



St. Paul's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OAKLAND

April—May 2020
Volume 14, Issue 4

THE GOOD NEWS

To know Christ better and to make Him better known

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD by the Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson



So often when life brings us sorrow, pain or distress, we question God. We want to know why God allowed this or that to happen to us or someone we believe deserves a better fate.

In my view, this questioning of God is a clear reflection of our human nature. We are weak and self-centered. We are both emotionally and physically weak, as neither our minds nor bodies can withstand great pain, though that may be defined differently for each individual. We all have a breaking point at which our physical strength crumbles. This is also true of the human mind and psyche; there is point of distress beyond which it can no longer function in an optimal way. I believe that the closer we each get to those breaking points, the more intense are the feelings of disappointment and

questioning. There is questioning of self, others, and even God.

This all said, I would pose that the best questioners of God are those who live in deepest relationship with God. What do I mean by this? Have you ever had a meaningful disagreement and discussion with someone you do not know or someone you don't care much for? Let me be clear here, the question isn't have you had a disagreement with someone, but rather has it been meaningful. From my perspective, a meaningful conversation is one of those where you are able to share your thoughts and perspectives in an open and honest way, not fearing that the other may choose to retaliate or humiliate you. A meaningful conversation, even about a disagreement or something that you are upset about, leaves you hungry for more. The stronger

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HELPING THE UNDOCUMENTED

In early April, St. Paul's parishioners raised over \$7500 to provide desperately needed aid to undocumented workers in the Fruitvale District of Oakland. Pastor Pedro Morataya leads the Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana on High Street. That church sponsors many social service activities including active English as a Second Language courses in the evenings that two of our parishioners, Susan Tilden and Courtney Kirkeby, help staff. Many of the people the church serves are undocumented residents, mostly from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. These workers are usually employed in low-paying, day-labor types of job. Their employment and lives are always greatly stressed because of the constant threat of detention and deportation. Families often cannot or dare not

count on the social services available to citizens. The COVID-19 crisis disrupted lives even more. Primera Iglesia organized volunteer teams to reach out to individuals and families. They provided food support for 17 families, modest cash support to 25 students, and purchased additional food to be distributed widely. In addition, the volunteers oriented and helped people to fill out and submit application forms to get any type of aid they qualify for. Just as important, the volunteers provided emotional and spiritual support. Our funds, added to the help others provided, have made a huge difference in the lives of many undocumented residents.



PANTRY OF HOPE

Item of the month

During this time of ‘shelter in place ‘ and physical distancing we are working on trying to find creative ways to continue the process of serving the needy members of community continues.

Though we would hope to receive your donations we are not able to do so at this time.

Thanks for your continued support and prayers.



AND NOW?

By Irene Plunkett

Depending where you are in the world, this is week X of the sequestration—orders to stay in one’s house as much as possible, except for neighborhood exercise and shopping for food or medicine. For the most part, at least in my area of California, people are abiding by the rules and feeling relieved that the dreaded upward curve of anticipated cases of COVID-19 is flattening and hospitals are reporting a slight dip in ICU patients.

This week (again in California) Governor Gavin Newsom had a long and informative press conference (almost quaint in its adherence to the old-school ideas about them) in which he outlined the six needs for the state to see in order to begin, gradually, re-opening its businesses, schools (not this school year, though), and general spaces. He wouldn’t give a date, but he did promise an update in two weeks, at which time the specific protocols for this incremental re-opening would be announced.

For many of us, that press conference marked the first day that we imagined that we might survive this pandemic. Especially for those of us who are older or medically compromised, there had been a great deal of attending to wills and funerals, even as we cooked, cleaned (incessantly), and went on creating some semblance of normality. Lots of people, mostly I’d say those not dealing with home-schooling children in addition to completing one’s regular job duties without the support of an out-of-home office, have suggested that we consider this time a kind of forced retreat—a moment to reflect on our lives, to read, to re-connect with loved ones far and near, and to allow ourselves to meditate.

Others have noted that in the absence of frenetic human activity, the natural world seems so be restoring itself: LA has almost no smog, the Himalayas are visible from northern India, the canals in Venice are hosting both dolphins and birds again, and hot spots for pollution in the developed world are greatly dimmed. The Milky Way has become visible in places where ambient light and pollution have blocked it for decades. Animals are roaming the streets in ways reminiscent of the scenes in P.D. James’s *The Children of Men*. There is, I’d say, a measure of comfort in this. Also, the message seems clear to those who may not have gotten it before: it is humans who need the earth and not the other way around. And the new reality we will be tentatively stepping into sometime in our near future will not be the same as the one we left behind.

And so this time we are currently in is a transition time. We have experienced a past and we are anticipating a future, but we are residing in neither at the moment. It feels like an invitation to ponder.

Transitions can be a tricky business. (If you’ve ever given birth, that phase called transition is, well, unforgettable, right?) Human life is full of them, the planned ones—birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, new jobs, retirements, births, graduations—and well as the unplanned ones—deaths, divorces, firings, illnesses.

This transition is both unplanned—apparently we weren’t given adequate warning about the coming pandemic—and planned—we are being given entree into a new emergence in the fairly new future. How might we handle this in a meaningful way?

It might be worthwhile for us to get in touch with our gratitude. If we have

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VESTRY REPORT

In order to keep the Parish informed of the work that the Vestry does as the elected volunteer leadership of the church, we will be reporting monthly on the Vestry meetings and sharing a written summary each month in the bulletin and newsletter.

As a reminder, any member of the Parish may attend Vestry meetings which are every fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noted, and the full minutes of the meeting are available to parish members upon request by contacting the parish administrator or a member of the Vestry.

What follows is a summary of the key decisions made by the Vestry at the Mar. 24, 2020 Vestry meeting.

- The church and school facilities remain closed with access limited to select staff and a few essential volunteers who are enabling online worship services to continue.
- The church's investment portfolio has decreased as the stock market fluctuates in response to the COVID-19 crisis. However, the expectation is that these long-term investments will rise again as the financial forecast improves.
- Pledged donations to date total \$150k which is better than initially reported, but still not enough to cover operating expenses.
- There is a plan being developed to continue pantry services under social distancing guidelines.
- The church website is being updated to reflect the digital services and the delivery of online services is being improved. Virtual coffee hours and happy hours have been organized to maintain social connections and the Faith Quest team is working to develop materials to share with families.
- While the St. Paul's Episcopal School continues its leadership transition, Fr. Mauricio continues to serve as acting school chaplain.
- There is a candidate for the Children's Ministry coordinator role, but no final decision or offer will be made until a face-to-face meeting can be held.
- The next Vestry meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28 at 7pm.

2020 OFFICERS OF THE VESTRY

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio
Wilson – *Rector*
Allison Sass
Senior Warden
Bill Davis
Junior Warden
Erica Terry-Derryck
Clerk
Ann Gregory
Treasurer

VESTRY BY CLASS

Class of 2020

Allison Sass
Dylan Versteeg
Bill Davis

Class of 2021

Erica Terry-Derryck
Sergio Prieto
Lisa Strait

Class of 2022

Will Cowart
Ann Gregory
Sharon Pilmer

Future meetings:

April 28
May 26
June 23

DEANERY DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES 2020

Delegates

Melanie Blake
Tom McGarrell

Alternates

Sandra Anderson
Jeanette Dinwiddie-Moore

SAINT OF THE MONTH—APRIL

Catherine of Siena, 1380



Catherine Benincasa was the youngest of 25 children of a wealthy dyer of Siena. At six years of age, she had a remarkable vision that decided her life's vocation. Walking home from a visit, she stopped on the road and gazed upward, oblivious to everything around her. "I beheld our Lord seated in glory with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John." She went on to say later that the Savior smiled on her and blessed her.

From then on, Catherine spent most of her time in prayer and meditation, despite her mother's attempts to force her to be like other girls. To settle matters, Catherine cut off her hair, her chief beauty. Her family harassed her continually; but in the end, convinced that she was deaf to all opposition, her father let her do as she would: close herself away in a darkened room, fast, and sleep on boards. Eventually, she was accepted as a third order Dominican postulant.

Catherine had numerous visions, and was also tried most severely by temptations. Frequently, she felt totally abandoned by the Lord. At last, in 1366, the Savior appeared with Mary and the Heavenly Host, and espoused her to himself, so ending her years of lonely prayer and struggle. She became a nurse, as Dominicans regularly did, caring for pa-

tients with leprosy and cancer, whom other nurses disliked to treat.

Opinion in Siena was sharply divided about whether she was a saint or a fanatic, but when the Bishop of Capua was appointed as her confessor, he helped her to win full support from the Dominican Mother House. Catherine was a courageous worker in time of severe plague. She visited prisoners condemned to death, and she was constantly called upon to arbitrate feuds and to prepare troubled sinners for confession.

During the great schism of the papacy, with rival popes in Rome and Avignon, Catherine wrote tirelessly to princes, kings, and popes, urging them to restore the unity of the church. She even went to Rome to press further for the cause.

Besides her many letters to all manner of people, Catherine wrote a Dialogue, a mystical work dictated in ecstasy. Exhausted and paralyzed, she died at the age of 33.

Everlasting God, you so kindled the flame of holy love in the heart of blessed Catherine of Siena, as she meditated on the passion of your Son our Savior, that she devoted her life to the poor and the sick, and to the peace and unity of the Church: Grant that we also may share in the mystery of Christ's death, and rejoice in the revelation of his glory; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Newsletter contributors sought

We are interested in hearing from writers and photographers; please email us if you would like to donate your talents.

The deadline for each edition is the 25th of the month previous to publication.

Please send your submissions of no more than 500 words to: halice@pacbell.net.

ST. PAUL'S CALLING!

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, St. Paul's parishioners are talking to each other even though we cannot assemble in our usual times and places. A team of over 20 people checked in with about 100 individuals and family units in our parish. The conversations were very rewarding both for the caller and the ones called. Just a touch of the humanity we normally share in person

in our many activities at St. Paul's! Note, though, that our roster list lacks some telephone numbers. If you did not get a call and would like one, please email Robert Knapp (rcknapp2@gmail.com) or call him (510-658-6547) and let him know.



SAINT OF THE MONTH—MAY

Alcuin of York—Deacon and Abbot, 804



Alcuin was born about 730 near York, into a noble family related to Willibrord, the first missionary to the Netherlands. He was educated at the cathedral school

in York under Archbishop Egbert, a pupil of Bede. He thus inherited the best traditions of learning and zeal of the early English church.

After ordination as a deacon in 770, he became head of the York school. It was not uncommon for theologians and intellectuals in the early and medieval church to be ordained as deacons, teaching and scholarship being understood by the church as a diaconal ministry as well as care for the poor and the needy.

Following a meeting in 781 with the Emperor Charlemagne in Pavia (Italy), Alcuin was persuaded to become the Emperor's "prime minister," with special responsibility for the revival of education and learning in the Frankish dominions. He was named Abbot of Tours in 796, where he died on May 19, 804, and was buried in the church of St. Martin.

Alcuin was a man of vast learning, personal charm, and integrity of character. In his direction of Charlemagne's Palace School at Aachen, he was chiefly responsible for the preservation of the classical heritage of Western civilization. Schools were revived in cathedrals and monasteries, and manuscripts of both pagan and Christian writings of antiquity were collated and copied.

Under the authority of Charlemagne, the liturgy was reformed, and service books gathered from Rome were edited and adapted. To this work we owe the preservation of many of the Collects that have come down to us, including the Collect for Purity at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist.

Almighty God, who raised up your servant Alcuin as a beacon of learning: Shine in our hearts, we pray that we may also show forth your praise in our own generation, for you have called us out of darkness and into your marvelous light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PANTRY OF HOPE DURING COVID-19

Although the Pantry of Hope must remain closed during the COVID-19 crisis, Deacon Carolyn and Father Mauricio have been active in organizing some continuing help. There has been one food distribution, carefully organized to maintain the safety of distributors and of recipients. About 20 Pantry clients were called and offered food. 18 came to collect supplies that included canned goods, pasta, oatmeal, rice, beans, juice, peanut butter, some snacks, shelf-stable milk, frozen chicken, and frozen fish, plus a roll of toilet paper, all previously put together with the help of families from St. Paul's Episcopal School. Fr. Mauricio and

Dylan Versteeg wore masks and waited inside the Narthex. For each client, they set a bag in the doorway, stepped back, and the client picked it up. The clients had been given a time slot, so there were never more than two or three present at one time, and those in line remained carefully spaced apart. All went smoothly. The clients, although clearly stressed and frightened by the crisis, were very grateful.



SAVE Stand-Ins against gun violence

SAVE (Soldiers Against Violence Everywhere) Oakland is taking a non-violent stand against the rampant murders in our community. Though the "Stand-Ins" are on hold the advocacy work does not stop until no one is killed on our streets. Please contact Paula Hawthorn, 510-601-8388, if you would like to participate.

Contact Save@Truevine-Ministries.com to be put on the email list for future Stand-Ins.

DioCal Clarity on Worship, Gathering, and Minimum Business Operations Guidelines

<https://diocal.org/news/clarity-worship-and-gathering-guidelines>

WORSHIP ROTA ONLINE

The current rota for the Sunday worship services is posted on the St. Paul's Web site at :
<http://www.stpaulsoakland.org/readings--rota.html>

The rota includes the names of readers, sub-deacons, intercessors.

New volunteers are always welcome. Please contact Fr. Mauricio or the Ven. Carolyn Bolton to volunteer or if you have any questions.

Posted on April 3, 2020. Updated on April 9, 2020

Bishop Marc has issued the following guidelines for congregations through May 10, 2020. These guidelines are in alignment with the most recent public health orders issued in all six counties in which the Diocese of California operates, which have been updated in relation to the statewide stay-at-home order. <https://diocal.org/news/updated-covid-19-guidance-next-eight-weeks-including-holy-week>

Churches are encouraged to continue to be creative in the ways they offer weekly worship by livestream, podcast, or teleconferencing. Gatherings of 10 people or less are permitted to be in the church to produce a worship service, which is considered "minimal business operations." However, there are certain restrictions:

Use the minimum number of people needed to make worship functional, with a maximum number of 10 people gathered, with none present over the age of 65, or in a vulnerable category.

The Rector, Vicar, or other Priest-in-Charge should check in with all participants before each worship service to verify that they are feeling well and are not experiencing symptoms such as fever, dry cough, or shortness of breath. Any participant who feels unwell or has symptoms of any kind should be directed to leave the premises and seek medical attention.

- All those involved should maintain the social distancing requirements of 6 feet or more.
- This should be the same group of people from week to week to minimize the number of people in contact with each other.
- There is to be NO distribution of

communion, even among the small group gathered to produce the online service.

- There should be no Virtual Consecration, drive by Eucharist, or a "Take-Home Eucharist" per guidelines from the Presiding Bishop. <https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-michael-currys-word-church-our-theology-worship>
- These recommendations are in accord with the health department directives of the counties that comprise the Diocese of California. We have directly confirmed that these protocols meet the requirements.
- In addition, these other restrictions are in place:
- All other in-person gatherings of any kind for any purpose are prohibited with the exception of funerals, which may occur following the same protocols outlined above (including social distancing) provided that the total attendance including clergy and any worship leaders involved in holding the service may not exceed 10 individuals.
- Clergy will continue to offer robust spiritual and pastoral care using electronic means, as in-person care is not permissible at this time. This includes refraining from in-person anointing with oil for the sick or in-person last rites. (See Bishop Curry's statement above)
- There should be no house gatherings, even if outdoors.

Preschools:

One exception to the order is the operation of church-run preschools, which are encouraged to remain open to the extent possible, provided they are able to meet the mandatory conditions pre-

scribed in the shelter-in-place order issued by the county in which they are located. This enables an essential service to employees exempted by the order.

Minimum Basic Operations

Please refer to and adhere to the “minimum basic operations” protocols set forth by the local authorities in the jurisdiction in which the church is located. No employee or volunteer should be asked to engage in work activities which exceed those guidelines. As noted above, the protocols for worship provided above have been determined to comply with these orders. The definition of “minimum basic operations” from the City and County of San Francisco is provided below for reference:

“For the purposes of this Order,

“Minimum Basic Operations” means the following activities for businesses, provided that owners, employees, and contractors comply with Social Distancing Requirements as defined this Section, to the extent possible, while carrying out such operations:

The minimum necessary activities to maintain and protect the value of the business’s inventory and facilities; ensure security, safety, and sanitation; process payroll and employee benefits; provide for the delivery of existing inventory directly to residences or businesses; and related functions; and

The minimum necessary activities to facilitate owners, employees, and contractors of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences, and to ensure that the business can deliver its service remotely.”

REPORT FROM EL SALVADOR

During March 8-12, five representatives from Faith Weavers of St. Mary’s Friends of El Salvador visited various public health and education projects in the backwoods of El Salvador. Robert Knapp participated. Here is a brief report.



Friends of El Salvador (FES) has actively sought to improve life in two small, rural communities in an isolated area of San Vicente Province toward the eastern end of the country. Perhaps 200 families live in the area. We witnessed the dedication of two deep wells dug with our support. Clean water is at a premium during the current long-term drought conditions. Springs and shallow wells dry up. These wells provide piped water to households. At the community k-9 school, we committed to fund two additional buildings in the school complex. A dedicated technology center will have to wait for the future—but the creative action of the excellent new principal persuaded the

government to bring cabled high-speed internet to the school, a huge win.

During the four days before our arrival, a devastating forest fire ripped through the communities’ recently planted mango, cacao, and cashew groves. Over the past four years, land had been cleared and planted with the cooperation of scores of local inhabitants. Families had been assigned plots to tend and reap profits from. Much of the work of those years went up in smoke. We are providing pumps to bring water up from the nearby river in order to flood the burned fields in the hope that some trees will survive.

Two scholarship students we support in university reported doing very well. One is already the secretary of his local *directiva*—the community council.

The resilience of “our” Salvadorans impresses us now, as it always has. What we saw discouraged us in some measure, but that discouragement was quickly allayed as we realized how much our partnership with the communities had and will improve so many lives.

Dear Readers:
In an effort to reduce paper waste and printing/ mailing expenses, we are asking anyone who gets the online version of The Good News and no longer needs a paper version mailed to his or her home to let us know. If you don’t get the newsletter online and would like to, or if you want to take yourself off the snail-mail list, please contact Parish Administrator at 834-4314, Ext. 501 or admin@stpaulsoakland.org. Many thanks.



St. Paul's

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Services

**Available via Facebook
live stream**

SUNDAYS

8 a.m. *Holy Eucharist or
Morning Prayer*

10 a.m. *Choral Eucharist or
Sung Matins*

4 p.m. *Evensong
(First Sundays, Oct.-June)*

8 p.m. *Compline
(4th Sundays only)*

WEDNESDAYS

(TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED)

12:10 p.m. *Holy Eucharist
(with Healing prayer on
the 1st Wednesday of the
month)*

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THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

and deeper the relationship, the more comfortable it is to express the exact feelings and thoughts we have.

We have just recently observed Holy Week and my mind goes back to the conversation Jesus had with God in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his death. What we read in Matthew's 26th chapter is a deep distressful conversation. Jesus knows and understands what is coming. He is aware of the pain and suffering he must endure, and he begs for the possibility of it passing over him. This is Jesus' moment of emotional distress, less than 24 hours before what will his moment of deepest physical breakdown. The Eternal Word of God, Jesus, the one we call Lord and Savior was broken in all his humanity. How was he able to overcome that brokenness and utter the

words *into your hands I commend my spirit?* Through his deep and meaningful relationship with God.

The words of Psalm 23 (and others) are essential to those who call ourselves believers and followers of Yahweh. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want* are not folly to those who walk closely with God. These words allow us to prevail, despite life's trying moments, with the certainty that we are cared for and that the God who cares for us understands our brokenness, fear, and anger. This same God is willing to engage in deep meaningful conversations, even in our periods of deepest pain and questioning.

Where is God? Wherever you need God to be, for your shepherd is never not there.

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AND NOW ?

been able, somehow, to survive this first-wave of the onslaught of the virus, we could be grateful, both for our own sakes and also as a way of honoring the many victims of this illness. (I know that survivor guilt is a real thing, but that's really not what I have in mind here. I'm thinking more about a consciousness of intent that comes out of this sense of gratitude.)

In some human traditions—various kinds of new years, for example—we have the opportunity to be intentional about the future. As we do here, it seems to me. Some questions that are often asked in this moment is: What can I leave behind now? Have we been traveling too "heavy," too loaded down with expectations or belief systems that no longer serve us or which might no longer be appropriate in the newly emerging world?

Also: What can I expand? Are there

parts of my life that need to be bigger, more important, than they were in the past? What I have learned, directly or indirectly, in the transition that I can move forward, even in small ways? What ancestral stories have helped me in this time and how might they continue to be relevant?

And as we look at these questions, it might help to shape them a bit by category. Here are some to try on to see whether or not they might be useful to you: Mental and physical health; psychological/religious/spiritual health; living spaces; the role of art—including your role as an artist or artisan; relationships of all types; resource use and development (a wide category). These are just some ideas but they might be interesting to play around with. As difficult as this sequestration has been, there might be lessons here to carry forward and baggage to chuck before we get on with the new normal.