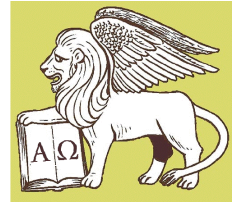




Winged Lion

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There is a Norman Rockwell painting that depicts a pastor and sexton hanging a sign in front of a great cathedral which quotes the Psalms and reads:

“Lift up Thine Eyes”

But below the steps, on the street, people are walking by with their heads lowered. None of them notice the sign; neither do they notice one another.

Easter is here... but how many will truly notice? How many will lift up their eyes and behold the risen Lord in his glory?

How many will take renewed hope in a life of faith and eternal promises? Maybe more than Mr. Rockwell and I think... I hope so.

We have been focused, and understandably so, on all the things we have been denied because of the pandemic. Here in the church we aren't doing a lot of things the way we used to do them.

But does that mean we should take our eyes off Jesus? Absolutely not.

The Church has been through worse times: Plagues, inquisitions, wars, famine, persecutions — and all the while it survived.

Not only did it survive, it continued to proclaim the good news of salvation and new life in the midst of all that was going on.

Christians are often at their best during a crisis. Here at St. Mark's we have seen members finding new and

FROM THE RECTOR

vibrant ways of being the people of God even in a pandemic.

No, we haven't been able to do a lot of the fun stuff we like to do (eating together, laughing around small tables, hugging each other, etc.) but we have found ways to continue worship each Sunday, share the sacrament, marry our children and bury our dead.

In each instance our focus has been solely on the risen Lord and his power over evil and death.

Easter is here and we proclaim our Alleluias not as loudly as before but certainly louder than we were able to do last year when all this began.

Resurrection means a great deal of things, and here at St. Mark's it means, at least in part, that our folks are being vaccinated and are slowly coming back into the church to worship.

In the coming months I expect to see us gathering around those tables, laughing again and, although not quite yet, hugging again.

But our focus will be the same... on hearing the good news and receiving the sacrament.

I am happy to say that we have not lost that focus, nor will we. Our eyes are fixed on Christ, whether together or apart.

I know we are all likely to be in a rush to get things back to 'normal'

again; but we will proceed carefully so that all feel comfortable with the measures being taken for their safety.

Yes, we will continue with masks and social distancing through the Spring and then see what it looks like as summer rolls around.

And, we will continue to follow the guidance of our Bishop, who is very optimistic about the future.

St. Mark's was the first of the Montgomery area churches to resume indoor worship (some of our parishes have yet to meet inside) and we will likely be among the first to make other positive changes.

We will, however, think through all that we do as we head out of this terrible time.

In the meantime, keep your eyes and heart fixed on Jesus. He is the source of all that is good in our lives whether together or apart.

Jesus is, after all, the one who brought us together in the first place, and He will be the one who brings us back.

He is our only reason for being, and so may our hearts truly rejoice as we sing out: “Alleluia, Christ is Risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.”

Blessings,

Fr. Scott +

Vestry met March 23 to finalize plans for Holy Week and Easter

The St Mark's Vestry met on Tuesday night, March 23, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in Ray Hall.

Scott opened the meeting with prayer. After the opening, we traditionally start with the Treasurer's Report. However, James Miller, our treasurer, had a previous commitment and came later.

We then approved the minutes from our February meeting.

Next, we moved on to Old Business: first item was possible funds available through the Stimulus efforts.

Unfortunately, it is the understanding of the Diocese that none are available in this latest round. But Paul Whaley is keeping an eye out.

Paul then discussed repairs to the plaster and brick work in the sanctuary. This project is waiting on the contractor to complete a previous job.

Next, Jan Byrne (part of the Property Committee) briefly discussed the property deeded to the church by Larry Vinson upon his death. Their recommendation is to sell it as is after

cleaning it and making one small repair.

The plan is to have an estate sale there, which was the item of Old Business. Jan is also heading that up, with the sale to be held in July as a fundraiser for the church.

From there, we went to New Business. The first item we had was our Fall Fundraiser, the Chili Cook Off to be held in the Fall.

Jim Byard and Chas Cowart will co-chair this event, with their first meeting next month. There will be a Vestry Liaison and volunteers from the congregation are welcome.

Holy Week and Easter Preparations was the next item of New Business. There will be services Palm Sunday, Holy Monday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday; again, reservations are required for the three Easter Sunday services.

Many thanks to Jan Byrne and Jim Plexico for hosting the evening Palm Sunday service at their farm.

We then had James Miller's Treasurer's Report.

Next, we had committee reports. As reported last month, Gordon Faulk is developing a 5-year plan for the church's facilities.

Park Hobbs, daughter of Andy & Harriet will be going to Happening #77 the second weekend in April at Camp McDowell. Congrats, Park!!

Scott asked the Committee for Envisioning the Future/Ministering to the Demographic (Kathy Quinn, Andy Hobbs, and Jim Searcy) to remain after the meeting so they could meet.

Last, Scott gave his Rector's Remarks. Larry Studdard has hand-crafted a number of crosses (among MANY other wood-working projects) and gifted a number of them to Scott, who in-turn gifted them to the Vestry. Many thanks, Larry!!

The church has also received the plaque in memory of Mary Youmans for the new brick pillars between the sanctuary and Chapman Hall.

Scott then led us in the Lord's Prayer, and closed the meeting with a blessing. The next Vestry meeting will be March 23, 2021.

**ROB GASTON,
COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR**

A note from Father Scott...

As we await word from the bishop about how to amend how we do things (wine at communion, sharing the peace, fellowship activities, etc.), I am encouraged by the number of people in our congregation who have had at least one vaccination. By my calculations, according to just what individuals have told me, right at half of our adult congregation is either fully vaccinated or has had their first

jab (as the English say). This is encouraging on several fronts. I do not think it is overly optimistic to think that all those who desire to be vaccinated will be by the end of June. If so, and depending on what Bishop G. tells us, we will see a further loosening of the restrictions over the past year. Obviously, this is dependent on things continuing to go the way they seem to be heading. I appreciate your patience, and I ask for

just a bit more as we are hopefully in the last months of Covid's horrible grip in the United States. I ask that you join me in continuing to pray for the families and individuals who have suffered, and continue to suffer, from this blasted pestilence. Your vestry and I have formed a committee to come up with special ways and events in the coming months as we begin the process of returning to our beloved parish life.

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday (April 1)

7 pm Stripping of the Altar, Eucharist

Good Friday (April 2)

Noon and 7 pm services in the Church

Easter

Three Services (**Reservations necessary**)

8:00

9:30

11:15

Palm Sunday Gratitude:

Thank you to Jim Plexico and Jan Byrne for allowing us their beautiful farm for a rousing Palm Sunday service this year. Thank you also to John and Lyn Dunbar for once again tramping through the swamps



THANK YOU LES!

Les Amidon has been showing up early every Sunday morning to video our first service for broadcast on the web for our parishioners who aren't yet attending. Thank you Les! We certainly couldn't do it without you.



Come Walk our New Stations

The Stations of the Cross are permanently displayed around the Church thanks to a private gift and the labor of Gordon and Debbie Faulk. Thank you Jim and Beverly Byard for your help and encouragement along the way.

Also, thank you to James Byard for his work in making our stations accessible through a phone application QR code. Hard copies of the liturgy, including all 14 stations, can be found in a weather shielded plastic box near the first station (next to the front door of the church).

Walking the "Way of the Cross" is a traditional discipline appropriate at anytime, but especially during Lent. We encourage all who can to walk the stations and to tell their friends and family about them as well.

Newsletter Submission Info

Just a reminder: all articles for the Winged Lion are due no later than the 20th of each month. Please see to it that your news and information are submitted to the editor, Becky Obert, by that date. Becky has a mail box in the office hallway or you can email her at beckyobert@mac.com.