The Church of Our Saviour Rogation Sunday in Coloma

Over a century and a half ago, a remarkable young priest named Caleb Peirce arrived in Gold Rush-era Placerville to take charge of a parish called St. Mary's Episcopal Church. He was never able to locate that church, however, so he began conducting Sunday services in the county courthouse. During each week he also traveled on foot to conduct services at several other churches in the area, including Emmanuel Church in Coloma. A few years later, in 1865, he oversaw construction of the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Placerville, where he served as rector until his death in 1903.

Well over a century after Rev. Peirce's death, the Church of Our Saviour remains a vital and vibrant part of the greater Placerville area, and is the oldest continuously-operating church building in El Dorado County. Meanwhile, Emmanuel Church is now part of Coloma's Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and has been recently restored to its mid-19th-century glory. Together, the two historic church buildings are among the most authentic, well-preserved parts of the region's Gold Rush-era history.

Importantly, the two churches will once again be connected through a special Rogation Day service on Sunday, May 25. Rogation Day is an ancient spring tradition among Anglican and Episcopal churches, in which congregations ask for God's blessing on the harvest and give thanks for the bounty of the earth. In modern times Rogation celebrations often extend to uplifting everyone who works in agriculture, farmers markets, restaurants, public-safety workers, government, military workers and places of healing.

This year's Rogation Day service will be conducted by the Rev. Deborah Sabino, the Rector of Placerville's Church of Our Saviour. The service will be held at the historic Emmanuel Church, on Church Street in Coloma, California. The service, which begins at 10 am, will employ the historic prayer book and liturgy that Caleb Peirce followed in the 19th Century. The service will be preceded by a procession along Coloma's Main Street. All are welcome at this special service at the Emmanuel Church. All are also welcome to attend any of the regular, weekly worship services at the Church of Our Saviour in Placerville. For further information, visit the church's website at oursaviourplacerville,org.

