

Volume 13, Number 2

March 2021



Newsletter of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Manchester, CT

Happenings

Services for a Blessed Holy Week

This year, we will observe the most meaningful time in the Christian year with services that feed our souls while protecting our health. Please plan now to take part.

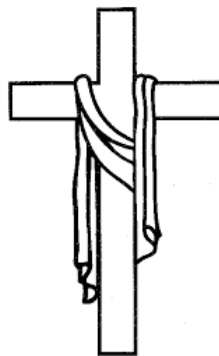
Saturday before Palm Sunday, March 27

The tech team will record the Blessing of the Palms in St. Mary's Memorial Garden on Saturday morning. Those who wish may then come by in the afternoon to pick up palms for themselves and their families. We are blessed: We will have a new portable sound system gifted by a parishioner that we can use for outdoor services. This year, we offer this traditional-made-safe method for blessing and distributing palms to parishioners.

Palm Sunday, March 28, at 10 am on Zoom – Joint worship with Concordia

Our traditional service for Palm Sunday (adapted for virtual worship) opens with the Palm Sunday Processional Gospel passage, and the familiar hymn "All, Glory, Laud and Honor." The service focuses on the Passion Gospel with multiple readers and hymns. We will pray for the needs of the world, and our

responsive prayer while we are unable to receive Holy Communion. We then enter Holy Week praying as we sing, "Jesus, I will ponder now on your holy passion; let your Spirit now endow me for meditation."



Maundy Thursday, April 1, at 7 pm on Zoom – Worship with four churches (Concordia, Emanuel, Faith and St. Mary's)

As has been our custom, we collaborate with our Lutheran neighbors for Holy Week services. This year, we find ourselves challenged to imagine the message of servanthood and Jesus' commandment to love without the familiar foot washing and sharing Holy Communion. This service will center on read-

ing from the Gospel of John and the servant ministries we witness in the community beyond our church doors.

We invite parishioners to look for the hands and feet of Jesus in our local community. Take pictures of the servant ministries you witness and share them with us. They will be incorporated in our Maundy Thursday service. More information to come.

Good Friday, April 2, at 7 pm on Zoom – Worship with four churches. The Solemn Biddings and the Passion Gospel are the center of the liturgy of the day. Our veneration of the cross will include photos of crosses from our homes.

We invite parishioners to share photos from home – a cross or a special place you've made for worship at home. We will prepare a presentation similar to the nativities presentation we made for Epiphany Sunday. More information to come.

Continued on p. 5

Join the Conversation

Another parish-wide listening session will be held on Zoom on Sunday, March 21, from 11 am to noon. Watch weekly newsletters for more information and the Zoom link.

(See p. 6 article on the Feb. 21 session.)



Financial Summary

January 2021 — Operating Statement

By Joy Dorin, Assistant Treasurer

	Current Month - January	YTD 1 month, 8.3% of the year	2021 Budget	YTD % of Budget
Total Income	\$28,165	\$28,165,	\$229,996	12.2%
Pledge Income	\$24,043	\$24,043	\$180,568	13.3%
Total Expenses	\$28,922	\$28,922	\$358,531	8.1%
Net Surplus (Loss)	(\$757)	(\$757)	(\$128,535)	0.6%

Notes

- The 2021 operating budget – summarized in the table above - was approved by the Vestry and presented at the Annual Meeting.
- The review of current month's results to previous month's results will begin next month with February's summary.
- As the summaries are reviewed, please keep in mind that the construction of the 2021 operating budget included the following:
 - ◇ On the income side:
 - ◆ \$180,568 in pledge income, a reduction from the 2020 actual of \$212,418.
 - ◆ \$26,400 in building use which represents a full year or rental income from 33 Park Street but no rental income from Iglesias due to Covid-19 restrictions.
 - ◆ No income from parish functions due to Covid-19 restrictions.
 - ◇ On the expense side:
 - ◆ The second-year (95% to 90%) of a three-year planned reduction in the church's contribution to premiums for medical and dental insurance.

January Income

- Pledge income was strong – there were five Sundays in January, some parishioners pay their full-year pledge in January, some pay their first- quarter in January.
- Prior year pledges was also strong – some parishioners completed their 2020 pledge.

January Expenses

- Expenses tracked as projected.

January Net-Surplus/Loss

- There was a small loss of \$757 for the month - a good start to the year!

Outreach Activities during Lent

Even a pandemic won't prevent St. Mary's traditional Lenten outreach activities from taking place this year. Please plan to be part of them.

Wall out Hunger

Each year, between Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday, parishioners donate items we deliver to MACC Charities for distribution. This year, we are focused on collecting:

- non-perishable food
- toiletries
- personal care items
- feminine hygiene products
- cleaning products
- paper goods

Donating is easy (and contactless!). Simply place your donations in the box on the porch of the church office building. The

drive continues until March 28.

Undie Sunday

Having adequate underclothing is a pressing needs among people struggling economically. That's why each year, in March, we collect NEW socks, underwear, bras and undershirts for all ages and sizes and donate them to MACC. Please purchase whatever items you can and either place them in the box on the office porch or plan to take them to the drive-through event that will be announced soon.

Gift Cards for Families

The Family Resource Center at St. Mary's partner school, Bennet Academy, is always in need of gift card to give to families in need. Parishioners are invited to purchase \$25 gift cards to either Stop & Shop or Walmart and drop them at the church office by March 29.

New Book Study Begins in April

St. Mary's parishioner and gifted lay preacher Mary Covello will lead a six-week book discussion on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's book, *Love Is the Way: Holding onto Hope in Troubled Times*.

Meetings will be held on Zoom on six Sundays at 1 pm beginning on April 11.

Interested in taking part in this series? Just email Mary at mary.covello@gmail.com.



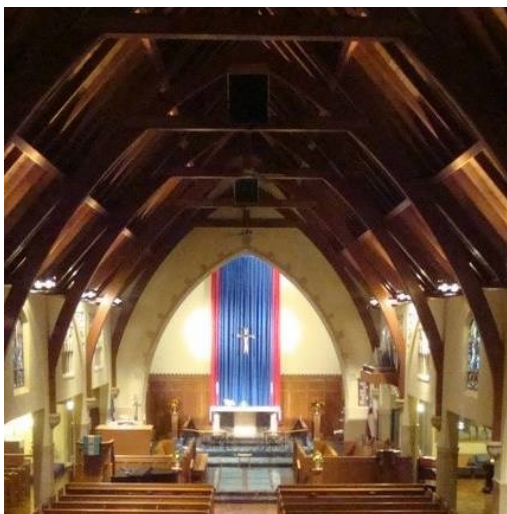
Tech Team Volunteers Needed Thursdays

As St. Mary's "tech team" continues to learn about our new live streaming and recording technology, we are also seeking to expand our Church Media Ministry. We have resumed the Altar Guild ministries of preparing the altar for services and cleaning up. Both are done at a separate time from when the tech team is present.

We are also ready to resume, on a limited basis, the lectors who read the lessons and prayers, and the acolytes who assist at the altar. Both of these ministries are currently taking place on Thursday mornings.

We know that not everyone who has been involved in these ministries in the past is able to participate at this time, so we are reaching out to extend a broader invitation. All those new to participating must know we maintain high safety standards, including mask wearing and social distancing while in the building.

Are you in good health and available on Thursday morning? Is God nudging you to try something new? Our team of five wants you to come experience this new thing God is doing with us at St. Mary's.



Reach out to Rev. Ann (revalovejoy@gmail.com or 304-951-7122) if you would like to know more.

God calls each of us to participate in God's mission in the world and through the church. Might God be calling YOU to one of these special ministries?

Services of Holy Eucharist that premiere beginning at 7:30 on Sunday mornings are recorded in St. Mary's main sanctuary.

Create a Sacred Space at Home for Lent

This year we find ourselves observing Lent from home with limited access, if any, to our customary worship spaces and familiar rituals. Worship is a sensory experience that fully engages us, and Lent is an especially meaningful time of reflection for Christians.

While we long for the season of spring, we enter the traditional season of Lent: a time of penitence, fasting and repentance as we ready ourselves for Holy Week. We place our hope in the promise of the resurrection and new life and for now, during Lent, we take time to tarry at the foot of the cross of Christ.

WORSHIP AT HOME

Consider creating a special environment for worship in your home.

SPACE

A quiet, comfortable space is ideal for prayer. It may be a spare room, a corner of your bedroom or a favorite table, for example.

CREATION/PLANTS

Flowers and plants remind us of God's miraculous creation and all God's creatures. Bringing something inside during the winter can be a pleasing reminder of the cycles of life and the hope of spring. This could be a rock or a branch or a cup of snow.

ART/JOURNAL

If you like to jot down your thoughts in a journal or sketch your prayer, include these items in your sacred space or prayer corner.

MUSIC

An instrument, singing bowl or a recording of hymns or music for meditation can open our hearts.

SCRIPTURE

Include a Bible for reading and prayer. Or consider a spiritual reading or a devotional for Lent. Write out a favorite scripture passage read during online worship and use it to center your thoughts as you reflect and pray.



CANDLES

Candles are a symbol of God's presence with us. When you light a candle for worship, reflection, or prayer you can offer these words from scripture: "It is you who lights my lamp; the LORD, my God, lights up my darkness." Psalm 18:28

CROSS

A reminder of the crucifixion and resurrection.

ICON

An icon is a sacred image used for reli-

gious devotion. Common subjects include Christ, Mary, saints and angels.

SYMBOLS OF LENT

Consider gathering a collection of items with special significance for Lent.

SMALL BOWL OF WATER

As you begin worship or prayer, trace the sign of the cross on your forehead or on your hands to remind yourself of your baptism and God's promises.

PURPLE CLOTH

The color for the season of Lent is purple, suggesting repentance and solemnity. Include a swath of purple fabric or other purple item in your sacred space.

EMPTY VESSEL

Place an empty vase, bowl, or other vessel in your worship space to remind you of the practice of fasting during Lent. Write down what you are fasting from or what spiritual practice you are committing to and place it in the vessel.

DESERT

Create your own wilderness desert box as a reminder of the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert tempted by Satan. How do we bear witness to God's grace in our times of need? What might you place in your symbolic wilderness?

Holy Week Services (Continued from p. 1)

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 3, at 7 pm on Zoom – Joint worship with Concordia

This year, St. Mary's and Concordia will continue with our worship on Zoom; Emanuel will be worshipping outdoors. Our service on Zoom will center on the stories of salvation and the renewal of our Baptismal Covenant. We will shout our first "Alleluia! Christ is Risen!" and even in these uncertain times, we will recommit ourselves to our faithful God.

Easter Sunday, April 4, 7:30 am recorded service on YouTube AND 10 am Zoom joint worship with Concordia

Our Easter morning begins with a service of Holy Eucharist with spiritual communion on our YouTube channel at 7:30 am. This prerecorded service is available any time after it premieres at 7:30 am.

We are also exploring the option of offering Holy Communion with pre-consecrated "communion cups" shared while remaining in your car at St. Mary's. If you have ever received communion while at the hospital or at home, it would be a similar experience to Communion Under Special Circumstances. More to come on this possibility.

At 10 am we gather on Zoom to celebrate the Day of the Resurrection with our friends at Concordia. This service will be a traditional Easter service, with joyful singing and music, only without enjoying sweets in person. You won't have to share your Easter candy!



Weekly Worship Continues

St. Mary's offers numerous worship opportunities while our building is closed due to the pandemic. Try something new!

- **Morning Prayer** via Zoom at 10 am on Sundays in collaboration with Concordia Lutheran Church. Participants say that the service, largely from *The Book of Common Prayer*, is fulfilling and offers a sense of fellowship.
- **Compline** on Zoom at 7:30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, **except** on Wednesdays during Lent.
- **Lent: Special shared programming** on Zoom at 7 pm on Wednesdays during Lent in collaboration with Emanuel, Faith and Concordia Lutheran Churches. This is a contemplative service focused on the Stations of the Cross. Music is offered by all four churches and includes organ, piano, singers and steel drums. Musicians include Kelly Sharp, Nancy Knauf, Jun Lee, Josh Quillen and Emanuel Cruz. Lay preachers are Mary Covello and Beth Lavalette of St. Mary's, David Smith of Concordia and two preachers from Emanuel.

- We now offer a **Sunday service of Holy Eucharist with Spiritual Communion**, recorded in our main sanctuary and available on St. Mary's YouTube channel* beginning at 7:30 am every Sunday. It is available for viewing any time afterwards.
- In the Easter season, we hope to offer **communion to-go**, as some other Episcopal churches are doing. This will enable parishioners to receive consecrated bread and wine in a drive-through fashion. More details will come soon.
- As the weather gets warmer, we will reintroduce **outdoor services** in some form.

*To subscribe to our YouTube channel: 1) type www.YouTube.com into your internet browser; 2) in the search bar across the top, type *St. Mary's Manchester* and click the search button.; 3) our YouTube channel is the second channel down on the page and has a circular image of the church next to it; 4) click the red "subscribe" button across from the image. Now you're subscribed.

Faith, Friends and Fun

By Noreen Kirk

Jean Kelsey has been a member of St. Mary's for more than 70 years. But you wouldn't guess that by talking on the phone with her. Her energy, humor and way of speaking give the impression of a much younger person. "I do *think* young," Jeanie says. Undeterred even by a couple of joint replacements, she says she's eager to return to exercise classes and swimming at the "Y" as soon as the pandemic ends.

Jeanie was born in Glastonbury, where her grandparents had a farm known first as the Hale Farm and later as the Kelsey Farm. Her Hale ancestors had purchased the land from indigenous peoples in the 1600s. She is descended from settlers who came to Connecticut with Thomas Hooker and founded Hartford, and she's been a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution for more than 50 years.

Jeanie's high spirits were evident from an early age. She remembers attending the Buckingham Congregational Church as a young child and being seated in the front row with all the other children while someone read a story to them. "I didn't like the story," Jeanie says, "so I got up and left."

Jeanie's parents, Marjorie and Everett "Bud" Kelsey, moved to Manchester when Jeanie was 4 years old. Marjorie had been raised an Episcopalian, so the family joined St. Mary's. The Rev. Alfred Williams was the rector at the time, and Jeanie remembers finding him somewhat frightening. "He'd wave his arms and his vestments would flap out and it was a little scary," she says.

Jeanie's distant cousin Gertrude Elizabeth Liddon liked to tell a story about a very young Jeanie attending a baptism at St. Mary's. Never inclined to sit still,

little Jeanie amused herself by sliding from one end of the pew to the other and climbing over the back of it.

Growing up in St. Mary's

Jeanie and her three brothers, David, Donald and Robert, grew up in the church. All were baptized and confirmed



here. Jeanie remembers going to Sunday School in Anderson Hall, which was then called the Parish Hall. Each class occupied its own long table. "There were no dividers between them, and it was noisy as all get-out," Jeanie says. Her teachers included Pearl Binks and Bob Smith. Her Aunt Betty Thibodeau, "who could make anything fun," was one of her confirmation teachers. "We'd have class in the morning, then go back at night for confirmation instruction," Jeanie says. "Mr. Williams would come for that." Suffragan Bishop Robert Hatch came to confirm the class.

Jeanie became good friends with Shirley Hallin, who would later become Shirley Zeidler. Both were active in the church's Girls' Friendly Society, led by Mary Phelps DeMerchant. One of Jeanie's favorite memories was working with Shirley to prepare for a meal to celebrate the opening of St. Mary's "new" church. The two young girls had fun getting into harmless mischief.

A Beloved Ministry

Jeanie was involved in the Girls' Friendly Society through high school. She later served for eight years on St. Mary's vestry, including five years as clerk. But the ministry she fell in love with was Altar Guild. She got involved with Altar Guild in the 1970s through Adeline Smith. Other members of the team included Ethel Rollason and Peggy Vaughan. Later, June Todd joined the team. Jeanie enjoyed polishing the silver and preparing the altar. As the youngest member early on, she was usually the one to run back and forth between the altar and the sacristy. She loved learning the names of all the vessels, linens and altar hangings. "It was like something I'd never experienced before. I loved Altar Guild from the first minute I joined it. And here we are, all these years later!" Jeanie has served as directress of St. Mary's Altar Guild for about the past 10 years.

A Wistful Note

Looking back, Jeanie speaks fondly of the many friendships she formed over the course of her life at St. Mary's. Like all parishioners, she has seen many changes in the church, especially in the past year. She understands the serious challenges St. Mary's and other churches face. And while she knows it's improbable, her dream for St. Mary's would be to have the church as it once was: "packed with people and having events and suppers."

St. Mary's Elected Leadership 2021

Rector:
The Rev. Ann Lovejoy Johnson
304.951.7122
revalovejoy@gmail.com

Senior Warden:
Mechelle Olórtégui
860.995.1946
Mechelle.tovar2011@gmail.com

Junior Warden:
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Treasurer:
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Assistant Treasurer:
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Mary Covello
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Mary.covello@gmail.com

Sylvia Armogida
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sylviaarmogida@gmail.com

Delegate to Diocesan Convention:
Mary Covello

Alternate to Diocesan Convention:
Lois Johnson

Liaison to Manchester Area Conference of Churches:
Beth Lavalette

Delegates to Manchester Interfaith Social Action Committee:
Bruce Perry, Joy Dorin, (third position open)

Delegates to Manchester Interfaith Corporation:
Eileen Christensen, (second position open)

Please feel free to contact the rector, the wardens or vestry members if you have questions or comments about St. Mary's.

A Heartfelt Note of Appreciation

Brittany Hall, who has served for several years as coordinator of the Family Resource Center at our partner school, Ben-net Academy, has let us know that she is leaving her position. Brittany wrote this note to St. Mary's:

"I extend my absolute greatest gratitude to the entire St. Mary's parish for your never-ending thoughtfulness and support for students and families. The difference you have made cannot be summed up in words! If only you all could see some of the reactions I've gotten from families in response to your generosity, you'd understand what I mean. I send much love and a

heartfelt thank you to each and every member that has ever helped make my role possible, because truly, I could not have done it all without you!

Thank you, thank you, thank you for always making me feel so welcomed and being a glimmer of hope and kindness, even during such challenging times. I will continue to hold you all near and dear to my heart! Ongoing blessings to each and every one of you"



Brittany Hall



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

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*God cooks;
we share the feast!*

Worship Schedule

Visit us on
Facebook!

While our building is closed, please watch your weekly emails (or postal mailings) for information about worship. Also see p. 5 of this issue of Happenings.

- On Sundays at 10 am, Morning Prayer is held via Zoom. Zoom coffee hour begins at 9:30 am.
- On Sundays, beginning at 7:30 am and available any time after that, a recorded service of Holy Eucharist with Spiritual Communion is available on St. Mary's YouTube channel.
- On Mondays, Wednesdays* and Fridays at 7:30 pm, Compline is held via Zoom.

*Except on Wednesdays during Lent, when different programming is offered.

Parishioners Share Thoughts on CAT Results

Approximately 30 members of St. Mary's gathered on Zoom on Sunday, Feb. 21, for a "listening session" held to discuss the results of the recent Church Assessment Tool (CAT) survey.

The session was an opportunity for parishioners to speak with Rev. Ann, vestry members and each other about the survey's findings. Participants shared their candid thoughts about St. Mary's culture, mission, areas of commonality and difference, changes within the church and more.

Parishioner and vestry member Joy Dorin, who headed St. Mary's CAT team, said, "We appreciated everyone's openness and courage in sharing and discussing their various perspectives and feelings about St. Mary's. Parishioners' input is important to us as we make plans to reopen and look to the future."

Another listening session—to discuss the church's future—will be held on **Sunday, March 21**, from 11 am to noon on Zoom. Watch weekly e-newsletters for more information.



Shopping on Amazon? Remember to choose AmazonSmile when you log on, so that St. Mary's will receive a percentage of whatever you spend. Just go to www.smile.amazon.com. Your login and password are the same. If you have questions, contact Mechelle Olórtégui at 860.995.1946 or Mechelle_tovar2011@gmail.com.