



St Mark the Evangelist Anglican Church

1606 Fisher Ave, Ottawa ON K2C 1X6

Weekly Newsletter

April 3, 2020

Dear friends,

Welcome to the third edition of our weekly newsletter. We expect this newsletter to continue as long as

we cannot meet in person.

Eucharistic Fast

We received a letter from the bishop last week, letting us know the results of a meeting of the House of Bishops for the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. Both that letter and a letter from Bishop John are being included in the same email as this newsletter. Bishop John has formally advised us that communal liturgies have been put on hold until further notice.

“One of the realities for the Church living through this pandemic is our inability to physically gather as community for worship and mutual support. The Eucharistic Feast which we are used to celebrating week after week has been interrupted. Online celebrations, prayers, bible studies and devotions offered by parishes have been keeping us connected in a virtual way and we are grateful for these inspired links. This temporary absence from one another tests our very nature as a living body and reminds us of our deep longing to be together. We find ourselves in a time of Eucharistic Fast rather than Feast.

Therefore, the bishops of our Province have agreed together that our virtual worship through Holy Week and the season of Easter, or until such time we can gather in community together, will not include the liturgy of the Eucharist.” – Bishop John

Sunday Morning Service

Although we cannot attend Sunday morning worship, we have put together a recording of the Liturgy of the Palms & Morning Prayer for Sunday, April 5. It should arrive in your inbox on April 4. On Sunday, we will leave palms outside the link door of the church. Anyone wishing a palm is welcome to come and pick one up. If you cannot get out, please email the office at stmarks@stmarksottawa.ca and we will reserve one for you.

Accompanying the recording will be a file which has the complete service including the readings if you would rather read them. Unfortunately, the sermon will not be transcribed and you will need to listen to the video to hear the sermon. Many, many thanks to Alex Dee who is doing the video production for this endeavour. This week was a particular challenge as it includes a dramatic reading of the Passion.

A number of people have asked who the other singer on the video is. The answer is: they are all Joy. When the hymns are recorded, the organ is recorded by itself and then the voices are added in, one at a time. This week Alex has also added a voice.

Because of this method of recording different sections at different times and then melding them together, we are able to follow the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa guidelines on Physical Distancing. There are no more than three of us in the church at any one time and we maintain a distance of 2m between us.

Holy Week

While we cannot meet during Holy Week, we are putting together a couple of special services in video format. Released for Maundy Thursday will be a video of the stripping of the altar and an invitation to vigil. (See below.) There will be a reflection on the Five Sorrowful Mysteries released for Good

Friday and of course, a Morning Prayer for Easter Sunday.

Overnight Vigil

As Holy Week approaches, we are trying to provide new ways to observe this sacred time in the church calendar under the current conditions. In past years, we have invited those who wish to participate in an overnight prayer vigil to sign up for an hour between the end of the celebration of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday and dawn on Good Friday morning. In previous years, this vigil has been held in the Peace Chapel at St Mark's, where the Elements of bread and wine are placed on the altar following the service.

The invitation to spend an hour in prayer at the foot of the Cross still stands this year, but we are asking participants to do so in their own homes. For some who previously hesitated to be in the church in the overnight hours, alone, this provides a special opportunity. In addition, no one need choose an inconvenient time because someone else has already signed up for a particular hour. As long as every hour of the night is covered, everyone can participate.

Devotional aids will be provided for those who wish to use them. We all experience Holy Week in our own way, so you are free to spend your chosen hour as you see fit, in silent prayer, singing hymns, reading Bible passages, or meditating on Christ's passion.

Please let us know what your chosen hour is, so we can ensure a continuous observance throughout the night. You can do this by contacting Cynthia Greer at 613-723-2680 or by email at greercynthia69@yahoo.com, or by calling the church office.

A Poem for our Time

This inspirational poem has been making the rounds in the social media world – although its attribution is a bit confusing. It turns out there are two writers named Kathleen (Kitty) O'Meara. One of them who lived in the mid

1800s and a contemporary one. This poem has been attributed to both although I believe

In the Time of Pandemic

And the people stayed home.
And read books and listened, and rested and exercised,
and made art and played games,
and learned new ways of being and were still.
And listened more deeply.
Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.
Some met their shadows.
And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous,
mindless and heartless ways the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined
together again,
they grieved their losses, and made new choices,
and dreamed new images,
and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully,
as they had been healed.

– Written by Kitty O'Meara, inspired perhaps by an Italian poem by Irene Vella (whose immuno-depressed husband has been ill during this period of Coronavirus).

the contemporary Kitty O'Meara actually wrote it. She has been interviewed and the previous Kitty O'Meara wrote prose rather than fiction. Regardless of when it was written, it does give us food for thought.

Flowers

We are going to put some pots of flowers in the church when we record the Easter service. If you would like to contribute to Easter flowers, please let the office know at 613-224-7431 or stmarks@stmarksottawa.ca. If you would like a specific dedication, please include that in your message.

Donations to the Church

We are extremely fortunate at St Mark's that there are a number of people who use Pre-Authorized Remittance. That gives us some

source of income during this time that there is no public worship. If you are not on PAR, I would encourage you to continue your donations. While some of our expenses have decreased while we are not meeting, we have lost a substantial portion of our income from rentals and from Sunday offerings. We are looking at options for donation while we are not meeting together. Of course, putting a cheque in the mail is always a great option for getting your donation to us.

Along with many other churches in the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, we are embarking on an option that allows donations to be made online by credit card. This option is administered by a registered charity called CanadaHelps. CanadaHelps basically acts as a clearing house for all registered charities. They will immediately issue a receipt for the donation and deposit the actual donation into our account. To make a donation click on the following link:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/47820>.

It is currently set up so that you can make donations for General Income, Lenten Outreach, Easter & Flowers. You can also write a message for us if there are further instructions.

You will have to remember when you go to do your taxes for 2020 where you have put your receipts from CanadaHelps. If you cannot find them, contact CanadaHelps and they will be happy to issue duplicate receipts. All money donated will be put in to the appropriate income category when it comes to us.

Public Health Link

Ottawa Public Health has a link which offers guidelines on physical social distancing for older adults. Here is the link:

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/physical-social-distancing-101-for-older-adults.aspx>

Contacting the Church

Contacting the office has actually not changed at all. You may contact the office at 613-224-7431 or stmarks@stmarksottawa.ca.

Messages are being monitored and the business of the church is continuing, albeit remotely.

Comments and Suggestions

If you have anything you would like to see in next week's newsletter, please email the church at stmarks@stmarksottawa.ca.