha. He most recently served in the Diocese of West Missouri. His wife the Rev. Mary Schrom Breese is rector of Epiphany, Sedan.

The Very Rev. Vicki Smith, rector of St. David's, Topeka, on March 4 was named dean of the Northwest Convocation. She replaces the Rev. Patrick Funston, who currently is on sabbatical and on Aug. 1 will become canon to the ordinary.

The Rev. R. James Mitchell died on March 13 in Wichita. He had served at St. James', St. Alban's (before its merger) and St. Stephen's, all in Wichita. Memorial services have not been announced. ☉

Patrick Funston is named canon to the ordinary

ON JAN. 26 Bishop Cathleen Bascom announced that the Rev. Patrick Funston will become the diocese's canon to the ordinary, beginning Aug. 1.

Funston, 36, currently is rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Manhattan, where he has served since 2013.



The Rev. Patrick Funston

As canon to the ordinary, Funston will serve as the bishop's chief clergy administrative aide, translating vision and initiatives into the processes necessary for them to be sustainable and to bear fruit. He also is charged with researching best practices for the work of mission in Kansas.

He will work with clergy and parishes to implement new models like the Kansas Minster Project and will serve as the bishop's representative on three new diocesan task forces: Justice and Racial Reconciliation, Care of Creation, and Evangelism. In partnership with diocesan Transition Missioner Debbie Kremers, he also will have responsibility for clergy and parish transitions.

Funston grew up in this diocese and was an active participant in its youth and campus programs. He is a 2007 graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2011 and was ordained a priest in 2012. He spent two years as chaplain and teacher at Bishop Seabury Academy in Lawrence before becoming rector of St. Paul's.

He currently serves as president of the Disciplinary Board and until recently was dean of the Northwest Convocation. He is a two-time deputy from the diocese to General Convention and former member of the Council of Trustees, and he also served on the Commission on Ministry and the Campus Ministry Council.

His wife Michael is diocesan Associate for Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministries and will continue in that role. They have two children, Eirín and York. ☉

Kansas parishioners help health care workers by making cloth face masks

KELLY WINGERSON, a member of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, loves to sew. She belongs to two sewing groups — Grace Cathedral Quilters and Quilters Tecumseh North, a group within the school where she works as a math tutor.

In mid-March, as hospitals and health care workers began to find themselves unable to obtain the personal protective equipment that they needed — items including masks, gowns and gloves — she and others decided to take action.

With help from the cathedral's assistant organist Sylvia Hamilton, she began to organize people to sew washable masks made of cotton and flannel, to be worn by medical professionals in order to conserve N95 masks for those treating Covid-19 patients.

By late March, 80 masks were delivered to Tallgrass Surgical Center, and physician Dr. James Hamilton (Sylvia's husband) planned to take them to a Topeka hospital. Wingerson's work to that point even was featured on a local television station.

Since then, additional sewing groups have joined her effort, with more than 20 volunteers creating nearly 2,000 masks by late April, with more being delivered to other care facilities in the area.

But Wingerson said the effort hasn't been without its challenges. Not long after starting mask production, volunteers encountered a shortage of the elastic used for ear loops, both in local stores and online. So stitchers improvised and switched to fabric ties. Volunteers also shared materials among themselves when needed, and some non-sewers stepped in to cut fabric to the required size.

Wingerson said, "With new information as the virus progresses, it appears sewing face masks will be a steady need for our community. So you can trust the village of sewers will continue until the needs are met."

Others spring into action to help

The Church of the Covenant in Junction City on March 24 also got involved with making masks, this time by assembling more than 100 kits that were sewn to completion by parishioners. A plastic bag was filled with three pieces of fabric and two pieces of elastic, along with



PHOTO BY KELLY WINGERSON

Kelly Wingerson of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, has been sewing cloth face masks for health care workers unable to obtain surgical masks because of the coronavirus pandemic. She and others in groups she has helped facilitate have made more than 2,000 masks.

a link to the sewing instructions. In less than a week all the masks were finished, and they were blessed by the rector, the Rev. Doreen Rice, during the church's online worship service March 29.

Lee Miescher of St. Bartholomew's at St. Johns, Wichita, personally has made more than 400 masks for use by local medical personnel.

At Trinity, Lawrence, Camille Olcese recruited volunteers to assist with making masks for health care workers at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. ☉

Bishop Bascom announces guidelines for diocesan churches to re-open

By Melodie Woerman

ON MAY 4 Bishop Cathleen Bascom issued guidelines that describe how churches of the diocese can begin to re-open, as state and local officials relax stay-at-home orders put in place to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Churches may re-open on May 24, contingent on orders from state and county officials. She made it clear that no church is required to open on that date, and clergy and lay leaders of every congregation need to base their decision on their own circumstances.

The bishop offered this summary of the guidelines:

- Churches may resume in-person worship on May 24, unless local authorities require a later date for group gatherings
- No church is required to resume worship in their building, and the bishop will support whatever a church decides is in the best interest of its members
- Requirements of state and local officials on the number of people who can gather must be observed
- Everyone in church must keep 6 feet apart; family groups may sit together but remain 6 feet from other groups or individuals
- Churches need to mark their worship space to indicate seating that is 6 feet apart
- Everyone other than small children must wear a mask that covers their nose and chin
- Churches must keep a register of names of people attending in-person services for possible future contact tracing
- Services can include instrumental or recorded music, but no live singing
- No food or drink is to be offered at coffee hour
- Consider options for worship, both in-person and online (Morning Prayer, Spiritual Communion, Eucharist in one kind)

Civic pronouncements will govern numbers

Bishop Bascom, who was part of a group of faith leaders who spoke in late April with Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, said that congregations must follow the restrictions placed on the size of gatherings set by the state and county officials and adhere to the stricter of the two.

State guidelines that went into effect on May 4 permit gatherings of no more than 10 people until May 17. If health officials agree that virus mitigation is taking place, that number goes up to 30 people from May 18–30 and to 90 from June 1–15. No restrictions would be in place beginning June 16.

Because the number of cases of Covid-19 varies across the diocese, county officials may require smaller numbers, or longer timelines, than the state does throughout the phase-in process.

Distance is most important

The bishop said that the critical thing churches and members must do is to strictly adhere to 6 feet of distance between people or groups. “When I spoke with the governor, she said this is the most important thing everyone can do,” Bishop Bascom said.

Because of this, churches are to carefully examine their worship space and mark where worshippers can sit to maintain the required physical distance.

This means that the size of the worship space, and the number of usual worshippers, will impact how many can attend a given service, as well as how churches will ensure the maximum number allowed is maintained.

In her letter the bishop suggested churches consider having people rotate between in-person and online services, if numbers require it.

A return to communion

After churches have spent recent weeks offering online Morning Prayer services, the question of how to administer communion safely looms large. The bishop said communion with only bread can be offered, if clergy thoroughly wash their hands before distributing wafers and if worshippers maintain 6 feet between them going to the altar rail.

She suggested that spiritual communion is also an option, so that the church community hears the words of the Eucharist even if people do not receive the sacrament. (*The bishop describes spiritual communion in her column, on the inside front cover of this issue.*)

Masks also are important, as they lessen the spread of droplets by the wearer, thus protecting other worshippers



As churches begin to re-open



Follow the guidance of state and local officials



In-person worship can resume on May 24 if OK locally



Church leaders decide what is best for each congregation



Keep 6 feet distance between people and groups



Wear a mask that covers your nose and chin

from a virus that can cause a person to be contagious before they feel any symptoms.

The bishop also said music during worship can be instrumental or recorded, but there can be no singing at this point. Outbreaks of Covid-19 have happened in some states from choir practice or worshippers sitting near the choir, likely from the forceful breathing required for singing.

Living in three spaces

In her letter, Bishop Bascom suggested church members think about the path from initial stay-at-home orders to a society with no restrictions as three spaces, not three timelines:

- Home and Garden and Online Worship (shelter in place, as people have been doing since mid-March)
- The Courtyard: Small in-person Gatherings and Early Re-Entry (where churches can be, beginning May 24)
- The Full Church/Busy Market (after this coronavirus no longer is a danger)

The bishop noted that the Courtyard phase could last as long as 12 months, depending on spread of the virus in communities. During this phase, churches are encouraged to continue online worship, both for those who may not wish to return to in-person services as well as for

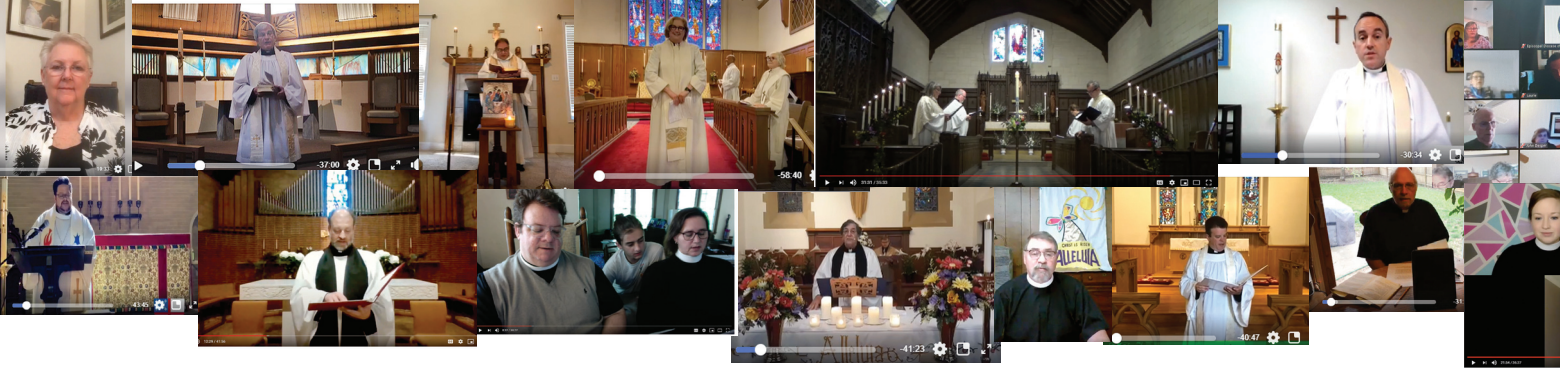
new people, some from outside the parish, who have been worshipping online.

Helping others

Churches already have adapted their food ministries to help hungry people by switching to to-go boxes or bags of food. That will continue for the foreseeable future.

Community groups, including AA, can resume using church buildings so long as they meet the maximum number allowed and keep 6 feet of distance.

The full text of the bishop's letter is available on the diocesan website, www.episcopal-ks.org.



Churches across the diocese adapt as pandemic brought building closures

***Editor's note:** On the next eight pages you will read not only how churches of the diocese have responded during the closure of church buildings, but also some first-person stories of how the pandemic has affected people in some way. There also is a brief look at churches during the 1918 flu epidemic, as well as the mass Virtual Choir video that debuted on Easter.*

We hope all this helps to document the work and ministry of the diocese during this extraordinary time.

By Melodie Woerman

ON MARCH 16 Bishop Cathleen Bascom, heeding warnings of national local health officials about the spread of the never-before-seen coronavirus, informed the diocese that churches would be closed until early April.

Two days later Presiding Bishop Michael Curry encouraged churches to suspend in-person worship through May 17, and word went out from the bishop's office on March 20 that buildings would be closed for worship for eight weeks.

And even as it hit clergy and worshippers alike that this meant no one would be gathering for Holy Week and Easter services, many churches

pivoted in mere days to providing worship online.

A dozen congregations were broadcasting on Sunday, March 22, most via Facebook. By early May, that number had grown to 26 churches, out of 44, using Facebook, YouTube or even Zoom video conferencing for services of Morning

Prayer.

Meetings quickly moved online, too, for diocesan bodies as well as parishes. The Council of Trustees, which had offered online meeting opportunities in the past when bad weather hit, has met via Zoom since mid-March. The Commission on Ministry was able to interview can-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Rev. Marc McDonald offers an Easter Day blessing, in the rain, to parishioners driving by St. Andrew's in downtown Emporia, as his daughter Sarah waves an Easter streamer overhead. It was the first time he had seen many of his congregation in person since church buildings were closed across the diocese starting March 16.



SCREENSHOT COLLAGE BY MELODIE WOERMAN

Screens became the place of worship for people across the diocese as churches used Facebook, YouTube and Zoom to share services and messages when church buildings were closed to worshippers.

didates for Holy Orders online, and Vestries across the diocese have learned how to conduct business virtually.

The pandemic-caused closure also disrupted plans by three churches to mark important milestones. The 100th anniversary of St. James' Wichita, set for June, was postponed, as was the May observance of the 150th anniversary of St. Luke's, Wamego. St. Andrew's, Emporia, postponed some early activities related to its 150th anniversary, with hopes that the celebration itself still could proceed in November.

Staying connected while apart

Online services offered the chance for many to gather on Sunday mornings, or at other times, for worship. But churches also found ways to stay connected throughout the week. Many created teams of people, Vestry members or others, to reach out to parishioners on a regular basis by phone calls or emails.

The Rev. Mary Schrom Breese sent a weekly sermon by mail to members of Epiphany, Sedan, and reached out by phone or text to a portion of her congregation daily. The Rev. Kay Dagg, St. Paul's, Clay Center, mailed letters to everyone without email, along with a sermon, and parish children got a card from her each week.

The Rev. Mike Loyd, St. Andrew's, Derby, sent cards to elderly members and

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Thoughts about liturgy online

By the Rev. Gar Demo
Rector of St. Thomas, Overland Park



In my mind liturgy feels like going to the opera: the room, aesthetics, clothing and ambience all contribute to the experience of the high art of opera. Without that, opera is just people standing around singing.

I don't think our liturgy translates well to video, at least not without effort and thoughtfulness to the

difference in the medium.

At St. Thomas' we have found a mixture of pre-recorded material (music, sermon, readings) with live participation still leaves us with some of the elements of communal worship.

We feel "together" on Facebook and YouTube as we participate together in our traditional services, but at the same time pre-recording allows for the sound and other elements to be done in a way that dignifies the services.

As each week has passed, we have tried new things with great success and a few bumps in the road. We had a virtual palm procession with photos of our members processing palm branches at home. We have offered time for virtual community prayer, and we had a virtual peace, with short videos from our members to each other.

We had two new members join and ask to be baptized.

Additionally, our children's ministry has put together amazing weekly teaching sessions and videos for Zoom with our kids. All our small groups are meeting online, and our youth continue to meet weekly as a group, online, as well.

All this said, we have no idea what we are doing or when this will end. However, we have found many creative and wonderful ways to connect with each other anyway — and some of that we will keep. ☺

I am a Covid-19 survivor

Note: The author is a member of an Episcopal church in Kansas who asked to remain anonymous to protect her family's privacy. This was written on April 29.

I am recovering from Covid-19. I was one of the lucky ones — I didn't have to be hospitalized, and my oxygen levels stayed within range. My husband and two sons never got sick. I still have a job and good health insurance.

But I still experienced two miserable weeks of fevers of up to 104, severe body aches, headaches, shortness of breath and chest pain. I wondered if my body was strong enough to fight off this new virus. I had panic attacks and had to face my own mortality. Calls to my priest helped me through those dark times.

Mine was the first identified case of coronavirus local transmission in my county. This means I did not have known contact with an infected person or traveled to a viral hot spot. I don't know when or how I contracted it, or how many people I unknowingly exposed to it before I developed symptoms.

In mid-March, some relatively mild but worrying symptoms sent me to my doctor's office, where they luckily had tests for Covid-19. They sent me home and told me to isolate (and my family to quarantine) while I waited for the results. That meant I had to use a bedroom and bathroom apart from the rest of my family. Two days later I found out I tested positive. My husband, donned in a mask and gloves, brought meals to me. When my fever caused me to sweat through the bed sheets, I had to change and launder them myself because of contamination risks.

I was in isolation for two weeks, not knowing each day if I would get better or worse, sleeping only 3-4 hours at a time before waking up gasping for breath. My family was not allowed to leave the house unless it was a medical emergency. My husband was relegated to the couch for close to four weeks.

My fevers began to subside after two weeks, and the health department cleared me from isolation protocols. My family was in quarantine for an additional two weeks.

For almost a full month, we relied on people from our church and community to help with grocery shopping, dropping off masks — anything we needed. We had so much help and support. It wasn't easy, but we did it.

I am recovering, but I wear out quickly. My stamina isn't great. My lungs aren't the same as before, and I sometimes have to use an asthma inhaler for the shortness of breath.

I want people to know how grateful I am for the sacrifices people are making right now — practicing social distancing, reducing their work hours, home-schooling their kids and missing the fellowship of church. I know it will help people not experience what I did.

I don't want my story to scare people but to say, "Be cautious." These are hard times with lots of sacrifices, and I am very grateful for those making them. ☺

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"probably...more emails during this time than I've done in my life."

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis recorded a weekly video reflection for her parishioners at Trinity, Arkansas City, and Grace, Winfield, and Grace Cathedral, Topeka, sent short daily meditations by email, from the Very Rev. Torey Lightcap and the Rev. Ashley Mather.

The Rev. Marc McDonald, St. Andrew's, Emporia, offered weekly office hours using Zoom, and the Rev. Jon Hullinger, Trinity, Atchison, said people often would stay online after Morning or Evening Prayer services, just to chat.

The Rev. Greg Doll, St. Mark's, Blue Rapids and St. Paul's, Marysville, said he texted and called people regularly. He said, "If anything I've become more pastoral" than before.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth was offering online services, but the Rev. Steve Lipscomb said he knew some members couldn't watch. So he sent them audio recordings of worship on CDs, and even provided CD players for those who needed one.

Some churches offered fun activities, too. Church of the Covenant, Junction City, hosted an acoustic music concert on its Facebook page April 17, and St. Paul's, Manhattan offered a daily "Noon Zoom," with offerings that included

coffee hour, prayers and music recitals by church members.

Going digital

While churches made a swift pivot to worship on screens in place of worship in person, it wasn't without its challenges. Lightcap, dean of Grace Cathedral, called the effort to create an online service "very time-consuming" and "outside the main areas of expertise of most clergy."

Leavenworth's Lipscomb called it "a trial and error process" that improved each week.

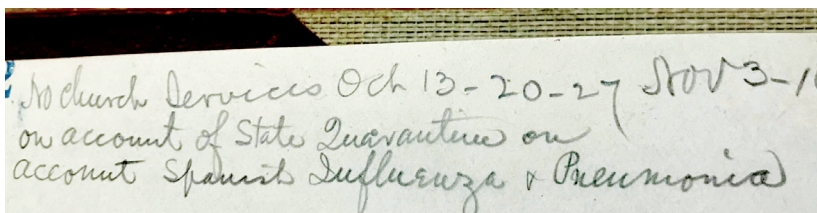
The Rev. Doreen Rice of Covenant, Junction City, said there was a learning curve to using Facebook Live, as well as dealing with Internet lapses during the broadcast. And, she added, "It is very odd to worship in front of an empty church."

McDonald said his Emporia church had begun streaming last October, but using it exclusively pointed out their need for better equipment and more robust streaming licenses, which came at a cost. Learning how to use all that, with little outside assistance, was a challenge, he said.

But clergy also said that all the effort was worth it, and that their churches plan to continue to offer some kind of online worship even after in-person services resume.

Lightcap said the cathedral's Morning Prayer service, pre-recorded on Zoom and posted to church YouTube and Facebook channels, along with live Compline every night, has provided "an expanded reach, new congregants, and a few donations from people impacted by this ministry."

Lipscomb said St. Paul's has seen some former members, who moved away or otherwise left the church, join in online services. McDonald said the extra reach provided by



A financial record book for 1918 belonging to the Church of the Covenant, Junction City, notes that the church was closed for five Sundays that fall because of quarantine caused by the Spanish flu pandemic.

The 1918 pandemic in Kansas

In the fall of 1918, while the United States was engaged in World War I in Europe, another foe began to sweep across the country. A new strain of influenza had first appeared in the spring among soldiers at Fort Riley, but it was mild and passed without much notice.

But by October it had mutated into a new and dangerous strain that resulted in a quarter of the country infected and 675,000 deaths. In Kansas, with a population of 1.7 million, 12,000 people died.

The state fared better than others in part because of the quick action of Dr. Samuel Crumbine, secretary of the state board of health, who was known for his "swat the fly" campaign to stop insect-born illnesses. In October he issued a statewide call for a stop to public meetings. In Topeka, local officials went further, closing all public gatherings, theatre presentations and churches. Other cities soon followed.

School districts shut down classes, and some cities listed school assignments in the local post office or printed them in the newspaper.

By November many quarantine orders were lifted, but some cities kept them in place until January.

The flu returned in the spring of 1919, but fewer people fell ill, leading health officials to conclude the disease had come to an end.

Information comes from "Kansas in the 'Grippe,'" an article for the Spring 1992 issue of Kansas History by Judith R. Johnson, now Professor Emeritus at Wichita State University. ©

online services "is too great not to continue."

Doll said he found that the "audience is much larger" than his two small congregations, and that using Facebook for services has prompted him to use it to reach out more to his parishioners in general. He plans to continue doing all of that.

Special Easter offerings

While Holy Week and Easter were

unlike anything before, the diocese and parish churches worked hard to provide special offerings.

In the first week without in-person worship, Bishop Bascom decided to create a diocesan Easter Vigil service, with the service booklet printed and mailed to members of every church.

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Continued from page 11

The service itself was made up of video segments from 19 people or groups, including the bishop preaching her sermon via Zoom. There also was audio of an Easter hymn sung in 2016 at Grace Cathedral, accompanied by photos of Easter windows or Easter flowers from churches throughout the diocese. The 59-minute video was made available on the diocese's YouTube channel and garnered more than 1,500 views.

Churches also got creative with what they provided during Holy Week.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis and the Rev. Kathy Swain each recorded the Maundy Thursday Stripping of the Altar, Lewis at Grace, Winfield and Swain at Trinity, Arkansas City.

St. John's, Parsons offered an online Stations of the cross on Good Friday, while St. Paul's, Clay Center provided a Stations of the Cross slideshow of images and prayers.

St. Bartholomew's at St. Johns, Wichita, decided to record all the Holy Week services, with senior warden Gary Charter using his iPhone for videos of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday Stations of the Cross and Easter Day. The church also provided an audio recording of Deacon Terry Miescher leading a service of Tenebrae.

St. Andrew's, Emporia, asked parishioners to record themselves saying "Peace be with you. And also with you," with clips then edited into a video for Easter Day.



Gary Charter, senior warden at St. Bartholomew's at St. John's, Wichita, used duct tape to attach his iPhone to a tripod to record Holy Week services at the church.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Communion not available

In early April Bishop Bascom sent a pastoral letter to clergy, outlining her thoughts about the importance of the Eucharist to all Episcopalians but realizing that offering the sacrament to parishioners wasn't possible as church buildings remained closed.

She encouraged churches to continue to offer Daily Office services (Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer), or to provide a Spiritual Communion, where a Eucharist is celebrated but the sacrament isn't consumed, by the priest or anyone else present. Instead, worshippers pray

Virtual Choir included Topekans


During the Easter Day online service from Washington National Cathedral, a "virtual choir" of more than 600 people sang "The Strife is O'er," thanks to efforts to stitch together 777 video submissions into a seamless whole.

Among those included were three people from Grace Cathedral, Topeka: Jason Kingman, Deborah Barnes and Bobbi Athon.

Submissions were solicited during a short time frame in March via social media. The idea came from communicator Natalee Hill of Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Philadelphia, with the technical side



overseen by Jeremy Tackett, the Episcopal Church's director of creative services.

The video can be viewed at episcopalchurch.org/virtual-choir 

that they will share in communion with Christ.

(The bishop describes spiritual communion in her column, on the inside front cover of this issue.)

Addressing food needs

One of the initial critical needs was to help churches with food ministries find ways, if possible, to continue to serve people in need. A letter from Bishop Bascom suspended food provided just for hospitality, like potlucks, but permitted food ministries to continue if it involved a to-go or drop-and-go format, what the bishop called “Feeding without Gathering.”

And as the number of people who lost jobs, were furloughed or had wages reduced grew, churches knew the work of feeding people was more important than ever — if they were able to keep it going.

Some larger community meals, including the Happy Kitchen at St. Paul’s, Manhattan and the CUFF dinner hosted by Epiphany, Independence, suspended operations because they either lost volunteers or their space made the new format unworkable.

The Saturday sandwich ministry of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, always had provided a to-go sack of sandwiches, so only the interaction with participants had to change.

The weekly Sharing Table at St. Luke’s, Wamego began to offer diners a hot to-go breakfast.

At Canterbury at K-State, program assistant Anastasia Cunningham has continued to cook food for students in the area who regularly ate a weekly meal at the house. Now, she delivers a hot, hearty meal in carry-out containers.

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I am caring for Covid patients

By Yvonne Saunders-Teigeler, M.D.
Member of St. Andrew’s, Derby

Note: This reflection was written on April 20.



I moved to Kansas just under two years ago, when my active-duty husband got orders to move from Nevada, where I had my own medical practice. I am 51 with 3-year-old twins, and since January I’ve worked 24 hours a week at Newton Medical Center.

I am the main Covid-19 doctor at my clinic, North Amidon Family Physicians. I see patients in person and test them for the illness. The local health department isn’t doing contact tracing, or surveillance testing or retesting, so it is my responsibility alone to care for patients who are at home recovering from Covid-19. It has been nerve-racking for all concerned. I see the stricken look in my patients’ faces when they get the presumed Covid-19 diagnosis.

I have just enough personal protective equipment. My only N95 mask is sitting in a brown paper bag marked with the date it was issued — March 31, 2020.

I have a face shield and a surgical mask, but I have to make them last, too. I wear a plastic sheath on top of my scrubs (scrubs I have left over from decades ago when I did my training) and shoe covers (Covid-19 can spread on shoes).

But my skin is still not completely covered, and I see sick patients every day. I take a shower once I get home but am constantly worrying about what I have touched and what I have contaminated.

My dreams are not nightmarish but close. The other day I dreamed in detail what I would do if I were sick and how I would handle the logistics in my family. The next night I dreamed that I drowned in a Covid-19 ocean. I took my last breath and actually died in my dream. That has never happened to me before.

I am finding it hard to finish all my prayers each day. When I pray for people all over the world, I get overwhelmed and tense. The carnage and suffering is too much for me to empathize with, and I need to reset myself for a smaller vantage point. I sometimes only manage to pray for my husband and two kids, and then I stop.

Thank God for my church life and our priest, Father Mike Loyd. I stream the weekly service every Sunday morning, and that has given me the continuity and spiritual lift that has been keeping me going.

Prayers for all of you reading this. Be safe and carry on. ☉

More than 250 cars lined up on April 15 to get a box of food from the Mobile Food Pantry distribution offered by St. Paul's, Clay Center and the Evangelical Covenant Church.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



Continued from page 13

Only weeks before the church closed, Church of the Covenant, Junction City had begun a new weekly community dinner, with hearty fare like chili or lasagna, served on china with silverware and glassware. They had to shift to sack suppers with sandwiches, fruit, chips and snacks.

Rice, the church's rector, said that the program grew from serving 30 people its first week to more than 100 in mid-April. She said many of those they serve now are parents and young children.

St. John's, Wichita, has seen the number of people at their Sandwich Saturday ministry grow to 200 people or more, many of them homeless or near-homeless people in the downtown area. Senior warden Shirley Orr said they modified their outdoor delivery method so it's easier for volunteers and guests to keep a safe distance, and many guests have begun to wear a mask.

Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services has been providing about 100 hot sack breakfasts and 25 sack lunches every weekday.

The breakfast program at St. Paul's, Kansas City, has moved from eggs with biscuits and gravy to a bag that includes a microwavable container with a cold breakfast sandwich, fruit and a granola bar, along with coffee, juice and water. They also include health information about Covid-19, too.

Large-scale need

St. Paul's, Clay Center, for years has partnered with Harvesters, a large area food bank, to help feed people.

Harvester's Mobile Food Pantry makes large boxes of food available to anyone who drives up, with food placed in their trunk.

That no-contact distribution method continues to be used, but the change has come in the numbers being seen. According to Deacon Carolyn Garwood, who helps oversee the church's involvement, in January they served 196 families, and 197 in February.

There was no March distribution, but in April a line of 269 cars waited to pull into the parking lot of the Evangelical Covenant Church for a food box. "That was 23,000 pounds of food," Garwood said, to help feed more than 700 people in the receiving families. "We look for May to be up, also," she said.



PHOTO BY LARRY BUENING

Volunteers from St. David's, Topeka, prepare to check off names of students picking up food provided by the local school district from the church parking lot in early April.

The Trinity Interfaith Food Pantry is the largest food pantry operating in the diocese (the pantry at St. Paul's, Kansas City, remains on hiatus after its space was destroyed in a basement flood last year).

They also have had to move away from a shopper model of service to providing one bag of non-perishable goods and another bag of cold food per household. They are available on tables outside the office building that houses the pantry on Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

According to TIFP volunteer Barry Molineux, the number of pantry patrons in April was 208, which was 11 percent higher than April 2019. He said, "The growth rate has increased each week and we have no reason to think it won't continue."

One change is that upwards of 75 percent of people now arrive on foot or by bike. Molineux believes they now are serving more people who are homeless or live in transitional housing but can't get to larger food programs elsewhere in town.

Help for school children

When local school districts needed help in distributing food to students no longer in class, three churches in the diocese helped provide an answer.

The parking lot at Epiphany, Independence, became the place where food and curriculum items were available, and Covenant, Junction City, also was a delivery location.

For several years St. David's, Topeka, has been a recognized summer meal site, so it was natural that they served as a site for breakfast and lunch grab-and-go meals provided by Topeka Public Schools. They helped students during the district's first three weeks of work to keep school children well fed. ☺

My small business is hurting

By Todd Allison

Member of St. Peter's, Pittsburg and the Council of Trustees



Obviously, Covid-19 has been incredibly hard on the economy. It is having a devastating impact on small businesses. My small business is a little unusual in that it is a manufacturing company. While the pandemic has not shut us down, it will have a lasting effect.

Our company, Progressive Products, manufactures two distinctly different product lines. The first is industrial conveying equipment. On that side of the business, there has been a slight sales dip, but it is pretty much business as usual. We are observing all the required precautions for safe working conditions and some office people are working from home. But other than that, not much has changed.

However, the other side of the business builds mobile concert stages for the entertainment industry. The pandemic has all but eliminated the need for our product. Groups are now limited, crowds are banned, and all entertainment events have been cancelled indefinitely.

It has shut down the entire production industry. We still have some remaining production orders we are completing. But once we finish those units sometime this summer, we are not sure what we will do. We are facing the layoff of almost 20 people.

If this was not bad enough, we do not know when the industry will come back. It is clearly not safe to have crowds until a vaccine has been discovered. Only then will the live entertainment industry begin to rebound.

By the initial bookings we had into June, we were setting up for our best sales year to date. The pandemic has been an incredibly disheartening turn of events. It is a time that challenges faith.

Even so, I feel lucky. We are still working, and we still have jobs. We are all healthy and there has been only a few cases of Covid-19 in Southeast Kansas. Moreover, we were blessed enough to receive some funding through the Paycheck Protection Program.

I still have hope and faith in both God and science. I really think that the only way through this crisis is to pull together as a community and remain faithful to our beliefs as Christians.

God will give us the strength to get through this. I pray that God also gives us all the wisdom to do what we must to keep each other safe. ☺

Bishop's first novel now is available

By Melodie Woerman

BISHOP CATHLEEN

Bascom said she didn't set out to write a novel. But in the process of completing a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and the Environment at Iowa State University, that's exactly what she ended up doing.

And in March, *Of Green Stuff Woven* was published by Light Messages Publishing.

The bishop said that when she started her degree program, she felt drawn more to the idea of a memoir, or idea-based essays. But a professor pressed her to think about other types of writing as well.

Narrative and memoir

The novel has two threads — a modern-day story featuring the dean of an Episcopal cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa (which the bishop was), as well as memories from the dean's childhood that help to explain her passion for prairie that is reflected in her actions.

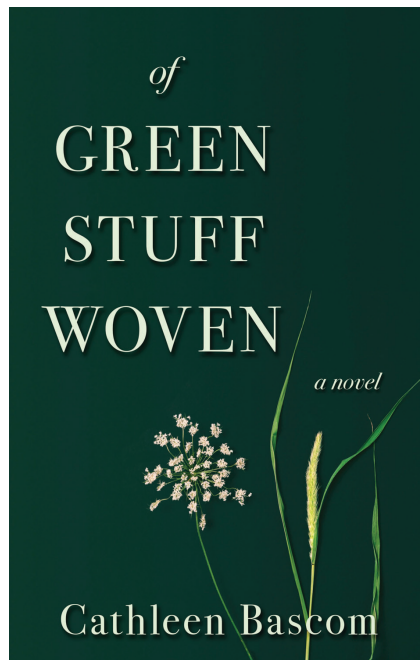
"The two threads weave together," she said, giving rise to the "Woven" in the book's title.

The bishop said that the story of the fictional dean includes pieces of her actual time as dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, but she was able to make that part of the book much more dramatic.

Fictional Dean Brigid Brenchley oversees a plot of prairie grass that filled a square block; then-Dean Bascom helped her congregation replace a dilapidated parking lot with a small garden of native plants.

Real-life parishioners took that step in response to a major flood that struck Des Moines in 2008. "We had become so much more aware of flood mitigation and also water quality," she said. "We had some gurus in the parish who were engaged in state politics around environmental issues and they said, 'Can't we do something better?'"

In the book, the flood occurs after the churchyard was turned into a large field.



She said some of the characters in the book are based on parishioners or people she knew in Iowa, but the plot itself is entirely fictional.

The other piece of the book — a look back at key parts of Brenchley's life in Colorado and Kansas — is much more autobiographical, Bishop Bascom said. Pieces were moved around in space or time, but she said they are fairly close to her actual experiences. "I wanted to explore how one's ecological spirituality comes into existence," she said.

She said she was thrilled that the publisher chose to illustrate those chapters with drawings of native prairie plants, saying "I had always imagined it that way."

The hardest part of writing the book, she said, was lining up the fictional narrative with the personal memoirs in a way that made sense.

Besides being an ode to her love of the prairie, Bishop Bascom said she also sees it as a kind of evangelism for people who don't know this element of Christian spirituality exists.

Praise from reviewers

The book has drawn praise from reviewers, including Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. He wrote this for the book's cover: "This new novel by 'writing bishop' Cathleen Bascom is a book you won't want to put down! Filled with delightful characters and page-turning situations, it's also an important book dealing with important issues around our responsibility for God's creation. And for the sake of all, it's a book with a message we can't put down."

Writing for *The Living Church*, Christine Havens referred to the book as "A Prairie Church Companion" and said, "*Of Green Stuff Woven* is a remarkable love story. Not a romance, but a narrative that roots itself within Cathleen Bascom's spirituality and love of the prairie as well as her love of the Episcopal Church."

The book is available for purchase through retailers listed on the publisher's website, lightmessages.com. ④

But it's Easter anyway!

(This is an excerpt of the Easter sermon preached by Presiding Bishop Curry during the online service at Washington National Cathedral.)

IT'S EASTER Sunday. It doesn't look like it. It doesn't smell like it. It doesn't really feel like it.

But it's Easter anyway.

Churches are empty. There's no sight or smell of lilies. No children dressed in new clothes for Easter Day. When I was a child I remember that all the women would come to church with hats, white and pink, and flowers and fruit adorning them. None of that today.

When it happened, in those days, it was Easter. And we knew it. And we would sing "Jesus Christ is risen today."

We would sing "Hail thee festival day. Blest day that art hallowed forever."

We would sing "Welcome happy morning ages to age shall say."

We would sing "Because he lives I can face tomorrow."

We would sing "The strife is o'er. The battle done. The victory of life is won. The sound of triumph has begun. Alleluia!"

Oh, we would sing, and we would shout "Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

It's Easter. But it doesn't look like it. It doesn't feel like it. It doesn't even smell like it.

But it's Easter anyway!

To be sure, there is no Easter Bunny in malls. To be sure, there are no crosses now adorned with beautiful flowers by children from Sunday school. There are no crying babies in churches, no wiggling children, no old and young alike packed into seats.

The pews are empty. The church is quiet. Even the sounds of trumpets on great organs, even if they sound, they bounce from wall-to-wall, echoing in empty churches.

For there is sickness and hardship in the land, there is death and destruction, there is sadness and fear, anxiety. As the old slaves used to say there is a weeping and a wailing.

But it's Easter anyway!

Think for a moment. That first Easter. It was Easter, but nobody knew it.

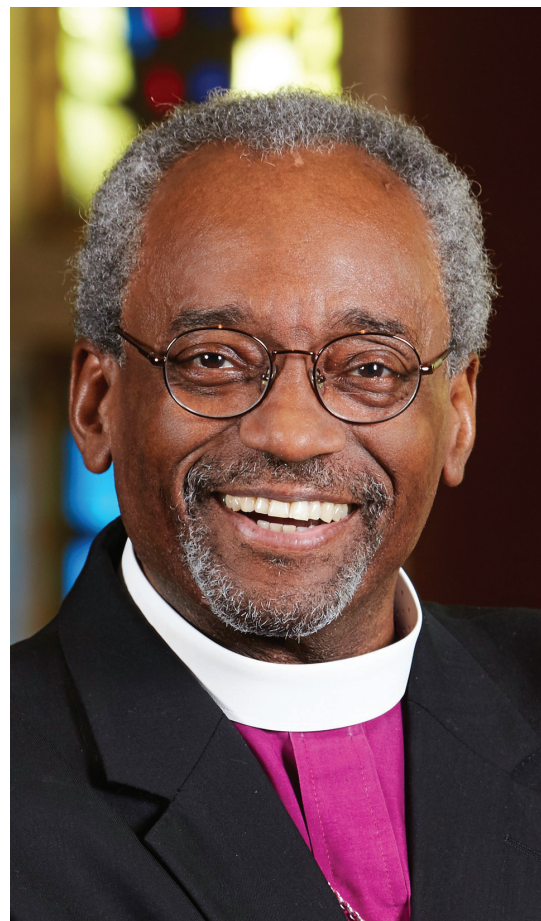
The Bible says, early in the morning, Mary Magdalen got up and went to the tomb while it was still dark. It was dark and she wasn't exactly sure how to get there, but she went anyway. She knew that there was a stone rolled in front of the entrance of the tomb. She got up and went anyway.

Mary and other women followers of Jesus were there when Jesus was dying on the cross and they saw him love, even in death.

And so Mary and those women got up in the dark, not knowing for sure what was going on, just doing what love does. Love can't change the fact of death, but love can live through it and thereby defeat death.

And so they got up and went to the tomb just to do what love does. They went to anoint his body and to make sure that the linen shroud was still clean and to give him a new one if necessary. They went to the tomb that morning, just to do what love does.

They didn't know. They really didn't know that Easter had happened. He had been raised from the dead. He was alive, new, transformed, not walking dead. He was



alive, new, the new creation beginning. He was alive, but they didn't know that.

It was Easter, but it didn't look like it. It didn't smell like it. It didn't feel like it. But it was Easter anyway.

Easter had happened. And though Mary and the other women didn't know it at the time, because they were acting on their love for Jesus, their trust in him, even when they didn't understand, they found their lives aligned with the very life of God. The God who the Bible says is love.

And in so doing, discovered faith, hope, and eventually, Mary would actually see Jesus alive, raised from the dead. ◉



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