



Winged Lion

A publication of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Prattville, Ala.



April 2020

As I sit here in my new (temporary) office at home staring out the window at the dogwoods and azaleas blooming, everything appears to be oh so normal. But as we know, the times are anything but normal. This will be the first time in 33 years of ordained ministry that I have not stood before a congregation on Easter morning to proclaim the Lord's resurrection. I have never in 59 years not been with the family of God during the highest holy day in the church calendar. Nor have I ever been required to keep my distance from the people in my charge. I've never had a hospital send me away, a nursing home refuse me entry, a parishioner afraid to stand within six feet of me. Never have I not been able to offer the sacrament or been told that I can only have graveside services if someone dies. Never have I had to tell a couple in love that I can not go ahead with their wedding as planned. I realize, as the bishop's representative I am the one who has to enforce all of this locally, but I can tell you this is tearing at my very soul. And yet... it is the right thing to do for now.

Patience is not one of my virtues. But we will all have to be patient in the days and weeks to come. It helps me to remember that this is only temporary. "This too shall pass," as the Persian fable once quoted King Solomon as saying.

From the Rector

We will be back to "business as usual" at a date in the hopefully not too distant future. The bishop has said that there will be no public worship other than online worship, so in the meantime we will muddle through, happy that we at least have the technology to come together—even if it is in a rather odd way.

"This too shall pass."

We will be back together soon I pray, and I look forward to that. I'm trying not to grouse or complain about the restrictions, (although I realize I just did that two paragraphs ago) but I'm looking for ways to stay in touch by calling, texting, emailing, writing letters and notes and posting the daily readings onto our website.

Speaking of our website and email—These will be the two primary ways we will get the word out to everyone on just about everything during this time. Please check both your email and the website regularly.

The everyday work of the church continues. Remember, there are bills to pay, salary checks to write, maintenance to keep up, etc... PLEASE stay current with your pledge. Several of you have paid your pledge for months in advance in anticipation of our giving going down at this time. Thank you very much. To the rest of us, please stay up to date. Michele will soon be sending out quarterly statements so that you can know where your giving stands at this point.

Please take care of yourself. Rest. Relax. Read. Go for long walks or sit outside and admire the beauty of spring. Keep me updated with things going on in your life. Call me if you are in need of prayer or just want to chat. Check on your friends and neighbors and your fellow parishioners. Don't spend too much time in front of cable news. Find things that are uplifting and concentrate on them. As St. Paul once said: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

**Blessings,
Fr. Scott**

DURING OUR TIME APART

Remember, the Church is not the building but the people. Let us, as the body of Christ, support one another in prayer as we look forward to being together again.

In the meantime, here are some ways to connect:

- Join together in worship on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.
- Listen to the Lenten daily readings on the website
- Stay current by reading our emails
- Read the Winged Lion each month
- Let Beverly Byard or Yulia Childers know if you are prohibited for health concerns to go to the drugstore or grocery store
- Leave messages on the Church phone. They are being checked daily.
- Call or text Fr. Scott. His new number has been sent as an email
- Check on fellow parishioners
- Mail your weekly or monthly check to the church for deposit

LINKS TO THE LARGER CHURCH

Diocese of Alabama

www.dioala.org

Episcopal Central

www.episcopalchurch.org

Episcopal Cafe

www.episcopalcafe.com

The Living Church

www.livingchurch.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP LIVE



**We can't see you, but you can see us.
Join us for Sunday Morning Prayer
each week live at 10 a.m.**



INSTEAD OF PALMS

This year we are asking St. Mark's members to place a green branch (from any tree or shrub) on the front door of your home or in the window to celebrate Palm Sunday. We may be physically isolated, but we are not separated. We remain united as the body of Christ.

Don't forget that the church's expenses continue whether we are in the pews or not. Giving has fallen off during this time, and we need everyone to stay current on their pledge. Thank you.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

No, we cannot be together at church, but we can individually walk the "Way of the Cross" on the grounds. Thanks to the Byards and Faulks, we will have Nine Stations set up on the church campus for you to come walk and pray. Instruction leaflets will be available. We ask that you not congregate in groups of more than 5 and that you follow the recommended guidelines of staying 6 feet apart. The stations will be set up by the morning of Maundy Thursday morning (April 9) and will remain up until we are allowed to be together again.

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday

Live at 10 a.m.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvW_M6zNCpk&feature=youtu.be

Lessons for Holy Week

Daily on the Website www.stmarksal.org

Good Friday Liturgy

Live 10 a.m. (recorded for later viewing)
website to be announced

Easter Morning

Live at 10 a.m.
website to be announced

2020 ST MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH MUSICAL OFFERING

St Mark's Church in Prattville hosted the 2020 version of its annual Musical Offering on Saturday, March 7th at 2:00 PM in the church sanctuary. The performance of both instrumental and vocal music was open to the public free of charge and was attended by almost a full house. This is the 5th year of the Offering that featured 12 different musicians from around the area. Among the musicians this year were recording artists Beth and Johnny Veres who have toured with the east and west coast as part of the Electric Blue Yonder and released their first album earlier this year. The Veres husband-and-wife team performed a couple of their own songs, *Bluster* and *Colors of the Rainbow*.

Also featured were Carolyn O'Bryan-Miller, Music Director at St Mark's and Yuliya Childers, former director of the Prattville Community Chorus and an alumni of the Odessa Conservatory of Music in the Ukraine. Audience members got to experience 17 pieces of music that appealed to a variety of tastes, from classical to jazz to folk, rock, and show tunes to popular music. Some samples included *Minstrel Man*, performed by Ms. Jakia Gadson, with lyrics by Langston Hughes and music by Margaret Binds; to *The Holy City*, performed by Jeremy Pyles (Director of Music Ministries at First United Methodist Church, Prattville) and accompanied Cynthia Summers (Principal Pianist of FUMC), so just about everyone found something they like.

The first St Mark's Musical Offering was in 2016 and began originally as a way to feature the church's genuine Steinway Piano that was built in New York in 1905. A couple from Dothan had traveled to New York to purchase the piano, and it remained in their family for over 100 years. In 2016, St Mark's received a very generous memorial donation from church members that enabled them to purchase the piano which had recently been completely refurbished. And several of the Offering's musicians definitely put this wonderful instrument through its paces. Most notable of these, and the event's grand finale were a pair of two-handed pieces by Ms. Childers and Christy Henson (Organist and Pianist at First Presbyterian Church), *Sabre Dance from Gayaneh Ballet* by Aram Khachaturian and *Malaguena from Suite Andalusia* by Ernesto Lecuona.

Interestingly, the piano is 5 years older than the St Mark's sanctuary that now houses it.

The initial 2016 Offering proved highly popular and has been continued every year since. Over the years, the types of music offered and the musicians performing it have been varied and greatly appreciated by the Prattville and area communities. In the words of Carolyn O'Bryan-Miller, St Mark's Music Director and coordinator of the event, the Offering has become "One of the most-anticipated events of any kind in Prattville" and is always packed; this year's Offering definitely continued that tradition.

Afterwards, the church hosted a reception in the Ray Fellowship Hall with light refreshments where audience members had the opportunity to get to know some of the very-talented musicians.

ROB GASTON

