



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

315 East Pecan Street, San Antonio, TX 78205-1819

Dear People of St. Mark's,

"After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised..."

-Matthew 28:1-6a

If I'm honest, if you had asked me in October what I imagined the biggest challenge for our congregation in this program year was going to be, I would have quickly pointed to the scaffolding event. I would have been able to tell stories of our resilience and faithfulness in what seemed like such an unanticipated challenge. Now, I wonder if it will be merely a footnote in the history books compared to what we are experiencing in these days.

While we know that church is not about a building, we are being more strongly challenged to realize that we can still be the church even when we cannot gather in the same way. We are making wonderful connections in new ways, and I've frankly been amazed by people's willingness to tolerate new technology and still find joy and connection. We share the journey each time we pick up the phone and check in with someone. We are living out the commandment to love one another when we willingly separate ourselves from the comfort of each other's physical presence, to ensure the health and safety for our beloved community.

The gospel appointed for this year's celebration of Easter starts with a great earthquake, which feels timely. We are entering a time of great uncertainty with many potential aftershocks. As people of faith, we are not immune from fear, but we also know that God promises to be present in that. The angel responds immediately to the women at the tomb and tells them to not be afraid, Christ is not absent, but mightily present beyond the grave. We as the church are learning that in new and amazing ways daily. I hear stories from so many of you about how you are persevering and still finding hope and beauty in the midst of so much uncertainty. We are hearing the prayers and the words of scripture in more profound ways.

This will certainly be true for us this year as we pray our way through Holy Week. It will be different, but it will still be profoundly holy. And when we gather, whenever that Sunday is in the future, we will say Alleluia with a newfound appreciation for one another and the gift of our common prayer. I am so grateful for the witness and resilience of our community that continues to proclaim hope and serve one another and our beloved city.

Many of you have been wondering about how things are going at the church, especially with our current stay home, work safe policies. Most of our staff have been working remotely, using skills they honed after the scaffolding event.



We hold weekly remote Zoom staff meetings and work throughout the week to support weekday and Sunday programming. We have minimal staff present daily onsite to ensure the safety and security of our sacred spaces. Our phones are being answered as usual during business hours offsite, and the emergency pastoral care is still available 24 hours a day.

We have been offering daily Morning Prayer and Compline during the week. On Sundays we have been sharing a live streamed service of Morning Prayer. Some have asked why we have done this in lieu of “spiritual communion.” While there are many right ways to choose to worship in these times, to fast from Eucharist with our people during Lent has felt like the right choice for these weeks. We look forward to having spiritual communion at the main service on Easter Day and will continue to discern what is best going forward after that. Our Holy Week offerings will be different but will still give us a way to walk the way of Jesus and proclaim his resurrection on Easter morning.

Like all charitable organizations, much of our budget is comprised of people’s salaries. As our staff has continued to work with faithfulness, flexibility, and love, it has been the hope of our leadership and myself to preserve staffing levels even in uncertain financial times so as to support the St. Mark’s community with new forms of offerings and worship. We are continuing to monitor our expenses judiciously and explore all options for savings in the coming months, including possible relief under the C.A.R.E.S. legislation. But we still need and rely on your generosity. If you are used to giving when you are at church, please ensure that support continues. If you are able to accelerate your pledge, since some are unable to make their commitments in these times, please help in that way. If you are able to make a special Easter offering as you would have at services, please use the enclosed envelope or go online to our Give menu at www.stmarks-sa.org to do so.

I trust in the generosity of our community and I know that Jesus Christ is already at work redeeming this time. The light that banishes the darkness has already come into the world and will not be extinguished. As we say in the Eucharist, Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again. Indeed! That is worthy of our praise and our strong Alleluia!

Please know of my love and prayers for you and our community at this time. I am grateful for our common calling and faith journey. It certainly hasn’t been boring! And, I would not choose any other community to walk along with in such times as these.

Peace,



The Rev. Elizabeth C Knowlton
Rector

Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Live services on Facebook (facebook.com/StMarksSA) and our website (www.stmarks-sa.org/updates)

**The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday -
April 5** 10.00am - Liturgy of the Palms

Good Friday - April 10
12.00pm - Good Friday Liturgy

Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
12.00pm - Reflections & Prayers

Holy Saturday - April 11
1.00pm - Holy Saturday Liturgy

Maundy Thursday - April 9
7.00pm - Maundy Thursday Service

Easter Day - April 12
6.00am - Lighting of the New Fire,
Scripture, & Reflection
10.00am - The Feast of Easter with Holy
Eucharist